

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# 2019 Annual Report

*Office of Law Enforcement*





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*Cover Photo: Trophy Big Horn Sheep skulls. Credit:  
USFWS*



# Message from the Chief, Office of Law Enforcement

I am pleased to present the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement's (OLE) Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Annual Report. This report reflects our commitment and efforts to bring justice to those who profit from the trafficking of wildlife; protecting our Nation from wildlife-related diseases and injurious species by working in partnership with tribal, local, state, federal, and international counterparts; and landscape conservation. It represents our dedication to facilitating the legal wildlife trade; highlights our operational performance as well as our progress toward achieving the goals we established in our Strategic Plan; and educating the public about the importance of our mission.

The OLE's operations are aligned with our FY 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and organized into four strategic goals: (1) Combat global wildlife trafficking, (2) Protect the Nation's fish, wildlife, and plants from unlawful exploitation, industrial hazards, and habitat loss, (3) Facilitate and expedite legal trade, and (4) Enhance management accountability. The first three strategic goals focus on our main responsibilities, while the final goal focuses on accountability to our people. Together, these strategic goals chart a path for us to leverage our competencies and achieve our vision of conserving the nature of America. To achieve this vision, our office is dedicated to a progressive focus on people, effective enforcement and facilitating a legal wildlife trade, while simultaneously interdicting illegal wildlife and wildlife products, through enforcement partnerships.

## People, Partnership and Education

We recognize the hard work of our special agents, wildlife inspectors, intelligence analysts, forensic scientists, and support staff who serve critical roles in the fight against wildlife trafficking and the successful prosecution of criminals who break Federal and international wildlife laws. Over the past year, our accomplishments were impressive. We conducted almost 9,900 wildlife crime investigations, which resulted in \$6 million in fines, \$600,000 in civil penalties, and 103 years in prison. We inspected more than 195,000 declared wildlife shipments that were valued at over \$4.3 billion. Scientists at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory examined 2,732 pieces of evidence and 2,732 photos for species identification as they supported the teams in the field.

As Hurricane Dorian bore down on the United States, OLE special agents and conservation law enforcement officers rose to the occasion and volunteered in huge numbers to assist as part of the

Emergency Support Function #13. In other parts of the country the National Wildlife Repository provided tours, distance learning programs, and other outreach activities to almost 3,000 participants. Across the OLE, staff participated in educational outreach events speaking to thousands in attendance.

Further, we recognize that comprehensive training is the foundation of any successful law enforcement program. In 2019, OLE provided a cumulative total of 640 training days to thousands of law enforcement officers during 67 domestic and international training missions. These trainings build capacity with international and domestic law enforcement partners while advancing U.S. interests through international cooperation. They are provided to domestic and international law enforcement officers to reduce crime, combat terrorism, and dismantle transnational organized crimes.

## Effective Enforcement

Through effective law enforcement efforts and enforcement partnerships, the Service works to disrupt criminal networks, apprehends violators, refers wildlife trafficking cases for prosecution, seizes and forfeits property of the crimes, and applies penalties to deter others from committing such wildlife crimes addressing this illegal wildlife trafficking requires strong and effective law enforcement, both in the U.S. and abroad. Effective enforcement is critical to the Service's conservation mission, and we are very fortunate to have dedicated men and women who carry out this enforcement across our country every day.

Internationally, the Service works with two distinct markets concerning the wildlife trade, the legal and illegal. Transnational organized criminal networks profit not only from illegal drugs, weapons, and human trafficking, but they also run large and profitable criminal schemes, which thrive from the poaching, smuggling, and illegal sales of wildlife and wildlife products. These criminal networks illegally traffic wildlife using a variety of smuggling methods, and both the illegal product and the vast profits are moved across international borders. To effectively fight global wildlife trafficking, which significantly affects U.S. native species and commerce, the OLE has strategically stationed senior special agent attachés at seven U.S. embassies in areas that experience high rates of wildlife crime. These attachés have built trusted partnerships with counterparts in their host countries, facilitated complex international investigations, participated in training programs, and supported OLE special agents who worked international wildlife crime investigations.

## Facilitation of Wildlife Trade

Illegal wildlife trafficking threatens security, hinders economic development, and undermines the rule of law. The work of Service wildlife inspectors significantly influences our Nation's public health, safety, economy, and natural resources. Our wildlife

inspectors process more than 195,000 declared wildlife shipments annually, by law- virtually all wildlife imports and exports must be declared and cleared by our inspectors.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank President Trump and the U.S. Congress for the continued support providing funds to improve the Wildlife Inspection Program and place new attachés overseas. It is imperative that the OLE continues to expand our programs to save imperiled and protected wildlife from possible extinction; take- down transnational organized criminal syndicates, and others who profit from wildlife crime; and share our knowledge, skills, and abilities with domestic and international counterparts.

I would also like to thank our tribal, local, state, federal, and international counterparts who assisted us in investigations that led to the arrest and prosecution of those who tried to profit from wildlife crime, and most importantly, I would like to thank the OLE staff. The success stories highlighted in this report only happened because of the dedication and achievements of every staff member. They are ultimately responsible for the OLE being recognized as the world's premier conservation law enforcement organization, and I am incredibly proud of their work. I am optimistic as we move forward and confident that the OLE will continue to protect wildlife for the enjoyment of future generations while ensuring the safety and livelihood of the American public.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Grace  
Assistant Director  
Office of Law Enforcement

# OUR LEADERS- PAST & PRESENT

## Chronological Listing of Law Enforcement Chiefs

**Directors.** Since 1900, the following people have served as Chief of the Biological Survey or as Director of the Bureau or Service for the periods indicated below in the first column.

**Enforcement Chiefs.** The following people have been in charge of the law enforcement responsibilities of the Service, or its predecessor agencies, for the periods indicated below.

**Enforcement Officer Titles.** Titles for federal wildlife law enforcement officers have changed over time.

1900-10....C. Hart Merriam  
 1910-17....Henry W. Henshaw  
 1917-27.....Edward W. Nelson  
 1927-34....Paul G. Redington  
 1934-35....Jay N. "Ding" Darling  
 1935-46....Ira N. Gabrielson  
 1946-53....Albert M. Day  
 1953-57....John L. Farley  
 1957-64....Daniel H. Janzen  
 1964-70....John S. Gottschalk  
 1970-73....Spencer H. Smith  
 1973-81....Lynn A. Greenwalt  
 1981-85....Robert A. Jantzen  
 1986-89....Frank H. Dunkle  
 1989-93....John F. Turner  
 1993-96....Mollie Beattie  
 1996-97....John G. Rogers Jr., Acting  
 1997-2001.....Jamie Rappaport Clark  
 2002-2005....Steven A. Williams  
 2005-2009....H. Dale Hall  
 2009-2010....Sam Hamilton  
 2010-2017....Dan Ashe  
 2017...Jim Kurth (acting)  
 2017-2018..Greg Sheehan  
 (acting)  
 2018-2019..Margaret Everson  
 (acting)  
 2019-present..Aurelia Skipwith

Directors

1900-16....Theodore Sherman  
 Palmer  
 1916-26....George A. Lawyer  
 1926-34....H. P. Sheldon  
 1934-48....W. E. Crouch  
 1948-52....Jesse F. Thompson  
 1952-57....Joseph P. Linduska  
 1957-62....John D. Findlay  
 1962-67....Allan T. Studholme  
 1967-72....Charles H. Lawrence  
 1972-90....Clark R. Bavin  
 1991-96....John J. Doggett, III  
 1997-2007..Kevin R. Adams  
 2007-2011...Benito A. Perez  
 2011-2016...William C. Woody  
 2016-present...Edward Grace

Chiefs

1900-13...Inspector; Interstate  
 Commerce in Game  
 1913-18...Inspector, Migratory  
 Bird Law  
 1918-28...U.S. Game Warden  
 1928-34...U.S. Game Protector  
 1934-73...U.S. Game  
 Management Agent  
 1973-present..Special Agent  
 1975-present..Wildlife  
 Inspector  
 2003-present..Conservation  
 Law Enforcement Officers

Titles

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# Who We Are

## *Conservation and Enforcement*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the only agency in the Federal government that has the primary responsibility of the management of fish and wildlife through conservation, protection, and restoration of certain populations of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the American public. The Service enhances its conservation mission with its own federal law enforcement bureau — the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE). The OLE is the investigative arm of the Service tasked to investigate wildlife crimes, enforce wildlife laws, regulate wildlife trade, help Americans understand and obey wildlife protection laws, and work in partnership with international, state, and tribal counterparts to conserve wildlife resources.

It's our mission to protect wildlife and plant resources — through the effective enforcement of Federal laws, we contribute to the Service efforts to recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and promote international wildlife conservation. The OLE is responsible for enforcing the U.S. laws, regulations, and treaties that protect wildlife and plant resources. The OLE works to intercept smuggling and facilitate legal commerce in fish, wildlife, and plant resources by investigating wildlife crimes and monitoring the Nation's wildlife trade.

Special agents (SAs), wildlife inspectors (WIs), conservation law enforcement officers (CLEOs), intelligence analysts, and forensic scientists play a critical role in the discovery and successful prosecution of wildlife crimes, both in the U.S. and abroad. Special agents and CLEOs are federal law enforcement officers who carry firearms, make arrests, execute federal search warrants, and serve subpoenas. Special agent attachés are strategically placed in regional areas around the globe to assist with training, coordinating enforcement, expanding capacity, and to consult on the illegal wildlife trade. Uniformed CLEOs work on patrol throughout strategically chosen locations to enforce wildlife-related laws and enforcement.

The wildlife inspectors are our front line defense against wildlife trafficking and the seizure of injurious species before they enter the U.S. ports. In addition, they are tasked with processing shipments to identify and intercept illegal wildlife in trade before it enters the country or continues in transit.

Additional technical and administrative personnel professionals support the effort nationwide at the National Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory —the only lab in the world dedicated to crimes against wildlife. There, a state-of-the-art facility is staffed by highly trained scientists and technical specialists who provide forensic assistance with crime scene investigations, cause of death determinations, class character analysis (such as species identification or chemical analysis), and individualization analysis. This plays a crucial role in identifying, apprehending, prosecuting, and convicting individuals responsible for wildlife-related criminal offenses.

The OLE continues to work in partnership with the State Department, other Federal agencies, and foreign governments to disrupt transportation routes connected to the illegal wildlife trafficking supply chain. The Service remains committed to working in tandem with other nations to combat wildlife trafficking to halt the destruction of some of the world's most iconic species by stopping illicit trade; ensuring sustainable legal trade; reducing demand for illegal products; and providing technical assistance and grants to other nations to develop local enforcement capabilities.

The OLE is charged with the most critical mission of protecting and enhancing America's treasured fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. SAs, WIs and CLEOs work tirelessly to ensure the perpetuation of diverse and abundant wildlife because biodiversity is essential to maintaining the health of our environment, families and economy.



# 2019 Annual Report

## About This Report

The Annual Report (AR) provides the Office of Law Enforcement's (OLE) program activities, mission and performance, along with the framework of cases inventory and highlights of significant cases that OLE completed during fiscal year. The OLE's Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 AR demonstrates our commitment to transparency, wildlife conservation efforts worldwide, prevention of illegal exploitation of species, and provides a comprehensive perspective of the OLE's recent successes and activities in executing its mission.

## How This Report Is Organized

The FY 2019 AR provides a comprehensive report about the performance operations starting with a review of OLE's portfolio including its mission and goals. It communicates the accomplishments of OLE's global enforcement efforts in addressing transnational organized crime involving wildlife trafficking. The report provides performance information for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019. The Assistant Director of the OLE provides an introductory message to the report and an Executive Summary provides an overview of the information included in the five main sections of the report.

## Photos:

*Next Page: Section I Photo: Jackson, WY Elk Courtesy: USFWS*

*Section II Photo: Alaska Polar Bear and Cub. Courtesy: USFWS*

*Section III Photo: Bald Eagle. Courtesy: USFWS*

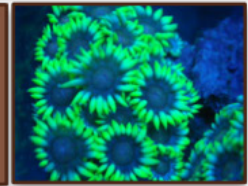
*Section IV Photo: Sumatran tiger, Courtesy: Frank Kohn-USFWS*

*Section V Photo: Clarion Angelfish, Courtesy: USFWS*



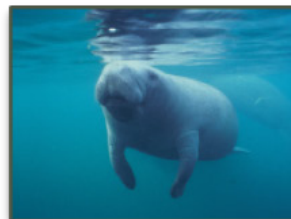
*Blanding's turtle can live up to 83 years. Courtesy, USFWS*

*Goniopora "Flower pot" Coral is commonly found in the Indian Ocean, Courtesy USFWS*



*Pieces of fraudulent Jewelry, Courtesy: USFWS*

*Mexican gray wolves are the smallest subspecies of grey wolf. Courtesy: USFWS*



*Florida Manatees are more closely related to the elephant than any other species, Courtesy: USFWS*

*African Elephant herds mainly consist of female elephants, Courtesy: USFWS*



*Living rock cacti are only found in the Big Bend region of the Chihuahuan Desert. Courtesy Al Barrus/USFWS*

*Polar Bears are the largest carnivore that lives on land. Courtesy: USFWS*





**Section I. Overview** This section presents an overview of the OLE's portfolio and program responsibilities. It summarizes OLE's history, mission, strategic goals, focus areas and organizational structure.



**Section II. Headquarters** This section describes the headquarter programs and summarizes their functions. Each program leads or supports OLE's frontline activities, provide resources, analysis, equipment, research, and policy development to ensure the frontline programs have tools and resources to accomplish OLE's mission.



**Section III. Investigative Activity** during FY 2019, the OLE investigation programs maintained a mission-driven, high-performing workforce and affirmed its commitment to investigative excellence, and provided investigative expertise and related support to potentially devastating threats to wildlife resources -- illegal trade, unlawful commercial exploitation, habitat destruction, and environmental contaminants.



**Section IV. Wildlife Inspector Program** This section highlights the Service's trade monitoring activities at U.S. ports, providing a front-line defense against illegal wildlife trade. Wildlife inspectors processed declared shipments, utilized intelligence to intercept wildlife contraband, conducted proactive enforcement operations to catch smugglers, in conjunction with other federal agencies; and worked with special agents to investigate businesses and individuals engaged in illegal wildlife trafficking.

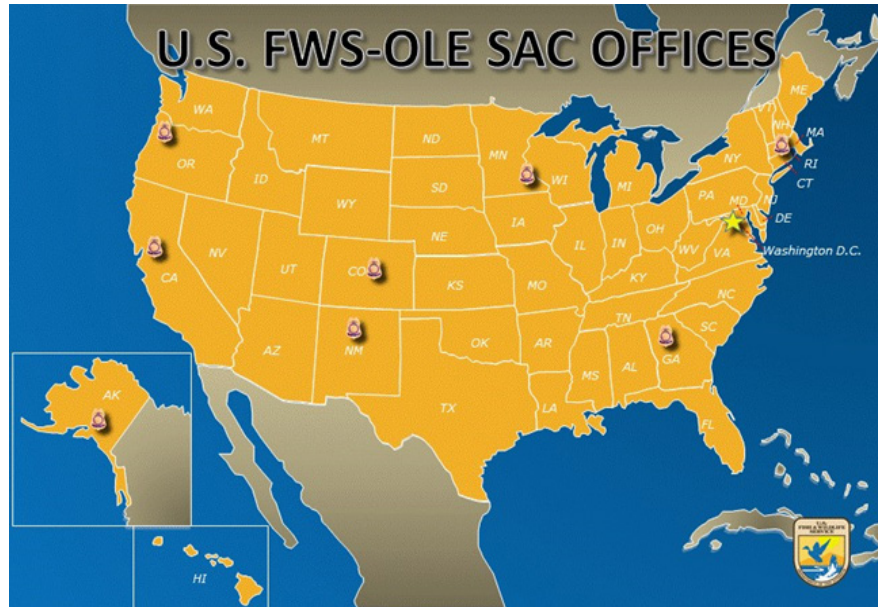


**Section V. Support to the Field** This section presents an overview of OLE's support of its frontline in the field through national policy guidance, professional training, and administrative and technical support. The program's state-of-the-art infrastructure also includes three special units that provide forensic analyses, high-tech investigative assistance, and intelligence gathering and analysis in support of Service wildlife crime investigations and wildlife inspection and smuggling interdiction operations.

# I. OVERVIEW

OLE operates at the international, national, regional, and local levels. At the international and national level, we provide program oversight, service support, policy, and guidance. At the regional and local levels our law enforcement professionals execute on-the-ground law investigations, wildlife inspections, and provide support to the frontline activities. Our special agents carry out investigations of wildlife trafficking to disrupt illegal trade and dismantle smuggling networks, among other responsibilities. With more than 495 employees we play a critical role in the interdiction and successful prosecution of wildlife crimes to fulfill our commitment to global wildlife conservation.

*Note Figure 1: FWS-OLE SAC Offices are located in the following cities: Portland, OR; Albuquerque, NM; Bloomington, MN; Atlanta, GA; Hadley, MA; Lakewood, CO; Anchorage, AK; Sacramento, CA. The Portland, OR office also includes other Pacific Islands not pictured. The Atlanta, GA office also includes Navassa Island, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands.*



**FIGURE 1. OLE SAC OFFICES**

## Mission

The mission of the OLE is to *protect* wildlife and plant resources through the *effective enforcement* of federal laws. By *working with* federal, state, tribal and foreign enforcement agencies and other conservation partners we help *recover* endangered species, conserve migratory birds, *preserve* wildlife habitat, *safeguard* fisheries, combat invasive species, and *promote* international wildlife conservation.



# Standing Watch — 119 Years of Federal Conservation Law Enforcement for our Nation!

## History



*FWS law enforcement, courtesy USFWS*

The Service has been dedicated to protecting wildlife for more than a century. Federal wildlife law enforcement celebrated its centennial in 2000 with the 100th anniversary of the Lacey Act (the Act),

which is the Nation's first federal wildlife protection law. The Act, as amended, prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken or possessed in violation of federal, state, tribal, or foreign laws. With these laws and treaties came the age of the "duck cop." A major focus of the USFWS during the Service's early years was policing waterfowl hunters and protecting waterfowl populations from commercial exploitation, as the American population grew rapidly.

During the middle of the century, however, increasing human pressures on populations and habitats of many animals began to take their toll. In 1940 special protections for bald eagles and then in 1962 golden eagles were put in place. During the 1960s further steps were taken to protect a broader range of endangered species. These measures culminated in the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

With these developments came new roles and responsibilities for Service law enforcement. From 1918 until the early 1970s, the word "game" consistently appeared in the job titles used for federal wildlife law enforcement officers. In 1973, however, the Service began calling its investigators "special agents." In 1975, the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) hired a biological technician to inspect wildlife shipments in New York - the beginning of a trade inspection force that would expand the following year to cover eight ports of entry. The opening of the world's first and only wildlife forensics laboratory in 1988 made science and technology an essential part of the Service's enforcement team.

The chronology located on each page traces the development of federal wildlife law enforcement and records major historical milestones for the protection of wildlife in the United States (US) and around the world.

## Chronology of Historic Events

**1900** – Lacey Act took effect as the first federal law protecting game; it prohibited the interstate shipment of illegally taken wildlife, and the importation of injurious species.

**1913** – Federal Migratory Bird Law became effective, the first migratory bird hunting regulations were adopted on October 1.

**1916** – US signed the Migratory Bird Treaty (MBT) with Great Britain (acting for Canada), recognizing migratory birds as an international resource.

**1918** - Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) became law, making it unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird, including feathers, parts, nests, and eggs of these birds.

**1920** - In *MI vs. Holland*, 252 U. S. 416, the US Supreme Courts (SCOTUS) upheld the constitutionality of the MBTA "establishing beyond question the supremacy of the federal treaty-making power as a source of authority for Federal wildlife regulation

**1926** - Black Bass Act (BBA) became law, making it illegal to transport in interstate commerce black bass taken, purchased, or sold in violation of state law.

**1934** - Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act became law, requiring all waterfowl hunters to possess a "Duck Stamp." Division of Game Management was created in the Bureau of Biological Survey (BBS, fka Div of Biological Survey), USDA, with responsibility for wildlife law enforcement (LE).

**1935** - Lacey Act was expanded to prohibit foreign commerce in illegally taken wildlife.

**1936** - US signed the MBT with Mexico.

**1939** - BBS and the Bureau of Fisheries, Department of Commerce (DOC), were transferred to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

**1940** - Bald Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) became law. BBS and the Bureau of Fisheries were combined to form the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), DOI.

**1951** - FWS expanded the program of enforcement and management for the protection of migratory waterfowl, transferring the personnel and funds of the Section of Waterfowl Management Inves. to the Branch of Game Management (BGM).

**1956** - FWS reorganized into the USFWS, consisting of a Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (BSFW) and a Bureau of Commercial Fisheries (BCF). Wildlife LE responsibilities were placed in the Branch of Management and Enforcement of the BSFW.

**1960** - An investigation revealed large-scale market-hunting of waterfowl, the MBTA was amended to include felony provisions for commercial activities.

**1962-** The BEPA became the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and extended protection to golden eagles.

**1970 -** The Endangered Species Conservation Act (ESA) of 1969 became effective, prohibiting the importation into the US of species “threatened with extinction worldwide.”  
The BCF was transferred to the DC and became the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

**1971 -** Airborne Hunting Act (AHA) signed into law.  
**1972 -** US signed the MBT with Japan. MBT with Mexico amended to protect additional species, including birds of prey.

**1972 -** The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 became law, establishing a moratorium on the taking and importing of marine mammals. The BGEPA was amended to increase penalties to \$5k or 1 year; and a 2nd conviction was punishable by a \$10k or 2 yrs. or both. The amendment allowed for informants to be rewarded with half NTE \$2,500.

The Division of Management and Enforcement was reorganized. Waterfowl management responsibilities were transferred to the Office of Migratory Bird Management and the Division of Management and Enforcement became the Division of Law Enforcement.

**1973 -** The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 became law. The ESA expanded the scope of prohibited activities to include not only importation, but also exportation, take, possession, and other activities involving illegally taken species, and interstate or foreign commercial activities. It implemented protection for a new “threatened” category - species likely to become in danger of extinction.

The field organization of the Division of Law Enforcement was restructured into 13 LE districts & conservation officers received the title special agent (SA).

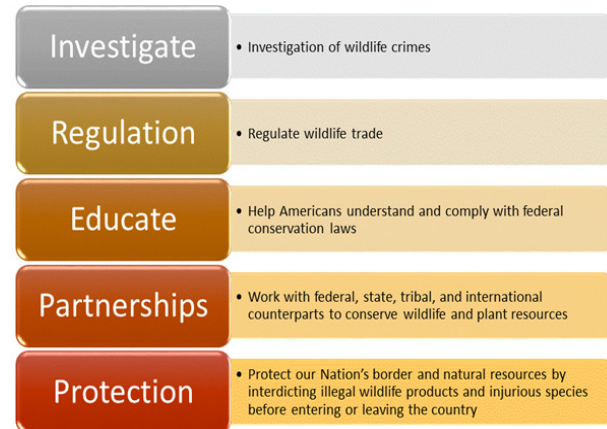
**1974 –** The BSFW became USFWS. The selection for the first Special Agents in Charge (SAC) and Assistant Special Agents in Charge (ASAC) under this organization was announced on February 21, 1974.

The Branch of Training and Inspection was created to provide law enforcement training to new SAs for the Service and graduated the first Special Agent Basic School cohort.

**1975 -** The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) went into effect, regulating the importation, exportation, and re-exportation of species listed on its three appendices. The 1st wildlife inspector was hired in NYC to inspect wildlife shipments.

## Focus

Five key focus areas have been selected as mission critical for completing each of our strategic goals



## Strategic Goals

In addition to our focus areas we have four strategic goals:

- Combat Global Wildlife Trafficking;
- Protect the Nation's fish, wildlife, and plants from unlawful; exploitation, industrial hazards, and habitat loss;
- Facilitate and expedite Legal Trade; and
- Enhance Management Accountability

## Authority and Laws Enforced

The OLE's law enforcement authority is derived from a number of federal wildlife statutes and from the implementation of selected international treaties. The Service has the statutory mandate and trust responsibility to fulfill its mission derived from the Nation's wildlife and plant protection laws.

We uphold the Nation's wildlife and plant protection laws, as well as enforce domestic wildlife laws. Since being tasked with enforcing the Lacey Act, in the early 1900's, our law enforcement mission has expanded to include: investigating wildlife crime, habitat destruction, and environmental contamination; and combating invasive conservation laws.

OLE primarily focuses on the enforcement of the following federal laws (see Appendix I for a brief description of these laws).

## **Applicable Laws, Acts, Orders, and Treaties**

Regulations - Title 50 Wildlife and Fisheries  
Captive Wildlife Safety Act Injurious Wildlife  
Law Digest: Resource Laws  
African Elephant Conservation Act  
Airborne Hunting Act  
Antarctic Conservation Act  
Archaeological Resources Protection Act  
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act  
Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife  
Trafficking Act  
Endangered Species Act  
Indian Arts and Crafts Act  
Lacey Act  
Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp  
Act  
Migratory Bird Treaty Act  
Marine Mammal Protection Act  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
Rhinceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1998  
Wild Bird Conservation Act  
Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal  
Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal  
Organizations and Preventing International  
Trafficking  
Treaties:  
Convention on International Trade in Endangered  
Species Treaty  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Canada  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Japan  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Mexico  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Russia

### **Treaties:**

Convention on International Trade in Endangered  
Species Treaty  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Canada  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Japan  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Mexico  
Migratory Bird Treaty - Russia

## **Budget and Organizational Structure**

The OLE FY 2019 enacted budget was \$79 million designated for the investigation of wildlife crimes and enforcement of wildlife laws. This amount was augmented with \$26,725,514 in user fee collections to help offset the cost of the wildlife inspection program.

OLE employs 495 professional staff serving in many administrative and investigative capacities. There are 215 special agents, 113 wildlife inspectors, 4 conservation law enforcement officers, 26 forensics laboratory staff, and 135 support staff who ensure that the individual component missions and the overarching Service goals are carried out. Our budget analysts, management and program analysts, administrative officers, executive secretaries and computer support professionals all work tirelessly behind the scenes to support the OLE mission.

**1976** - US signed the MBT with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.  
Wildlife inspectors were hired at 8 ports of entry to inspect wildlife- Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, Seattle, and Honolulu.

Branch of Special Operations was created to initiate long-term, covert, wildlife investigations.

Branch of Training and Inspection relocated to FLETC.

**1979**- SCOTUS in the case of *Andrus v. Allard*, upheld the prohibition on the sale of migratory bird feathers, regardless of whether they were obtained before federal protection took effect.  
The number of district offices was reduced to 12.

The Division of LE hired a police crime lab director to establish a forensics program for wildlife LE.

**1981** - BBA and Lacey Acts was repealed and replaced by the Lacey Act Amd, which restored protection for migratory birds, and introduced protection for plants.  
Lacey Act Amd. increased penalties & included a felony punishment scheme to target commercial violators and international traffickers, up to \$20k or 5 years imprisonment, or both.

Dallas-Fort Worth became a designated port for wildlife entering or leaving the US.

**1982** - ESA was amended to include a prohibition against taking plants on federal lands and a new exception allowing the inadvertent, non-commercial transshipment through the US of endangered fish or wildlife.  
The Div. of LE was reduced from 12 to 7 Dist. one for each region of the Service.

**1983** - The Service's Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) became operational.  
**1986** - SCOTUS in *Dwight Dion*, upheld the applicability of the Eagle Protection Act to Native Americans on reservations.

MBTA was amended to require that felony violations be "knowingly" committed.

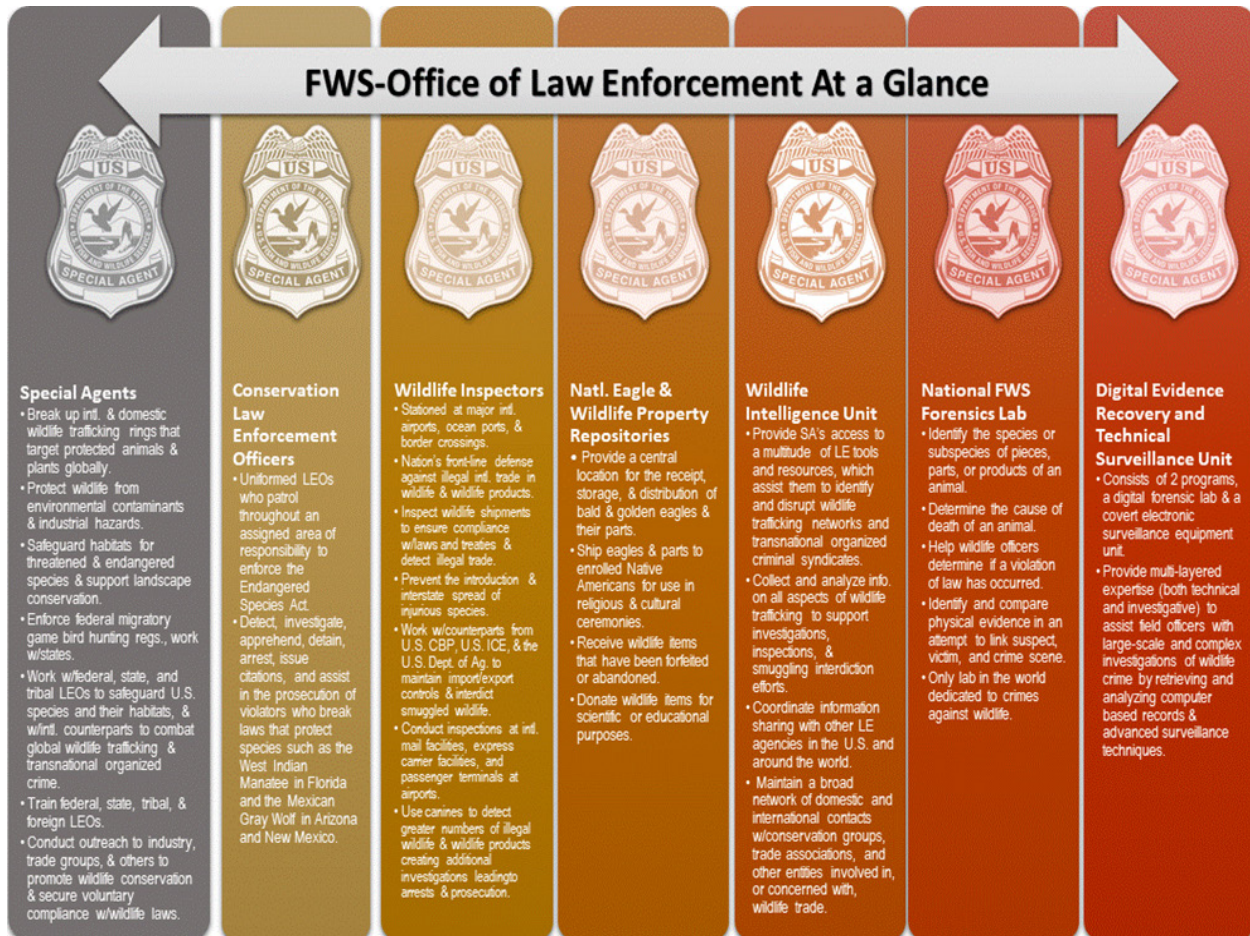
**1988** - African Elephant Conservation Act became law, providing additional protection for the species, whose numbers had declined by 50 percent in the last decade.

The Lacey Act was amended to include, among other things, felony provisions for commercial guiding violations.

**1989** - The Ntl. Fish and Wildlife Forensics LAB hailed as the only crime lab for wildlife in the world was dedicated in Oregon. In 1990 the Lab was renamed the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory his memory.



# Law Enforcement at a Glance



## Training

FWS-OLE's staff are the best trained and finest professionals in the world. Essential to effective performance as a criminal investigator, law enforcement officer, and an inspector is the requirement to attend a comprehensive and progressive formal training, which provides assurance that new practitioners are fully equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the environment in which they will operate. All OLE special agents and CLEOs begin their training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) located at Glynco, Georgia, which is dedicated to fostering the highest levels of professionalism and ethical behavior throughout the federal workforce.

In addition to their extensive initial training, special agents, CLEOs, and inspectors attend a yearly law enforcement refresher in-service training. During the week-long course, mandatory content includes a variety of topics designed to ensure all special agents and enforcement officers are maintaining required qualifications and have the most up-to-date case law review, legal requirements, policy information and current trends in wildlife commercialization.

### Becoming a Special Agent:

- 12 Weeks— FLETC Criminal Investigator Training Program or

- 6 Weeks— Department of the Interior Investigator Training Program

- 8 Weeks— FWS- OLE, Special Agent Basic School

- 1 year— Field Training

Becoming a Conservation Law Enforcement Officer:

- 16 Weeks— FLETC Land Management Police Training

- 3 Weeks— Federal Wildlife Officer Basic Training

- 10 Weeks— Field Training

Becoming a Wildlife Inspector

- 8 Weeks— FLETC Wildlife Inspector Basic School

## Special Agents and Field Investigations

The Service's investigation of wildlife trafficking disrupts and dismantles highly organized transnational smuggling networks engaged in illegal trade around the globe. Special agents with the Service's OLE are plainclothes criminal investigators who enforce Federal wildlife laws and investigate wildlife crimes across the U.S.

In 2014, with the support of the State Department, the Service created the first program for stationing regional wildlife law enforcement special agents at U.S. embassies as attachés, beginning in Bangkok, Thailand. In 2019, three attachés were added, OLE now has a total of twelve attachés stationed at U.S. embassies across the globe. Special agent attachés assist our international counterparts with wildlife crime investigations, training, and provide access to U.S. resources.

Descriptions of successful field investigations begin on page 24.



*Special agent releasing birds seized during an investigation, courtesy USFWS*

**1990** - Oregon became the 10th designated port of entry for the importation and exportation of wildlife.

The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 was enacted. It is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in the marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the US.

**1991** - The Forensics Lab developed and published an ID guide for Ivory and Ivory Substitute.

**1992** - Maryland, became the 11th designated port of entry for importation & exportation of wildlife.

The Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 was signed into law to address problems with the intl. trade in wild-caught birds-trade that contributed to the decline of species and featured unacceptably high mortality rates.

**1994** - Boston, MA became 12th designated port.

**1995** - The National Eagle and Wildlife Property Repository moved near Denver, Co.

The President establishes the International Law Enforcement Academics (ILEAs) to train international LE officials to reduce crime, combat terrorism, and share knowledge and resources.

**1996** - Atlanta, GA became a port for importing & exporting fish and wildlife shipments.

**1997** - The Div. of LE was removed from the supervision of the Assistant Director-Refuges and Wildlife to report instead directly to the Service Director. The Washington HQ office was renamed the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE).

The Forensics Lab was nationally accredited by under the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors' Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB). The Lab has continued its national accreditation now ISO-accredited by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board.

**1998** - The MBTA was amended to increase the penalty for hunting over bait and made placing bait a separate federal crime.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act was formalized to prohibit the import, export, or sale of any product, item, or substance containing, or labeled as containing, any substance derived from tiger and rhinoceros.

The Forensics Lab was designated the official crime lab of CITES and the Wildlife Working Group of INTERPOL. Treaties to this effect were signed at the headquarters of INTERPOL in Lyon, France, by the SEC of INTERPOL and SEC of CITES.

**2000** - A Service Reorg. established the position of Assistant Director (AD) for LE within the Directorate, providing executive level leadership for the agency's LE program.



**2002** - Anchorage, AK became a designated port for wildlife trade.

The Secretary of DOI mandated line authority for all SAs in the DOI.

Div. of LE was reorg. as the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) under the direction of an executive level chief.

Regional LE managers who previously reported to Service regional directors became SAs in charge (SAC) reporting directly to the AD/Chief, OLE.

OLE begins active intl. capacity building by participating at the ILEA in Botswana.

The Branch of Training and Inspection graduated the first criminal investigators cohort at the Special Agent Basic School.

The Forensics LAB developed training materials to instruct African wildlife rangers on how to investigate elephant and rhinoceros kill sites like human homicide crime scenes.

**2003** – The Repository underwent a renovation to add a large education room and additional office space for staff.

**2004** – Houston, TX; Louisville, KY; and Memphis, TN became ports of entry for importing and exporting wildlife shipment bringing the nation's total to 18 designated ports.

**2005** - Due to beluga sturgeon being critically endangered, importing caviar into the United States from the Caspian and Black Sea basins becomes illegal.

**2006** – A 17,000 square foot addition to the 23,000 square foot Forensics Laboratory was constructed to house modern wildlife pathology, genetics, and bio-safety III isolation labs, along with an escape-proof room for their flesh-eating dermestid beetles. The Forensics Laboratory director assisted the International Coral Reef Initiative in developing a program to apply land-based, CSI techniques to damaged coral reefs.

**2007** - The bald eagle is de-listed, but remains protected by the BGEPA & MBTA.

**2008** – The Lacey Act was amended to include a wider variety of prohibited plants and plant products, including products made from illegally logged woods.

**2009** – OLE initiated the Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit (DERTSU) to provide technical support to field agents in the critical areas of retrieval and analysis of computer-based records and the use of advanced surveillance techniques. DERTSU consists of two entities: a full-fledged digital forensic laboratory and a highly technical covert surveillance equipment program.

## **Wildlife Inspectors**

Wildlife inspectors oversee wildlife transiting through U.S. ports. As such, they are the Nation's front-line defense against the illegal wildlife trade — a criminal enterprise that threatens species worldwide. These professional import-export control officers ensure that wildlife shipments comply with U.S. and international wildlife protection laws.

Stationed at the Nation's major international airports, ocean ports, and border crossings, wildlife inspectors monitor an annual trade worth more than \$4 billion. They stop illegal shipments, intercept smuggled wildlife and wildlife products, and help the United States fulfill its commitment to global wildlife conservation. Detailed information about the Service's Wildlife Inspection Program begins on page 30.

## **Conservation Law Enforcement Officers**

Conservation Law Enforcement Officers (CLEOs) are uniformed officers who patrol throughout an assigned area of responsibility to enforce the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Some of the duties include detecting, investigating, apprehending, detaining, arresting, issuing citations, and assisting in the prosecution of violators who break laws that protect species such as the West Indian manatee in Florida and the Mexican gray wolf in Arizona and New Mexico. Other duties may include assisting special agents, wildlife inspectors, state conservation or wildlife officers, and other law enforcement officers with investigations, surveillance, and warrant executions.





## II. Headquarters

The OLE Headquarters (HQ) is located in Falls Church, Virginia. It provides national leadership, policy development, planning and analysis, and technical administration and support. It acts as a liaison with other federal law enforcement agencies, and drafts and reviews federal regulations. The following are general descriptions of each OLE HQ program.

### Office of the Assistant Director

The Assistant Director, also known as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer is the top ranking officer of the OLE whose responsibilities include planning, developing, and directing all matters pertaining to investigations and law enforcement throughout the Service. The Assistant Director serves as the Director's principal advisor on all OLE law enforcement activity.

### Special Operations Division

The Special Operations Division (SOD) was created in 2011 to consolidate HQ's field operations under one special agent in charge in order to best streamline and focus the work. It is comprised of five distinctly different, highly functioning conservation law enforcement units. The Special Investigations Unit which conducts complex, large-scale criminal investigations of wildlife traffickers (See page 18 for more information). The International Operations Unit, which is comprised of senior special agent wildlife law enforcement attachés globally, is stationed at U.S. embassies to provide the OLE's expertise to international conservation law enforcement counterparts (See page 22 for more information). The Intelligence Unit provides analytical support to criminal investigations and liaises with other law enforcement organizations in the Federal Government's intelligence community (See page 39 for more information). The Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Surveillance Unit provides state-of-the-art digital evidence collection and technical investigative equipment support to the agents in the field (See page 39 for more information). The Branch of Training and Inspection provides training to domestic and international conservation law enforcement officers who conduct wildlife-focused criminal investigations (See page 40 for more information).

### Investigations Unit

Supervised by a special agent in charge, the Investigations Unit is responsible for ensuring that Service law enforcement policies and procedures are followed nationwide and responds to public and media inquiries on a national level.

Senior special agents, senior wildlife inspectors, enforcement specialists, and a writer-editor staff the unit. The unit supports the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the OLE on a number of high-level functions. These functions include the

**2010** – OLE's first multi-district, multi-office investigations were created- Operation Crash, initiated due to the increase of intl. smuggling of rhinoceros horn & elephant ivory & the other in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

**2011** – Operation Crash connected transnational organized crime to wildlife crime. Special Operations Division (SOD) was created and ultimately comprised the following 5 conservation LE units: the Special Investigations Unit (formally the Branch of Special Operations), International Operations Unit, Intelligence Unit, DERTSU, and the Branch of Training and Inspection.

**2012** – The Service and the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) signed MOA, "to facilitate the cooperation of the two agencies" to conduct Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) criminal investigations. Three Conservation LE Officers (CLEOs) were hired by the OLE specifically to protect the endangered West Indian manatee- to patrol the vast water ways of Florida, enforcing ESA.

The Forensics Laboratory (LAB) director created a Wildlife Crime Scene Investigation Manual for the Wildlife Working Group of INTERPOL.

The LAB developed a revolutionary new procedure to ID the species source of kiln-dried wood planks utilizing a newly invented Direct Analysis in Real Time (DART) mass spectrometer to analyze oil molecules found in wood.

The OLE assigned an SA to investigate IACA criminal activity.

**2013** – POTUS signed EO 13648: "Combating Wildlife Trafficking, "which established a Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking co-chaired by the DOI (led by Service), Department of State, and the DOJ. Est. the Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking and directed the Federal Government to strengthen enforcement and prosecution, reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife, and expand international cooperation, commitment, and public-private partnerships. Wildlife Inspection Canine Teams (WICTs) were created. Canines were trained to detect common wildlife scents and teamed with a wildlife inspector handler to intercept difficult to discover wildlife and wildlife products. 4 WICTs were placed at Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; Louisville, KY; & Miami, FL.

Service conducted its 1st Ivory Crush at the Repository. 6 tons of ivory was pulverized, which had been seized by the OLE over a 25-year span. At the time, it was the single most reported-on public event in the Service's history.

**2014** – The Presidential Admin. published the Ntl. Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking. It established guiding principles and strategic priorities for U.S. efforts to stem illegal trade in wildlife, and positioned the US to exercise leadership in addressing a serious and urgent conservation and global security threats. It also called for strengthening the enforcement of laws and international agreements that protect wildlife while reducing demand for illegal wildlife and wildlife products.

POTUS signed EO 13659: Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses that dictated the introduction of and necessary migration to the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)/International Trade Data System (ITDS), or "Single Window." The goals are to enable improved enforcement of our nation's laws at the border, and to make cross-border trade easier, faster, and more cost effective.

OLE created the International Operations Unit and the first USFWS attaché at the U.S. embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

The first class of the National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy graduated at the Service's NCTC. The Service co-created this yearly academy with the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (NACLEC).

OLE placed an intel analyst at the U.S. CBP Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center.

**2015** – U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, Implementation Plan was written. It identified specific steps and measurable goals for federal agencies to implement the objectives under each priority in the National Strategy.

3 SAs attachés were stationed as at U.S. Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Gaborone, Botswana; and Lima Peru.

The Service conducted its second Ivory Crush in Times Square, New York City, New York. Over one ton of illegal ivory was crushed in the heart of the city to an international crowd of spectators.

Three solicitors were stationed at HQ to support the OLE as legal counsel on issues such as administrative forfeiture, civil penalties, requests to prosecute, litigation support, and the drafting and legal review of regulations and policy.

**2016** – Congress passed the bipartisan END Wildlife Trafficking Act, which codified the Task Force, National Strategy, and Implementation Plan.

Service's obligations under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) are followed. Developing program-wide, internal policy; responding to congressional inquiries; writing and publishing public notices to the Federal Record; functioning as a liaison with other programs within the Service; producing or approving all written correspondence for public dissemination; and coordinating the deployment of special agents for natural disaster responses. The unit also serves as the liaison for the International Trade Data System and the Automated Commercial Environment (an electronic database of wildlife imports) with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and communicates with foreign counterparts on behalf of the OLE.

### **Law Enforcement Management Information System**

The OLE developed the Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS), which is an interactive, real-time database designed to assist staff in managing their duties and to provide automated control of wildlife permits and trade statistics.

### **Branch of Planning and Analysis**

The Branch of Planning and Analysis is responsible for a wide range of activities pertaining to administrative matters such as budget formulation and execution, workload and funding, monitoring of expenditures, and Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act responses on a national level. It also provides guidance to the regional offices concerning budget and staffing, and serves as the liaison to the OLE for all human resources and contracting functions.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory**

The National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Lab) opened in September 1988 in Ashland, Oregon. This unique facility provides species-specific identification of wildlife parts and products to assist OLE and individual state and foreign governments in establishing evidence of criminal activities. (See page 38 for additional information about this facility.)

### **Communications and Public Outreach**

OLE publicizes the results of major investigations to help deter wildlife crime. Other public awareness initiatives include creating airport displays; donating forfeited property for educational purposes to federal agencies, museums, and conservation organizations; developing brochures and fact sheets; and working with the media in press and television coverage of the Service's enforcement efforts.

In order to reach specific groups, including customs brokers, taxidermists, hunters, importers and exporters, and conservation group members, the Service holds public and professional meetings, gives presentations, and attends outreach events to disseminate information about laws and regulations.

# III. Investigative Activity

The Service believes that the effectiveness of its law enforcement effort can be maximized by directing its attention on the illegal commercialization of wildlife. Accordingly, the Service has utilized covert investigations to identify violators who are involved in sophisticated activities that would escape detection by traditional overt methods. By apprehending such violators, the Service hopes to deter large-scale illegal operations and believes the value of law enforcement successes preserve wildlife through the deterrent it creates.

In addition to conducting investigations, Service special agents are occasionally called upon to assist other federal law enforcement agencies in providing law enforcement and security support. This occurred in FY 2019, when, due to the historic flooding caused by hurricanes in North Carolina and Florida, OLE special agents and conservation law enforcement officers worked alongside of non-law enforcement rescue crews both in boats and on land. They helped anyone and everyone who needed assistance.

## Special Investigations Unit Investigations

In 2019 the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) agents teamed up with FWS Attaches to disrupt one of the largest ivory and rhinoceros horn trafficking syndicates in Africa. Operation Manhattan Project (OMP), was a complex undercover investigation focused on dismantling the Moazu Kromah Network (“Network”) that operated in Africa.

In early 2019, the investigation revealed the Network was offering approximately 92 kilograms of rhino horn for sale with an estimated value of approximately \$1.6 million USD (Africa price). The investigation showed that Amara Cherif, a key member of the Network was actively involved in supervising the collection, consolidation and anticipated shipment of an additional four (4) tons of elephant ivory from Malawi to Malaysia. Undercover efforts also identified co-conspirators allegedly connected to a Chinese network that operated in Malawi and Zambia.

During that time, agents traveled to Kenya to meet with official who had investigated a separate smuggling scheme. Several suspects were collecting and transporting elephant ivory and rhino horn hidden in tealeaves shipments from the Port of Mombasa to Laos and Vietnam. Evidence indicated the Network might have directed these smuggling efforts. The Kenya case involved approximately seven (7) tons of ivory seized in three containers in Thailand and Singapore in 2015 with a reported value at \$13 million USD.

The agents uncovered a wildlife trafficking scheme to utilize air cargo and sea container routes from Mozambique, Kenya and the Democratic Republic

**2016-** The Service finalized regulations to strengthen ESA trade prohibitions in African elephant ivory, with exemptions for antiques and items containing small amounts of ivory. An attaché was stationed in Beijing, China & Libreville, Gabon.

Four WICTs were added & stationed at Anchorage, AK; Honolulu, HI; Houston, TX; and San Juan, PR.

A judge ordered proceeds of illicit activity seized during Operation Crash directed to fund wildlife projects in Africa via the Service’s Rhino Tiger Conservation Fund. Thanks in part to these funds, five baby black rhinos have been born at the Sera Wildlife Conservancy.

The Service and WildAid implemented a U.S. consumer education and awareness campaign to benefit wildlife conservation by reducing demand for illegal wildlife and wildlife products.

San Diego Zoo Global, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, WildAid, & U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance, the OLE conducted a public burn of illegal rhinoceros horn.

A formal Intelligence Unit was created- as wildlife trafficking continued to expand, the need was recognized; however, intelligence had been an integral part of the OLE for decades.

The Service created a musical instrument certificate (passport) to ease the paperwork burden on musicians internationally traveling with musical instruments made from CITES-listed species. The passport program facilitates the frequent non-commercial, cross-border movement of musical instruments for purposes including, but not limited to personal use, performance, display, and competition with the issuance of just one document.

OLE Deputy Asst. Director & team who worked Operation Crash, were awarded 2016 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal, People’s Choice Award presented by the Partnership for Public Service -referred to as the “Sammie” is considered the “Oscar” for excellence in government service.

The Service revised section 4(d) ESA 1973 to increase protection for African elephants in response to the alarming rise in poaching to fuel the growing illegal trade in elephant ivory. The rule created a near-complete ban on commercial trade in elephant ivory, but still allows for the non-commercial movement of ivory to occur for certain items such as museum specimens, musical instruments containing antique ivory, antiques, and other movement that benefit elephant conservation



**2016-** With the NACLE Chiefs, the Service created the International Conservation Chiefs Academy and the first cohort graduated at the Service's training center in West Virginia. Branch of Training and Inspection began instructing the Wildlife Trafficking Investigator Program at all of the ILEAs, expanding to 8 ILEA intl. training missions per year.

OLE placed an intel analyst at the U.S. CBP National Targeting Center.

**2017** -President Trump signed E.O. 13773 "Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking on Transnational Organized Crime." It directed federal LE to take actions including, to strengthen enforcement of federal law in order to thwart transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations, and "to ensure that Federal law enforcement agencies give a high priority and devote sufficient resources to efforts to identify, interdict, disrupt, and dismantle transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations."

President Trump signed E.O. 13777, "Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda," which directed the Federal Government to, "lower regulatory burdens on the American people."

DOI Solicitor's Office issued its revised interpretation of the MBTA's prohibition on the take of migratory bird species "the take of a migratory bird, its nest, or eggs that is incidental to another lawful activity does not violate the act, and the act's criminal provisions do not apply to those activities."

An attaché was hired in Mexico City, Mexico.

The Service implemented the "eLicense" system to ease the paperwork burden on an importer and exporter of wildlife

A CLEO is hired & assigned to patrol the Mexican gray wolf range in NM and AZ.

2018 U.S. Congress directed the OLE to perform an in-depth study on the Wildlife Inspection Program. OLE was to, "conduct an analysis of potential options for increasing the capacity of the wildlife port inspection program...it should include a detailed explanation of the existing program and potential options for enhancing the program."

The Botswana attaché was reassigned to Pretoria, South Africa.

OLE placed 2 intel analysts at the DOJ, International Organized Crime Intelligence & Operations Center's Fusion Center to work with analysts and SAs from 12 other agencies in support to cases involving transnational organized crime, including wildlife.

of the Congo, involving several tons of ivory and thousands of kilograms of rhinoceros horn being smuggled to Laos and Vietnam from 2012-2017. Principal transporters and buyers linked to the Network were identified in Malaysia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. As a result, agents began tirelessly to plan investigative efforts targeting the transporter and buyer networks, by leveraging relationships with foreign counterparts and trusted non-governmental organizations.

On May 7, 2019, Amara Cherif, Moazu Kromah, Mansur Surur and Abdi Ahmed, key members of the Network were indicted in the Southern District



*June 2019 Uganda police force expulsion/arrest meeting, courtesy USFWS*

of NY (SDNY), charged together and in part with five felony counts – conspiracy to traffic in wildlife, Lacey Act, money laundering conspiracy and narcotics conspiracy. In June, a small team of SIU agents and Attache's traveled to Africa to meet with U.S. Embassy staff as well as U.S. and foreign government officials to plan

for the arrest of these Network targets. Operations were planned in Kenya, Senegal and Uganda and agents remained in Africa to assist with the arrests.

On June 7, 2019, Amara Cherif was the first Network target arrested in Dakar, Senegal, following a lure to meet an informant and receive a down payment for stockpiling a four (4) ton elephant ivory shipment destined for Malaysia. Cherif is now awaiting extradition to the U.S. In Kenya, Network targets learned of the Cherif arrest earlier that day and evaded apprehension. These subjects are currently considered fugitives and efforts to arrest continue. A fifth Network defendant was charged in SDNY for narcotics conspiracy and currently awaits extradition to the U.S.

The crowning moment of the operation was on June 12, 2019, when Moazu Kromah was arrested in Kampala, Uganda, and expelled from Uganda after the dismissal of a pending criminal case by the Uganda Director of Public Prosecution and deportation order by the Minister of Internal Affairs. In a historical first, FWS agents were present at the time of expulsion and took immediate custody of Kromah. The agents transported the subject from Kampala, Uganda to White Plains, New York aboard a private charter jet that arrived in the early morning hours of June 13, 2019.



June 2019 entry into the united states, courtesy USFWS

Following the arrest of Kromah, multiple arrests and seizures took place in Kampala at the direction of the Uganda Police Force, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Natural Resource Conservation Network and OLE at Kromah's residences and business, resulting in seizure of numerous electronic devices that have since been imaged by OLE DERTSU. Arrests of persons at these locations resulted in identification of co-conspirators in the Kromah Africa network and the USFWS is assisting Ugandan counterparts with pending cases.

Throughout this past year, OMP culminated a two-year undercover effort in Uganda, Kenya and Guinea, resulting in historic extraterritorial arrests by the OLE in large part due to the diligence and persistence of the FWS Attaché in Tanzania, SA Sam Friberg, and the relationships he forged during his tenure with a multitude of stakeholders tasked with combating wildlife trafficking and other transnational crimes in East Africa. OMP employed other formidable and significant deterrent measures such as the Patriot Act and U.S. Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Assets Control to further identify money-laundering schemes to include trade-based money laundering and administer economic sanctions on subjects and entities that threaten national security and foreign policy of the U.S., respectively. OMP is ramping up efforts to continue investigative efforts in Africa and Southeast Asia to disrupt, dismantle and deter high-level criminal syndicate members.

The SIU continued to work with the prosecution of two members of the Rathkeale Rovers crime syndicate based in Ireland came to conclusion in 2019 after the remaining defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced following extradition to the United States.

**2018-** The Branch of Training and Inspection (BTI) began a 1st joint training mission with U.S. CBP, instructing the Wildlife Border Inspection Training Program (WBITP) at the ILEAs, expanding to 11 ILEA international training missions per year. In conjunction with the WBITP, the BTI conducted its first ever international port inspections. The BTI facilitated 2 International Conservation Chief's Academies per year.

The BTI began offering country specific training to support Service attachés. This expanded the OLE international training efforts to 19 missions per year.

BTI partnered with the DOJ Environmental and Natural Resource Division and began offering the Wildlife Trafficking Executive Symposium at the ILEA Roswell, NM. This program is the highest level of instruction the Service offers.

The Forensics LAB constructed a 14,000 Morphology Center addition to house and preserve the Lab's more than 60,000 collection of 'known' comparison standards (e.g. hides, furs, skulls, bones, teeth, claws, etc.).

The Forensics LAB disproved the myth (responsible for causing the deaths of tens of thousands of pangolins) that pangolin scales contain tramadol, a narcotic pain reliever. These research results were broadcast internationally to help protect this critically endangered species.

**2019-** The OLE creates its first Wildlife Interdiction Team, consisting of Wildlife Inspectors from around the country dedicated to detecting, identifying, and intercepting illegal wildlife smuggled into and out of the United States. The OLE expanded its Intelligence Unit to include the hiring of dedicated Intelligence Analysts both at headquarters and stationed in the field.

New Attachés were positioned in Vietnam and Kenya and a liaison was hired with AFRICOM.







*Libation cup, courtesy usfws national fish & wildlife forensics lab.*

documentation indicating the libation cup originated from the United States. Through information provided to FWS by the London Metropolitan Police Arts and Antiquities Unit, Service special agents traced the purchase of the libation cup to a North Carolina auction house where video footage was obtained showing the two Rathkeale Rovers and a U.S. citizen from Miami, Florida, bidding on and ultimately purchasing the libation cup. The subsequent investigation further revealed the U.S. citizen was a victim in the illegal scheme, having been coerced to sell her luxury car in order to pay the total purchase price for the libation cup of \$57,500. The libation cup was shipped from North Carolina to Miami, Florida, and then smuggled out of the United States in the luggage of one of the defendants on his return trip to the United Kingdom.

After the defendant who smuggled the libation cup into the United Kingdom was arrested, the victim and the second defendant created a false auction invoice that reflected the purchase price of the libation cup as \$500.00 in an attempt to have the seized libation cup returned. Through a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), the libation cup was exported to the United States where it was submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory for analysis. The libation cup was identified as originating from an Indian

The lengthy FWS investigation was initiated in 2012 after one of the defendants was arrested in the United Kingdom attempting to sell a rhinoceros horn libation cup to an Asian buyer. The defendant was found with \$200,000 in cash and

rhinoceros, an endangered species.

The defendants were both indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Miami, Florida, in 2014 for (1) Conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act and Endangered Species Act and (2) Smuggling. One of the defendants was also charged with a third count of Obstruction of Justice. Interpol Red Notices were soon issued for their arrest.

One defendant was provisionally arrested in Austria in January 2016; however, extradition was denied because no similar Austrian wildlife law existed, due in part to the lack of a CITES specific violation included in the U.S. indictment. The defendant was released from custody in Austria in March 2016.

In January 2017, as a result of the still active Red Notice, the same defendant was again arrested, this time in Brussels, Belgium. Belgium granted extradition to the United States in July 2017, and the defendant later pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida (Miami). He was sentenced to 18 months in prison, with credit for time in custody since his arrest and detention in Belgium. The defendant was deported upon his release in August 2018.

The second defendant was arrested in the United Kingdom in 2018 for extradition to the United States one month after being released from half of a five and a half year prison sentence resulting from a conviction for his role in museum thefts across the United Kingdom of rhinoceros horns and artifacts valued at \$83 million. The defendant was previously convicted in the United Kingdom with twelve co-defendants who are all members of the Rathkeale Rovers. The defendant fought extradition but was ultimately brought to the United States in August 2019 and later pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 14 months in prison. The defendant will be deported upon released.



*White Rhinoceros, courtesy USFWS*



## International Operations Unit Investigations

In 2019, the International Operations Unit (IOU) continued to expand to include two additional Attaches to be stationed in Hanoi, Vietnam and Nairobi, Kenya, one Liaison to be stationed at the U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) in Germany, a Senior Program Analyst and Senior Program Consultant stationed at Headquarters, three Foreign Service National Investigators stationed in Mexico, Peru and Thailand, and two Technical Advisors stationed in Thailand and Gabon. The two advisors will oversee the Wildlife Vetted and Wildlife Crimes Units in those areas. These Units, funded by the U.S. Department of State (DoS), Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), consist of wildlife law enforcement personnel who are vetted, trained and equipped to target transnational organized criminal groups involved in wildlife trafficking.



*USFWS attaché training with local investigator; courtesy USFWS*

As always, the number one objective of the Attaché program is conducting and supporting wildlife trafficking investigations. Other objectives are: supporting host governments in transnational wildlife investigations; assisting in leveraging U.S. government assets in counter wildlife trafficking efforts and assisting in regional capacity building. Attachés also extensively foster intelligence sharing and investigative support between affected nations. The Attaché program provides vital access to Service resources such as the National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory (NFWFL) and the Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit (DERTSU). Also, the Liaison position stationed at AFRICOM will increase and solidify our engagement with the U.S. intelligence community and enhance information gathering and sharing.

### *Investigations:*

**Killifish Correios:** Service Attaché assigned to Brazil participated in search warrants and interviews conducted by Polícia Federal and lead environmental agency, IBAMA in Belo Horizonte, Brazil as part of a transnational investigation involving the smuggling of rare and endemic fish protected under

Brazil's Plano de Ação Nacional para a Conservação dos Peixes Rivulídeos Ameaçados de Extinção e Lei de Crimes Ambientais (endangered species law). Simultaneous interviews of four U.S. Subjects were conducted by Service Agents in Regions 1, 2, 3 and 5. The Brazilian Polícia Federal Attaché stationed in Washington D.C. participated in the interview of one of the Subjects in Region 5, which resulted in admissions of Smuggling and violations of the U.S. Lacey Act and the production of evidence which directly assisted Polícia Federal in their investigation. The investigation and cooperation in this case is ongoing and will serve as a model for future transnational Counter Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) efforts.



*Attachés work with foreign investigators to combat wildlife trafficking, courtesy USFWS*

**Op Eel-Licit:** In August 2018, Canada, the European Union and the United States participated in the first iteration of Operation 'Eel-Licit' Trade, and international enforcement operation focused on the global illegal trade in European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) a species protected under Appendix II of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Since the time of the initial operation, several additional CITES Parties (countries), including but not limited to: the Republic of South Korea, Japan, Australia, Russian Federation and Vietnam have been identified as significant importers or transit points in the global eel meat trade. In 2019, continued contacts by Service Attaché stationed in Beijing with Japan Customs, Japan Ministry of Health, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Attaché in Beijing, the USDA Attaché in Tokyo, and the NOAA Tokyo office on the illegal antibiotics issues that surfaced during Op Eel-licit.

**Op Kevagate:** February 2019, Gabonese officials discovered huge quantities of Kevazingo (CITES II, banned from export) at Chinese-owned storage facilities in the main shipping port of Libreville. Almost 5,000 cubic meters of timber were seized which is worth approximately \$8 million. Several arrests were made in concert with the operation. While under seizure, 353 of the containers went

“missing.” Approximately 200 were later found in Gabon but the rest had all been loaded and were en-route to or had already arrived at foreign ports. As a result of the scandal, approximately a dozen government officials were removed from office, including the Vice President and Minister of Forests, who have been implicated. The primary subject associated with the Chinese timber company was not arrested, however. Service Attaches worked together with the Gabonese government, industry partners and the United for Wildlife transportation taskforce to identify and locate the containers which had been shipped out illegally. Approximately 100 containers were detained at four different ports worldwide for inspection and further investigation. In Hong Kong, Customs officers inspected and sampled the timber from several of the containers for examination by the USFWS National Wildlife Forensic Lab. The Lab was able to identify the samples to species in many cases and provide that information back to the Attachés for follow-up with their host nation partners.



*Attachés work inspecting eel shipments during operation eel-licit, courtesy USFWS*

#### *Training and Conferences:*

The Service Attaché stationed in Tanzania continues training efforts in Tanzania and Uganda during the Modified Wildlife Crime Scene Investigations (MCSI) training. There were a total of six (6) courses in 2019. Along with the Attaché, the training was conducted by Branch of Training and Inspection (BTI) staff, current and retired Service Agents. Funding for the training was provided by DoS, Peace Keeping Operations (PKO).

The Service Attaché stationed in Brazil co-lead the 30th Meeting of the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG) in Singapore at the Interpol Global Complex November 18-22, 2019. The Service was represented by four Service Attachés, the IOU Desk Agent, SAC of SIU and Region 4 Regional Supervisory Wildlife Inspector. There were 45 countries represented at the meeting to include law enforcement, civil society and academia.



*USFWS attachés continually work with the development and administration of training to many foreign counterparts, including participants of the wildlife crime scene investigation modified course. Courtesy USFWS*



### *International Visitors Program:*

December 2019, three Thai officials visited Washington, DC for a meeting with OLE, OIA, DoS INL and a tour of the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. The Thai officials included two senior enforcement officers from the Department of National Parks, Division of Wild Fauna and Flora Enforcement, and a wildlife prosecutor from the Thai Attorney General's Chamber. This visit was very successful and the Program will continue to grow with other international counterparts being asked to visit.

### **Field Investigations**

Service special agents conducted many investigations into the illegal trafficking, smuggling, poaching, and commercialization of wildlife and plants. These cases required tedious attention to detail and the dedication of countless hours to surveillance, undercover work, records analysis, and the coordination with other districts and agencies. Throughout 2019, the OLE completed numerous investigations, performed proactive law enforcement activities, and provided assistance to disaster stricken areas throughout the United States. The following are examples of the diverse wildlife related cases the OLE has been involved in during 2019.

### **Wildlife Trafficking Investigations**

*(Bloomington, Indiana SAC Office)*

Between October 7, 2015 and November 27, 2018, a joint undercover investigation with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources into the illegal commercialization of paddlefish resulted in one violator being sentenced to two years in federal prison. The undercover operation named Operation Charlie involved law enforcement professionals from four states and took several years to complete in support of paddlefish conservation.

On November 27, 2018, an individual of English, Indiana, was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Indianapolis. A felon from past wildlife trafficking crimes, this defendant was found guilty on one count of possession of a firearm and one count of violating the Lacey Act for wildlife trafficking. This defendant was sentenced to serve 24 months in federal prison on each count and will be allowed to serve the sentence concurrently, three years of supervised release on each count to be served concurrently, restitution of \$1,000 to Indiana Department of Natural Resources, pay \$200 assessment fee and perform 240 hours of community service within five years. At the time of sentencing, the defendant was remanded immediately into the custody of the U.S. Marshal Service.

The defendant was also ordered to forfeit 7 firearms found in his residence and business during the execution of federal search warrants, including a sawed off shotgun and a stolen handgun. The defendant forfeited all paddlefish meat and caviar, as well as his boat and trailer, which were used in the illegal commercial fishing operation. Following his prison sentence, this defendant will be barred from paddlefish harvesting and caviar processing

operations for three years as a condition of his probation.

Other agencies heavily involved in this investigation included Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Additional businesses and subjects continue to be in the prosecution phase of this investigation



*Paddlefish and flathead catfish taken in an illegal net on the Ohio river, courtesy Indiana DNR.*



## Plant Trafficking Investigations

*OLE Albuquerque, New Mexico SAC Office*

On June 11, 2019, Operation Desert Snowball investigated two (2) German citizens who were photographing cacti near Douglas, Arizona. At the time, the two individuals showed a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Wildlife Officer (FWO) an envelope that had in it what appeared to be cactus seeds. The envelope contained bags with cactus seeds and information on location and scientific names. The two subjects had a previous interaction with law enforcement related to cactus and were familiar with laws regarding exportation of cactus from the U.S. The cactus seeds that the subjects possessed are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna, Flora (CITES), and listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

On June 25, 2019, one of the individuals was arrested at the Denver International Airport. A box containing 111 envelopes with numerous cactus seeds were found in his luggage. During an interview, the defendant admitted that he knew it was wrong to take the seeds and that he deliberately put the wrong scientific name on the envelope containing the seeds to conceal their identity. The defendant said he planned to grow the seeds, keep some seedlings for his collection, and advertise the rest of the seedlings on an online cactus forum to sell.

On July 9, 2019, the defendant pleaded guilty to one (1) misdemeanor violation of the ESA and was fined \$5,000 with time served for the day he spent in jail. A portion of the fine amount (\$3,750) was payable to the USFWS Lacey Act Reward Account and the remaining \$1,250 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to be applied towards cactus preservation programs.



*Barrel cacti, courtesy NPS*

*OLE Sacramento, California SAC Office* Between October 2014 and August 2018, a Southern Nevada resident stole, and directed others to steal for him, in excess of 500 federally protected cacti plants from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Arizona, then sold the stolen cacti through the Internet to more than 20 countries throughout the world.

On April 29, 2019, the subject, who had previously pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, theft of government property, smuggling cacti from the United States, and Lacey Act false labeling charges was sentenced to 24 months imprisonment to be followed by three years of supervised release, and was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$22,655.00 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The court further ordered the forfeiture of two pistols, two rifles, magazines, ammunition, and all seized cacti.

## Smuggling Investigations

*OLE Portland, Oregon SAC Office*

On July 24, 2019, a Florida couple was indicted on charges of conspiracy and trafficking in protected wildlife smuggled from Indonesia to the U.S. and reselling the wildlife from their Florida home. Approximately three hundred sixty-nine wildlife articles from their home were seized during the execution of a search warrant in January 2017. The indictment alleges that beginning in 2011, the subjects sold wildlife on eBay from their Indonesian home to buyers across the world. They would smuggle the items to purchasers in the U.S. in packages falsely labeled to conceal their contents. The subjects further continued to sell wildlife after they moved to Puerto Rico and ultimately Florida in 2013. All of the wildlife was protected by CITES. From 2011 to 2017, the subjects made approximately four thousands five hundred ninety-six online sales of CITES-protected wildlife worth about \$211,212. This investigation was part of Operation Global Reach, a long-term taskforce into the flow of illegal

wildlife from Indonesia to the U.S. On January 14, 2020, the subjects each plead guilty to one felony count of Lacey Act Trafficking for knowingly selling and offering for sale in interstate commerce, protected Indonesian wildlife that was taken, possessed, and transported in violation of federal law.

*OLE Sacramento, California SAC Office*

On May 31, 2019, a former U.S. Border Patrol Agent was sentenced in federal court to 30 months in prison for conspiring to distribute a controlled substance that is used to make deadly fentanyl, and 24 months for conspiring to smuggle CITES protected sea cucumber. Under the wildlife conspiracy charge, the subject had paid other individuals to smuggle bags of dried sea cucumber (*Isostichopus fuscus*) into the United States from Mexico on at least 80 occasions between 2014 and 2016, with an estimated total value in excess of \$250,000. The defendant was also ordered to pay \$5400.00 in restitution to CONAPESCA in Mexico.

*OLE Hadley, Massachusetts SAC Office*

Between 2016 and 2019, Operation Sound of Silence uncovered a criminal scheme to smuggle CITES protected water monitor lizards from the Philippines into the United States. These smuggled lizards were taken from the wild in the Philippines, smuggled into the US inside electronics equipment, and then sold to buyers within the U.S. The U.S. importers paid approximately \$250 per lizard and would sell them, falsely claimed as captive raised, for \$2,500 each. The investigation identified three Philippine suppliers, ten U.S. buyers and documented over 30 shipments containing live, smuggled water monitor lizards. As a result of the investigation, two suppliers in the Philippines were arrested and received prison terms and fines. Seven U.S. buyers were charged and received prison terms, probation, community service and fines.

Special agents also conducted Operation Common Denominator (OCD), during which a US turtle trafficker received an indictment on six felony counts, including smuggling, Lacey Act trafficking and false labeling of native turtles. The defendant plead guilty to one count of Lacey Act False Labeling, received a sentence in August 2019 of six months incarceration, six months house arrest and ordered to pay \$250,000 in restitution to the State of New Jersey. The undercover operations documented multiple purchases of adult female and hatchling turtles as well as hundreds of interstate sales, including ten shipments smuggled into Canada

A Chinese national residing in China and suspected ringleader of the illegal turtle syndicate, was indicted on one count of International money laundering in January 2019 and later on eight felony counts of smuggling. In January 2019, the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) arrested the defendant when he traveled to Malaysia for vacation. The defendant is currently in Malaysian custody exhausting the appeal process of his extradition to the United States.

Another Chinese citizen attending college on a student visa at the Pennsylvania State University was investigated for fraudulently and knowingly exporting 17 Endangered Gulf Coast box turtles to China in November 2017, via the US mail. Agents identified 70 different shipments sent from the



*Dried sea cucumbers seized at the Mexican border, courtesy USFWS*



*Monitor lizards smuggled in speakers, courtesy USFWS*

defendant to Hong Kong. Each shipment contained an average of five turtles. The shipments were sent from approximately ten US Post Office locations. The defendant attempted to ship from post office locations without surveillance systems. Special agents learned the defendant received \$700 - \$800 per shipment from the Hong Kong organizer. The defendant pled guilty to one count of 18 USC § 554(a), smuggling goods from the US in shipments totaling approximately \$200,000. In January 2020, the defendant received a one year and one day jail sentence and will serve one year of supervised probation upon release.



*Diamondback terrapins repatriated to the wild, courtesy USFWS*



### *OLE Atlanta, Georgia SAC Office*

A joint investigation involving Service Special Agents along with U.S. Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation targeting a transnational organized crime syndicate based in South Florida led to the arrest and conviction of the organizations' ring leader. This syndicate operated multiple businesses, supporting the trafficking of large volumes of reptiles, complex cybercrime and money laundering. During the course of the investigation it was determined the organization recruited individuals to participate as mules in the money laundering scheme, many of whom were women he met through his pornography/adult film business. The group was responsible for laundering approximately \$3.5 million dollars. The ringleader was convicted in the Southern District of Florida for Lacey Act violations and Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering resulting in a five year federal prison sentence.

### *OLE Atlanta, Georgia SAC Office*

The Southern Surge Task Force (SSTF) was formed to combat international trafficking in turtle species native to the United States and associated Federal crimes. This team of special agents and intelligence analysts continues to advance multiple high level investigations focused on disrupting transnational organized crime syndicates illegally acquiring species from the wild, subsequently smuggling them internationally with primary destination countries in Asia. The SSTF in cooperation with other Federal and state partners has leveraged an intelligence focused approach to identify trafficking organizations and smuggling routes has so far dismantled and exposed eight criminal enterprises resulting in multiple arrests and convictions in Federal court districts with additional prosecutions underway.

### **Illegal Hunting and Poaching Investigations**

#### *OLE Denver, Colorado SAC Office*

On June 17, 2019, an individual was sentenced for trafficking in over 500 pounds of unlawfully collected antlers in violation of the Lacey Act. The antlers were collected from federal lands in Wyoming with a retail value of over \$7,000. The defendant, is the owner of a company which sells dog chews made out of antler pieces.

The defendant had been unlawfully entering the National Elk Refuge and the Bridger-Teton National Forest prior to May 1, 2016, during winter closures and collecting shed elk antlers. The unlawful entry into these closures impacts wintering wildlife stressed by the rigors of rough Wyoming winters and it cheats many people hoping for a fair chance at finding shed antlers during the legal antler collection season. Protection of these winter ranges is a very high priority of the Wyoming Fish and Game Department.

The defendant's sentencing included five years of unsupervised probation; five year loss of hunting privileges worldwide; a five year ban from the



*Entrance sign at the National Elk Refuge, courtesy USFWS*

National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and Yellowstone National Park; and he was ordered to pay restitution of \$15,000 to Wyoming Fish and Game Department.

This investigation was multi-agency investigation with the Service (OLE & Refuges), U.S. Forest Service and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

#### *OLE Denver, Colorado SAC Office*

A multi-year joint undercover investigation focused on commercial hunts by an outfitter of Broken Bow, Nebraska. Agents from the Service worked in conjunction with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) in the investigation. The investigation uncovered more than 321 violations related to the unlawful take of various species of big game and wild turkeys.

Between 2012 and 2017 the outfitter owners, guides, and clients unlawfully killed at least 120 animals, which included 37 white-tailed deer; 43 mule deer, 6 pronghorn, 32 wild turkeys, a black bear, a jackrabbit, and a badger. Clients and guides from at least 21 states transported virtually all of the unlawfully taken wildlife in interstate commerce. Guided hunts ranged in cost from \$1,500 to \$7,000 depending upon the species hunted. The investigation also revealed an outfitter owner and guides unlawfully shot and killed at least 106 non-game migratory birds such as red-tailed hawks and American kestrels.

The outfitter established and maintained a network of at least 68 baited hunting locations in violation Nebraska state law. The company used electronic game cameras in order to locate, identify, and name the targeted deer. This allowed the client to kill a specific trophy-sized deer and to maximize their hunting client's success rate. One of the owners developed and utilized a proprietary deer supplement throughout the unlawful baiting operations and attempted to commercialize the product using the tradenames "Hard Rack Candy" and "PrimeTime" The outfitter acquired no less



than 115,378 pounds of deer bait products or components for use at bait sites between 2013 and 2017. Law enforcement surveillance operations and subsequent interviews of numerous clients and guides revealed 50-80% of all the outfitter archery and rifle white-tailed deer clients unlawfully killed their deer within baited areas during their hunts between 2013 and 2017.

Clients were encouraged by the outfitter to take wildlife such as mule deer within the Mule Deer Conservation Area where numerous state violations occurred. The investigation revealed the outfitter guides and clients unlawfully killed at least 45 mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn and wild turkeys by using a .17 caliber rifle, two different .223 caliber rifles, a custom-made .300 caliber rifle and a .308 caliber semi-automatic rifle, each equipped with suppressors, during the respective archery and muzzleloader hunting seasons.

During the investigation the primary operator and co-owner was on federal probation for previous Lacey Act convictions that restricted the co-owner from hunting, fishing, or trapping except while guiding paying clients. Probation also restricted the co-owner from carrying a gun or bow or otherwise hunting or fishing himself.

Twenty-four (24) defendants have pleaded guilty and ordered to pay a total of \$151,398 in fines and restitution. The business and four owners or guides are currently pending change of plea or sentencing hearings. Three guides, an owner, and the business have entered into plea agreements involving forfeiture of weapons, paying fines and restitution in the amount \$405,875, and five to 15 years of hunting restriction each. Additional terms of fine and incarceration is to be determined upon sentencing.



*Various firearms confiscated, courtesy USFWS*

## **Endangered Species Act Investigations**

*OLE Portland, Oregon SAC Office*

On August 19, 2019, in the District of Oregon, an Oregon resident pleaded guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for shooting a gray wolf (*Canis lupus*). In October 2016, the subject shot at a gray wolf from forty yards using a rifle and scope as the wolf was walking away from the subject in the Fremont-Winema National Forest. The subject failed to locate the wolf. Afterward, the subject made statements to others in his hunting party regarding his encounter with a wolf, which led law enforcement to investigate. Based on GPS data from the collared wolf, investigators found the adult female gray wolf known as “OR 28”, which had died from a single gunshot wound. Under a deferred prosecution agreement, the subject will submit to one year of supervised release, pay restitution of \$2,500 to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, not hunt any wildlife for a period of one year, and perform one hundred hours of community service. If the subject complies with these conditions, the subject will be allowed to withdraw his guilty plea and the government will move to dismiss the charge. This case was investigated by the OLE and the Oregon State Police.



*Gray wolf 28, courtesy of USFWS.*

*OLE Bloomington, Indiana SAC Office*

In 2013, the Duluth, Minnesota, special agent began an investigation into the selling of walrus ivory. During the course of the investigation the special agent was able to sell some walrus ivory to a Minneapolis, Minnesota area man. In 2015, special agents and Federal wildlife officers executed a search warrant at the home of the ivory buyer. During the execution of the search warrant, special agents learned the ivory buyer had purchased a southern white rhino half mount, which included the actual rhino horns, the previous summer. The mount was purchased from a criminal defense attorney in Las Vegas Nevada for approximately \$6,500. Special agents also discovered a “transfer of ownership” document the attorney had authored which falsely characterized the sale as “Not for purposes of sale but an in-kind donation of property....” Special

agents seized the mount and document and began an investigation into the Las Vegas attorney.

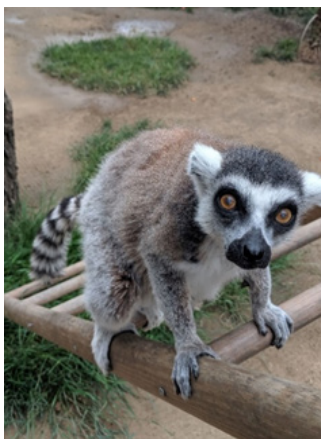
A series of interviews were conducted with the subject, during which time he denied committing any illegal activity related to the sale of the rhino mount.

An Environmental and Natural Resource Division Attorney and the St. Paul Resident Agent in Charge ultimately met with the attorney's defense team and provided a reverse proffer. They explained their client committed a felony Lacey Act False Records violation and that the fair market value of the rhino was at least \$435,500. The amount was calculated base on the weight of the rhino horn on the mount which was 17.42 lbs and the current black market value of rhino horn @ \$25,000 per lb.

In order to avoid felony prosecution the Las Vegas attorney agreed to accept a plea. The attorney was sentenced in late 2019 to a misdemeanor violation of the Endangered Species Act. He was fined \$25,000 fine, placed on two years of probation, and ordered to perform 40 hours of community service.

#### *OLE Sacramento, California SAC Office*

On May 20, 2019, a man who had broken into the Santa Ana Zoo and stole North America's oldest-living ring-tailed lemur in captivity (32-years old), agreed to plead guilty to one misdemeanor count of unlawfully taking an endangered species. In July 2018, the then unknown intruder had used bolt cutters to open enclosures and release a group of capuchin monkeys and ring-tailed lemurs at the zoo. In March 2019, following months of dead-end leads, a local federal/state task force working unrelated burglaries in the area discovered evidence stored on a cell phone related to the theft of the ring-tailed lemur. OLE further coordinated with the joint-task force, ultimately leading to the subject's identity who professed he had broken into the zoo with the intention of taking a monkey for a pet,



*North America's Oldest-Living Ring-Tailed Lemur  
Courtesy Of Santa Ana Zoo*

but he couldn't get any of the monkeys to go with him, so he took the lemur. The subject was sentenced in federal court to three months of imprisonment, one year probation, and ordered to pay nearly \$8,500.00 in restitution to victims in the case for violating the Endangered Species Act.

#### **Undercover Investigations**

##### *OLE Anchorage, Alaska SAC Office*

After over a year of covert investigation, on March 21, 2018, the former owner of a gift shop, located in Anchorage, Alaska, was indicted on felony and misdemeanor counts for violations of the IACA and the MMPA, respectively. There were more than 450 ivory and bone carvings fraudulently represented as Alaskan Native carvings in his store, when in fact, he carved the items himself. These items were on display, being offered for sale. The store owner sold additional items to undercover agents. Further, the subject illegally bought and sold contemporary Marine mammal parts, including a walrus oosik and a polar bear skull. On September 13, 2019, the former store owner pleaded guilty to a felony violation of the IACA for misrepresenting Indian produced goods and one misdemeanor MMPA violation. Pursuant to the plea agreement, he agreed to forfeit the 450 items that he carved (mostly from marine mammal products). The items had an estimated retail value of \$125,000. (Sentencing was initially scheduled for December 11, 2019, but has been postponed until the end of March 2020)



*Ivory carvings, courtesy of USFWS*



## Marine Mammal Protection Act Investigations

*OLE Anchorage, Alaska SAC Office*

In May, 2019, Fairbanks special agents received a report that a polar bear had been dumped on the burn pile at the landfill in Kaktovik, Alaska. Kaktovik is a remote village in the far northeast corner of Alaska. It is located on a barrier island and is home to about 250 people. Travel to and from the village is difficult due to weather conditions and limited flights (the only way in and out of the village). The investigation showed a Kaktovik man shot the polar bear in December, 2018 outside his house and left it to waste. The man, an Alaska Native, was allowed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to take polar bears, provided the take was not wasteful. Despite repeated opportunities to salvage the bear, the man did not do so. The bear became covered in snow over the winter. In May, 2019, after the snow thawed, the man had the bear carcass taken to the local landfill where it was partially burned. In December, 2019, the man pleaded guilty to violation of the MMPA. In February, 2020, the man was sentenced in federal court in Fairbanks, Alaska to 3 months in prison, a \$4500 fine, and one year supervised release during which he cannot hunt marine mammals, with the exception of bowhead whales.



*Polar Bear Remains At Kaktovik Village Dump, Courtesy of USFWS*

## Cooperative Investigations

*OLE Sacramento, California SAC Office*

In April 2016, one of our Northern California field offices received a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) request from Alberta Fish and Wildlife (AFW) seeking evidence of illegal hunting activity undertaken by a Canadian guide and his associates as well as potential illegal hunting activities by several U.S. citizens. Due to the investigative work of special agents, AFW was able to move their case forward against three Canadian citizens. In April 2019, those citizens received the following sentences: \$10,000 fine and 2 year suspension of recreational hunting privileges; \$9,000 fine and 3 year suspension of recreational hunting privileges; while the hunting guide received 6 months in prison, forfeiture of all items seized, \$8,970 fine, and 14 year suspension of commercial and recreational hunting privileges. The defendants were found guilty of both provincial and federal violations.

## Indian Arts and Crafts Board Support

In addition to enforcing laws that protect fish, wildlife, and plants, the OLE investigates criminals who violate the IACA. The OLE has dedicated two special agents, in the Southwest Region, whose work ultimately leads to the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of those who fraudulently produce or sell counterfeit American Indian and Alaskan Native (Indian) art and craftwork.

In 1935, the U.S. Congress established the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB), DOI, to promote Indian economic development through the expansion of the Indian art market. In 1990, the IACA was passed by Congress to counteract the growing sales of counterfeit Indian art. It is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits the misrepresentation in the marketing of Indian art products, as Indian made, within the U.S. and protects authentic Indian artists from unfair competition caused by counterfeit Indian artwork. The law covers all Indian and Indian-style traditional and contemporary art produced after 1935 and expanded the powers of the IACB. In 2012, the OLE signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the IACB to conduct IACA criminal investigations.

Indians throughout the U.S. depend solely, or in large part, on their artwork as their source of income. Without the oversight of the IACB and the OLE's investigative efforts, the marketplace would be flooded with cheap counterfeit items and there would be little or no market for Indians to sell their authentic hand-made products. Counterfeit Indian art negatively affects legitimate Indian artists, businesses, tribes, and economies; impacts Indian cultural and historical practices; and swindles the consumer. If this illegal activity is not policed, Indian artists will not be able to afford to create their art, which will result in the decline of Indian tradition, culture, and authentic art.



*Native American Regalia, courtesy USFWS*



The Service's role in Indian art counterfeiting schemes is to investigate violations of "the misrepresentation of Indian produced goods and products." Other federal statutes are also investigated such as identity theft, mail fraud, wire fraud, smuggling, and money laundering. The OLE was selected to investigate these crimes because both entities have similar objectives such as enforcing commerce laws and regulations, and protecting consumers from purchasing illegal products.

Since the OLE began enforcing the IACA, investigations have been extensive and crimes have been documented in states such as Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas; and in countries such as China, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand. The OLE investigates retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, counterfeiters, and smugglers who fraudulently produce and sell counterfeit Indian arts and crafts and investigation results are impressive.

OLE investigations have revealed that counterfeit Indian art networks use specialized hubs, across the nation, to distribute and market fraudulent Indian artwork. These illegal trade routes have evolved parallel to the hubs of production and distribution of legitimate Indian goods. Operating through complex webs of middlemen, perpetrators use the sales of counterfeit Indian art to undercut reputable competitors and investigations have shown that the illegal profit may be more than 200% over the cost it takes to create the counterfeit items. With these profits, the perpetrators take over reputable businesses and distribution channels to embed their operations, and their counterfeit products, in the Indian art industry. The millions of dollars that counterfeit Indian art networks generate each year support organized crime networks in the U.S. and are funneled to overseas operations.



*Examples of jewelry seized by iacb special agents, courtesy USFWS*

## IV. Wildlife Inspector Program

The Service relies on the ESA and the Lacey Act as the primary domestic legislation to regulate U.S. wildlife imports and exports. These acts direct responsibility to the Service, through the DOI, for the regulation of imported and exported fish and wildlife. CITES is the major international agreement for the regulation of trade in wildlife and plants and in the U.S., CITES is implemented through the ESA.

The Service has a broad range of programs to enforce the provisions of the ESA, the Lacey Act, and CITES. These include the designation of specific ports of entry for wildlife, the staffing of these ports with wildlife inspectors to monitor wildlife shipments, the licensing of commercial wildlife importers and exporters, the development of a national computer system to analyze importation and exportation data, and the use of international intelligence to monitor wildlife trade.



*Wildlife inspectors work side by side with their K9 partners, courtesy of USFWS*

Since the early 1970s, the Service has designated certain ports of entry for the importation and the exportation of wildlife. The concept of designated ports provides a funneling mechanism that consolidates wildlife shipments to a few specific locations in order to provide efficient service and reduce the cost to the public. The Service selects its designated ports based upon total cargo and wildlife traffic, and geographical diversity. In addition, the Service recognized that under certain circumstances, it would be necessary to allow importers to use other ports for scientific purposes, or to alleviate economic hardship and minimize deterioration or loss. For these reasons, the Service created a Designated Port Exemption Permit.

In 1975, the Service assigned the first wildlife inspectors at designated ports to inspect and clear importations of wildlife. Prior to that time, special agents handled all import and export clearance duties in addition to their other responsibilities. By creating a staff of wildlife inspectors, the Service has developed full-time experts to address a specific need.

The Service periodically reviews the port system, and the number of wildlife inspectors, to ensure it is adequate and providing the best service to the U.S. public. Originally, the Service designated eight ports of entry for wildlife shipments and had a staff of 32 wildlife inspectors stationed at these ports. As the wildlife trade increased, staff and the number of wildlife ports of entry and exit needed to increase too. In 1985, as a result of a Congressional budget

initiative, the Service increased the staff from 36 to 56 inspectors. At the end of 2018, the Service had approximately 125 wildlife inspectors stationed at 38 U.S. ports of entry.

The total estimated number of wildlife shipments has risen from around 45,000 (with a declared value of \$500 million) in 1980 to over 190,000 shipments (with a declared value of more than \$4.8 billion) in 2018. This is a significant increase: shipments of wildlife and wildlife products have increased by about 328 percent and the declared value of the shipments has increased by 860 percent.

Considering the small size of its law enforcement force, the Service is making important strides in intercepting illegal wildlife imports and exports. In 2018, a House Omnibus Appropriations Bill provided, “a \$2,000,000 increase for wildlife inspectors at ports currently without personnel, in order to deter illegal activities and to ensure that legal trade is not significantly slowed because of lack of Service personnel.” In addition, the U.S. Congress directed the OLE to perform an in-depth study on the Wildlife Inspection Program. Specifically, the OLE was to, “conduct an analysis of potential options for increasing the capacity of the wildlife port inspection program...it should include a detailed explanation of the existing program and potential options for enhancing the program.” An internationally recognized professional services company was awarded the contract and created three recommendation reports, which are being evaluated.



*USFWS wildlife inspectors work together with Customs and Border Protection Officers to intercept illegal shark fins, Courtesy USFWS*



### One-government Approach at the Border

Wildlife inspectors are our nation's frontline force to protect our country from illegal natural resources either entering or leaving the United States. They work side-by-side with officers from other federal agencies such as CBP, DOS, USPS, APHIS, and the DOJ to provide a "one-government" approach to import and export businesses.

CBP is the primary agency responsible for inspection and clearance of all goods imported into the United States. Before CBP officers will clear a shipment at designated ports, they refer each wildlife shipment to Service wildlife inspectors for inspection and clearance. At ports that do not have Service wildlife inspectors, CBP officers either clear wildlife shipments directly, take other appropriate action, or contact a Service wildlife inspector for guidance.

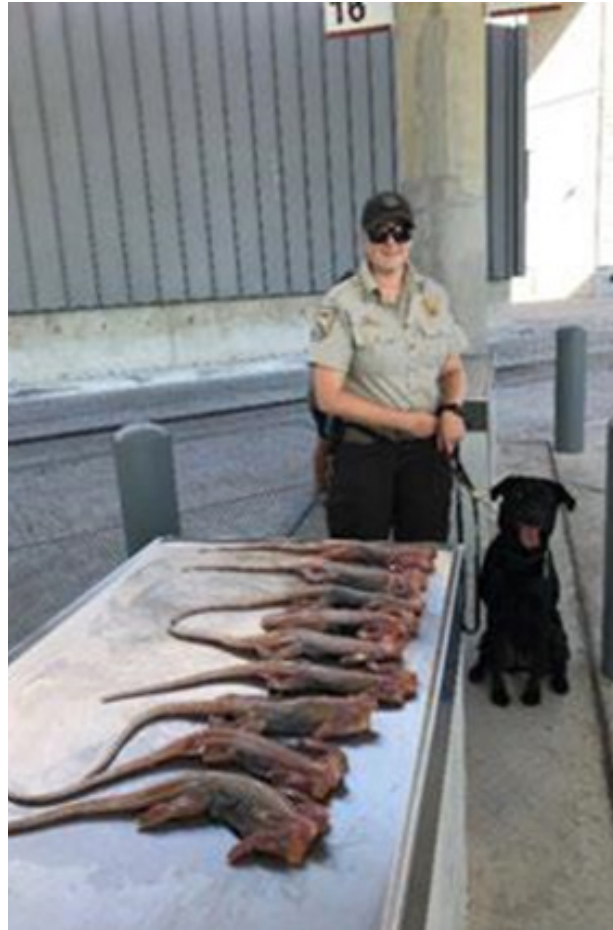
In addition, the Service works closely with USDA, and APHIS to ensure that all birds and certain mammals are quarantined prior to entering the United States. Service wildlife inspectors must coordinate inspections of these shipments with the USDA to ensure that wildlife laws, as well as quarantine laws, are properly enforced and that protection goals are being achieved. These laws must be enforced in order to prevent the spread of disease such as bird flu and Newcastle disease, which is a contagious and fatal illness that attacks the nervous system of birds. If allowed into the U.S., such bird diseases could severely impact the U.S. poultry industry.

It is also necessary for the Service to communicate with foreign governments to coordinate the enforcement of CITES and Lacey Act violations predicated on foreign wildlife laws. While the Service has the authority to communicate directly with other CITES management authorities, it may become necessary to route communications through official diplomatic channels. In these circumstances, the DOS has been extremely helpful and cooperative.

### Duties

Wildlife inspector duties include the examination of a shipment's documents, physical inspection of the contents of shipments, proper handling of seized property, and the administrative duties associated with the inspection, clearance, or seizure of wildlife imports and exports. In addition, they staff special enforcement task forces that conduct inspection blitzes at international mail processing facilities and other locations, or target specific enforcement problems, such as the import and sale of medicinal products made from endangered species. Outreach is also an important part of the job. Wildlife inspectors meet with customs brokers, trade associations, international travelers, and hunters to explain wildlife import and export rules and regulations. They are popular guest speakers at schools, nature centers, community conservation programs, and environmental fairs.

In addition to facilitating the legal trade, wildlife inspectors routinely examine shipments for smuggled wildlife and scrutinize paperwork for fraudulent trafficking schemes. Once an item is thought to be illegal, they dig deeper to uncover smuggling methods used to traffic a myriad of wildlife and plants. Daily, they work with the Service's forensic laboratory, intelligence unit, special agents, and their international counterparts to facilitate the legal wildlife trade and combat the illegal wildlife trade, which is commonly referred to as wildlife trafficking.



*WIs Beck and Allie with nine non-declared skinned iguanas, courtesy USFWS*

## Wildlife Trafficking

The legal wildlife trade, and the world's natural resources, will continue to thrive only if international laws, regulations, and treaties are followed and enforced. The Service monitors and regulates the legal wildlife trade to ensure the sustainability of these natural resources. However, there is a worldwide criminal element to wildlife and billions are illegally traded on the black market. Due to this high illicit trade, many of the world's wildlife and plants are poached from the wild, smuggled internationally, and sold for profit. This black market is jeopardizing the legal trade and causing many species to become threatened, endangered, or extinct.



*Blaine, WA wildlife inspectors, courtesy of USFWS*

The following seizure cases illustrate the level of detail and sophistication that wildlife inspectors provide. These examples represent only a fraction of the work performed by wildlife inspectors in 2019 and

highlight illegal activity from every continent except Antarctica. No matter the location in the U.S., Service wildlife inspectors encounter illegal activity involving items from beauty products to live, and sometimes venomous, animals.

A wildlife inspector in Blaine, Washington, discovered that two subjects had unlawfully exported two commercial shipments of live wildlife to Canada from the U.S. The shipments contained a variety of reptiles, amphibians, and insects, totaling ninety-five animals consisting of twenty different species. Several of the animals were CITES listed species, however, no CITES permit accompanied either shipments. The wildlife inspector determined that the subjects purchased the wildlife from suppliers in the U.S. for delivery to a parcel service facility in Sumas, Washington. The subjects then drove across the border from Canada to retrieve the shipments and transported the shipments for export in their vehicle. The subjects did not possess a USFWS import/export license or CITES permits for the export of the wildlife. In addition, the subjects failed to declare and obtain clearance from USFWS prior to export. A violation notice was issued to the subjects for export without clearance.

In September 2019, wildlife inspectors conducted Operation EL VALLE at the Laredo Port of Entry that included inspections at the World Trade International (WTI) Bridge and the Lincoln-Juarez International Bridge #2. During the operation, Houston Wildlife Inspector Beck and K-9 Allie inspected approximately 1,500 packages and assisted with the inspection of 100 passenger vehicles and 25 passenger buses. Other inspection totals include 175 UPS packages from Mexico and 13 commercial imports inspections were conducted at the WTI Bridge. Nine non-declared dead/skinned iguanas, one export of deer hair, and a small piece of white tail deer antler were seized from inspections performed at the Lincoln-Juarez International Bridge #2.

This investigation documented the attempted export, via International Express Mail by Yoodong LEE of Madison, Wisconsin, to South Korea of live Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) I cacti in violation of CITES permit and Endangered Species Act (ESA) declaration requirements. A total of twenty six (26)

separate packages containing a total of two hundred and fifty seven (257) live CITES cacti were seized and transferred to a US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Special Agent for further investigation.



*Inspection of eel fillet shipments, courtesy USFWS*

During the summer of 2019, a wildlife inspector in the Port of Newark inspected a large shipment of wildlife imported from Peru by a local U.S. insects and oddities company. The importer had an extensive knowledge of wildlife import/export processes and a history of previous wildlife violations documented by the Service. The wildlife inspector noticed numerous issues with the paperwork and upon the initial physical inspection, wildlife inspectors uncovered several undeclared species of butterflies (Lepidoptera spp.). The shipment, with a declared value of \$58k consisting of 46 boxes and over 2,850 glass frames of butterflies and insects, was detained for further investigation and species identification. It should be noted that lepidopteran species are considered crucial environmental indicators, and integral pollinators. Current research indicates that the trade in butterfly specimens for commercial purposes is largely responsible for the global decline of several species; the ramifications of which have the potential to cause widespread harm to critical habitats and the protected species who rely on them.

Wildlife inspectors spent four months working with lepidopteran experts from the American History Museum, researching, identifying, cataloging and counting the various butterfly and insect species. The inspection revealed the shipment contained over 13,700 butterflies from over 150 different species including specimens of *Prepona praeneste buckelyana*, a CITES III protected species. The importer had provided documents listing significantly fewer species and quantities, as well as a Peruvian export permit declaring that all of the animals to be of Peru origin.

The wildlife inspectors extensive cataloging found that many of the Peruvian origin species were indeed not listed on the export permit which is required under Peru wildlife regulations. Additionally,



numerous species were found to be endemic to other continents and countries, some of which included Australia, Malaysia, West Africa, Europe and India. Many of the countries represented in the collection require collection permits and, as the animals were all presumed wild caught, this indicated a massive spread of negative conservation impact and butterfly “laundering” throughout the globe.

Unlawful shipments of this magnitude highlight the issue of both ecommerce and the complexity of the framed insect trade. Illicit importers rely on the complexity of knowledge, time, and research that is required to fully inspect such complex commercial shipments, as a means to overwhelm ports into clearing shipments with misinformation. The shipment was seized in violation of the ESA, Lacey Act, CITES and foreign laws. The case WI worked with both the importer and their legal representation to secure a full abandonment of the shipment. The items are being transferred to the American History Museum who will be working with the Service to incorporate the butterflies and Service WIP wildlife trade conservation mission into a new exhibit scheduled to open in 2022.



*Shark fins seized by wildlife inspectors, courtesy USFWS*

In June 2019, Anchorage wildlife inspectors seized approximately 1200 pounds of shark fins transiting the Port of Anchorage from Mexico destined for Hong Kong. The declared value of the shark fins was listed as \$5000, but could be worth as much as \$365,000 on the black market. On June 21, 2019, while performing random inspections

at United Parcel Service in Anchorage, wildlife inspectors found a box labeled, “Prionace glauca, skirt.” Prionace glauca is the genus and species for blue shark. The five piece shipment originated in Mexico and was destined for Hong Kong. A



*Shark fins seized by Anchorage, AK wildlife inspectors, courtesy USFWS*

second shipment consisting of four pieces was also discovered. All nine pieces were detained for identification purposes. On June 22, 2019, three additional shipments consisting of 13 more boxes were detained. In total 22 boxes were detained averaging 50 pounds each for a total of approximately 1200 pounds of shark fins. Four species of sharks were identified in the undeclared shipments, including hammerhead shark. Hammerhead sharks are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an international convention with over 180 parties, including the United States, Mexico and China. . The entire shipment was seized and eventually forfeited.

In August 2019, a Burlingame, CA wildlife inspector utilized CBP’s Automated Commercial Environment portal to investigate a relatively new method of international cargo import, E-Commerce Consolidation, currently used by various multinational e-commerce corporations. Such a model allows for the rapid delivery of small parcels whereby sellers can conduct bulk international transactions without maintaining their own website. The inspector was able to identify the precise mechanism by which packages are gathered, transported to certain dedicated hubs, consolidated into air cargo shipments, and imported to US distribution hubs for final, domestic delivery. The Burlingame inspector through 100% manifest reviews identified that approximately 3-5% of all parcels imported via this pathway contained undeclared wildlife and more than half of said shipments contained protected wildlife or were being imported for commercial purposes without declaration or license. Examples of the protected wildlife imported via this pathway include but are not limited to ESA/CITES/foreign law protected species such as kolinsky weasel brushes, raptor and tragan feathers, white shark and wolf teeth, python and crocodile leather products, tridacna shell products, Corallium coral products and chambered nautilus shells. Inspectors then worked with two of the primary US consolidator companies to improve their Artificial Intelligence (AI) filters for all US imports and successfully reduced the percentage of wildlife to 1% or lower for each consolidator company with a near complete stop of illegal CITES imports.

In September 2019, wildlife inspectors and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers interdicted a commercial 81 box shipment, described as containing dried seashells. The shipment was in transit through the United States originating from Haiti with final destination Dubai. Upon detailed inspection revealed the shipment was mainly comprised of Queen Conch Strombus gigas which is a CITES Appendix II listed species. This shipment weighed over thousand two hundred and fifteen kilograms (1215 KG). For years CITES has banned Haiti from any trade in Queen Conch. It is believed that this shipment alone accounts for over 2 million Queen Conch harvested. A permit accompanying

the shipment from the Haiti management authority, falsely listed the species as a non-protected species.

In 2019 wildlife inspectors in the southeast led a nationwide high priority injurious species interdiction effort titled, “Operation Hidden Mitten”. This effort targeted inbound cargo shipments and passengers transporting injurious live Mitten crabs, primarily from China. This operation was successful in disrupting this illegal trade and prevented introduction of injurious species into native environs. The primary targeting took place from September 2019 through January 2020.

The total approximate number of live Mitten crabs seized during Operation Hidden Mitten for the 2019 Mitten Crab Season was 14,288. Each season starts in September and ends in January of the following year. There were 137 shipments seized, of which 135 came from China, 1 from Hong Kong, and 1 from Japan. Wildlife inspection operations within the various Atlanta, GA SAC area of responsibility were responsible for 8,227 of the 14,288 seized and over half of the seizures nationwide.

### Wildlife Inspection Canine Teams

The Service is only able to physically inspect a small percentage of wildlife imports and exports. To increase the interdiction of the wildlife and plants caught in the illegal wildlife trade, the OLE created the Wildlife Inspector Canine Teams (WICTs) in 2013.



*WI Lauren Beck & K-9 Allie At Earth X Convention, courtesy USFWS*

events. All of the dogs are Labrador retrievers or Lab mixes, and most were rescued from shelters. The “ideal” dog is between one and three years of age; has a high food drive; and is energetic, nonaggressive, and outgoing. A dog’s career typically lasts until they are nine-years-old; however, they can continue to work as long as they are healthy and productive.

Wildlife inspector handlers, and their canine partners, work together to “sniff out” and interdict illegal wildlife products at the several U.S. ports of entry, work alongside wildlife inspectors during border operations, and demonstrate their skills at outreach

These professionally trained teams graduate from a comprehensive training program where they develop skills to detect wildlife product scents and are exposed to work environments such as air cargo warehouses, ocean containers, international mail facilities, and U.S. border crossings. In addition, the dogs are individually trained to detect the most common wildlife trafficked items, which are commonly seized at their duty station.

These teams expand the OLE’s inspection capabilities by allowing more shipments to be screened at a faster pace. Continuously, wildlife inspectors are able to discover and remove illegal shipments of wildlife that would not have been found without the canine’s abilities. Thanks to the diligence of wildlife inspectors and the WICT, many successful investigations were initiated that resulted in wildlife traffickers being sentenced for their crimes.

### Border Operational and Targeted Inspections

Often wildlife inspectors will target specific locations or look for a specific species by performing border operations and proactive inspections. These inspections are performed to enforce federal and international wildlife laws at U.S. ports of entry including the U.S. border ports with Canada and Mexico. Border operations allow for the OLE to collaborate with Canadian and Mexican counterparts, which form strong working partnerships. The focus of the border operations depends on the location and the activity that usually occurs at that location. Proactive inspections usually result in the discovery of illegal wildlife and wildlife products that are in the import and export process.

### Outreach

In addition to their regular duties, wildlife inspectors and the WICTs participate in outreach activities. Throughout the country, they educate the public by working various types of events ranging from large public gatherings to small one-to-one meetings. They discuss the importance of facilitating the legal wildlife trade, fighting wildlife trafficking, the mission of the OLE and the Service, and career opportunities. No matter what they attend, the examples of seized wildlife products and canine demonstrations are always popular.

In July of 2019, Wildlife Inspectors (WI) worked an outreach for the Cactus and Succulent Society of Greater Chicago at the Chicago Botanical Gardens. The WI’s spoke to approximately 250 people, adults and children about CITES and the protection of protected plants and succulents.

In addition, the Rosemont Wildlife Inspection Team conducted outreach with the McHenry County Farm Bureau, the Chicago Customs Broker and Forwarders Association, Lake County Forest Preserve Forensics Camp and Koraes Elementary School Career Day to provide an overview of the inspection program, the statutes and regulations we enforce and the daily activities of a WI.



The Minneapolis, MN Wildlife Inspector, and several Chicago, IL Wildlife Inspectors conducted a three day border blitz operation at the International Falls Port of Entry. The operation was conducted with both Canadian Provincial Wildlife Authorities, Customs and Border Protection and the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Several hundred inspection were completed during the blitz. Approximately 30 inspection resulted in enforcement actions being taken by State authorities and 12 federal investigations were initiated.

Wildlife Inspectors in the Great Lakes Region also conducted inspections blitzes in conjunction with Customs and Border Patrol at the Minneapolis, MN DHL and Chicago, IL DHL facilities. Minor violations were documented during both blitzes.

Two Wildlife Inspectors attended the Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS) Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, in December 2019. Alberta hunting guides and outfitters are required to be a member of the APOS, which represents all guides and outfitters in Alberta and disseminates information about pertinent regulations to all its members. The Wildlife Inspectors set up a table and spoke with individual outfitters throughout the meeting regarding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) import regulations. Additionally, the Wildlife Inspectors also gave a presentation on USFWS regulations. At the conclusion of the event, the Wildlife Inspectors provided APOS with summaries of USFWS import regulations to disseminate to outfitting operations not present at the meeting.

While in Edmonton, the Wildlife Inspectors also met with officers from Environment and Climate Change Canada and with representatives of one of the major freight forwarders, Talon Distribution, Inc., that ships large quantities of taxidermy and processed sport-taken hunting trophies into the U.S. from Canada. The Wildlife Inspectors toured the company's facility and discussed import/export regulations and procedures with the owner of Talon Distribution, Inc., to increase compliance with USFWS import regulations.

Wildlife Inspectors in both Southern and Northern California conducted a significant amount of outreach during 2019. From the "typical" school classroom presentation to participating in annual Trade & Customs Symposiums to meeting with emerging leaders from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participating in the largest Earth Day event in the country, wildlife inspectors educated thousands of kids, adults and professionals alike about the laws and regulations surrounding protected wildlife. Wildlife Inspectors in Southern California staffed a wildlife booth for 60,000 visitors at the 30th Annual Earth Fair at Balboa Park in San Diego, while Northern California Inspectors joined Game Wardens with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a similar Earth Day event in the San Francisco Bay Area.

On October 2, 2019, under the auspices of the Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program, participants from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe visited the Office of Law Enforcement in Miami, FL. The purpose of the visit was multi-faceted, assessing U.S. efforts to deter poaching and trafficking of wildlife resources through wildlife protection policies, law enforcement and criminal prosecution; explore approaches of non-governmental organizations, citizens, and private organizations that promote and support wildlife protection and discourage consumer demand; learn best practices in the collection, storage, tracking, and disposal of confiscated materials, as well as discuss international collaboration at the federal and state levels that combats wildlife poaching and strengthens global cooperation against wildlife trafficking; and examine the harmful impact of international wildlife trafficking on political, economic, environmental, and social stability. Special Agents and Wildlife Inspectors spent the day with the group giving numerous demonstrations, presentations and actual field inspections addressing the purpose of the visit.

### Conclusion

In summary, the Service is doing an outstanding job of regulating wildlife imports and exports within the constraints of staff and funding. Most wildlife shipments are channeled through a few designated ports of entry where they are inspected and cleared by a well-trained staff of wildlife inspectors. Many violations are investigated by the wildlife inspectors; however those that may require an in-depth, criminal investigation are referred to an equally well-trained staff of special agents for investigation. The Service also works closely with other federal agencies, and with foreign governments, to enforce federal laws, foreign laws, and international treaties, which restrict wildlife trade.

The Service believes that it has a sound program for controlling the importation and exportation of wildlife and wildlife products. No systems of control is foolproof; however, the current program consisting of wildlife inspections at the ports, diligent investigation by special agents, and aggressive prosecutions by the Department of Justice are helping to create an effective deterrent to future violations.



*Wildlife inspector Dustin Hunt gives a live feed interview to schools across Texas on wildlife identification, courtesy USFWS*

## V. Support to the Field

### National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory

In September of 1988, the Service opened the 23,000 square foot National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Forensics Lab). The primary mission of the Forensics Lab is to make species-specific identification of wildlife parts and products seized as evidence, and much like a police crime laboratory, try to match suspect, victim, and crime scene together through the examination and comparison of physical evidence. Because there are few wildlife forensic techniques available to make species-specific identifications, the Forensics Lab staff conducts extensive research to develop new identification methods.



*Skeletonized bird examined at the forensics lab, courtesy USFWS*

In August of 2007, the Service opened the 17,000 square foot addition to the Forensics Lab, which includes modern veterinary pathology and genetics laboratories. The primary user groups for the Forensics Lab are Service special agents and wildlife inspectors, other federal agencies, state

wildlife agencies, and the signatory countries to the CITES treaty.

Since opening in 1988, the Forensics Lab has received over 15,000 cases consisting of 115,000 evidence items. Of these cases, approximately 85 percent have been submitted by federal agencies, 10 percent by state agencies, and five percent from international agencies. Each case involves one or more submitted requests for the examination or comparison of specific evidence items. As such, each request has represented a commitment on the part of the Forensics Lab to provide expert witness testimony in a federal, state, or international court of law.

In addition to casework and research, Forensics Lab personnel continue to provide valuable Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) and forensic training to Service law enforcement officers and wildlife inspectors, and to law enforcement personnel from state and international wildlife law enforcement agencies. Lab scientists provided wildlife CSI training to Namibian and Kenyan investigators, and additional training in ivory and timber ID techniques to Swiss, Peruvian, and Canadian officials.

In order to enhance the collection of evidence in timber smuggling cases, the Forensics Lab developed a more efficient means of sampling container shipments at ports of entry, thus

enabling national and international “timber theft” investigators to properly collect and submit wood evidence to the Forensics Lab for species determination.

In support of the Forensics Lab’s continued status as an internationally accredited wildlife crime lab, Lab scientists provided expert guidance on several national wildlife crime committees; provided wildlife forensics presentations to 12 national and international meetings; and published nine peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals. In addition, the Lab director is also a voting member of the Council of Federal Forensic Laboratory directors, which serves as a forensic advisory group to the Deputy Attorney General of the DOJ.

In order to develop specific analytical techniques, and then apply them to wildlife related cases, the Forensics Lab is organized into five analytical sections: Criminalistics, Genetics, Veterinary Pathology, Analytical Chemistry, and Morphology.

#### *Criminalistics*

Forensics Lab scientists in the Criminalistics Section use a wide range of scientific instruments to examine and compare items of trace evidence, as well as weapons, projectiles, and forged or altered documents.

#### *Genetics*

Forensics Lab scientists in the Genetics Section apply an extensive range of robotic extractors, sequencers, and DNA databases to identify the species source of blood, tissue, ivory, and horn samples, and to determine if submitted evidence samples came from the same animal source.

#### *Veterinary Pathology*

Forensics Lab scientists in the Veterinary Pathology Section utilize an extensive variety of medical pathology equipment, including x-ray analysis, CT-scanning, and histological processing of tissue samples to determine the cause of death of submitted carcasses.

#### *Analytical Chemistry*

Forensics Lab scientists in the Analytical Chemistry Section utilize gas chromatographs and mass spectrographs to detect a wide range of pesticides and poisons in blood and tissue samples submitted by the pathology Forensics Lab staff to help determine cause of death.

#### *Morphology*

Forensics Lab scientists in the Morphology Section use hand magnifiers and microscopes (along with a collection of 60,000 “known” specimens and thoroughly researched ID protocols) to identify wildlife parts and products back to the species of origin. This section is further divided into expert teams for identifying wood, bird, mammal, and reptile and amphibian evidence.





In the current fight against global wildlife trafficking, organized crime syndicates regularly use digital technology to carry out their criminal enterprises. For a law enforcement agency to be proactive and successful, a high level of proficiency in the field of digital technology is required. For that reason, the OLE initiated the DERTSU in 2009 to specialize in these disciplines and to support special agents in the critical areas of retrieval and analysis of computer-based records and the utilization of advanced surveillance techniques.

In fact, most every large-scale wildlife trafficking case investigated by the OLE has at least one type of digital evidence involved in the case, e.g., smart phone, computer, and GPS, which requires special techniques for proper handling and examination. This specialty is particularly important since many successful prosecutions use digital forensics as key legal evidence.



*DERTSU employees work supporting the field with many different aspects of digital evidence, credit USFWS*

In 2019, DERTSU provided direct digital evidence recovery support on 52 unique investigations. DERTSU staff deployed on 11 search warrants in support of the Office of Law Enforcement. DERTSU was often assisted by the field based Regional Computer Specialists (RCS) during these search warrant operations. The RCS's assist DERTSU staff with the documentation and acquisition of digital evidence during the execution of search warrants.

DERTSU processed the following number of digital evidence items during 2019:

- 61 mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets
- 17 computers
- 24 other devices such as external drives

As can be seen, the majority of cases worked by DERTSU involve the seizure of mobile devices. DERTSU is working on increasing its ability to gain access to locked mobile devices to defeat the growing trend of data encryption.

It is also imperative to provide innovative technical support to assist field investigations. If the

technology or physical structures do not exist, then the DERTSU Senior Special Agents build the equipment needed to complete the mission. For example, usually GPS tracking devices and audio/video surveillance equipment must be disguised in order to capture the crime as it is being committed. In this type of support, the DERTSU staff built, maintained, and assisted with the deployment, streaming, and recording of Internet based remote video surveillance such as pole cameras. They also manufactured several custom designed "props" to house and hide electronic monitoring equipment. Furthermore, the DERTSU continued to administer the OLE's use of mobile and video surveillance and investigative tool platforms.

DERTSU continued to support the Branch of Training by assisting in the development of the Wildlife Cybercrime Trafficking Program (WTCP) curriculum. DERTSU staff subsequently went on several training missions as instructors in support of the WTCP as well as several International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) training missions.

### **Branch of Training and Inspection**

Building the OLE's personnel's knowledge base and sharing those skills and abilities with domestic and international counterparts is paramount in the fight against global wildlife crime. The Office of Law Enforcement continued to expand its training mission, which is managed by the Branch of Training and Inspection (BTI). The focus of these trainings is to build capacity with international and domestic law enforcement partners, and advance U.S. Government interests through international cooperation.

Physically located at the FLETC in Glynco, Georgia, the BTI plans, coordinates, and manages comprehensive training for new and existing OLE staff, as well as National Wildlife Refuge, tribal, state, and international conservation law enforcement officers. To provide optimum training events, the BTI works closely with many private, state, and federal agencies such as the DOS, DOJ, CBP, DOI's International Technical Assistance Program, and the National Associations of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (NACLEC). Through this collaboration, the BTI leads the world in conservation law enforcement training.

Service experts, through the BTI, have participated as instructors at the ILEAs for 17 consecutive years. These global academies are administered by the DOS and are held in Bangkok, Thailand; Budapest, Hungary; Gaborone, Botswana; Roswell, New Mexico; and San Salvador, El Salvador.

In addition to the ILEAs, the BTI coordinated OLE experts to instruct international counterparts at the following training events and workshops: a Kenya Wildlife Service forensic lab evaluation; two Marine Crime Scene Investigation courses; three CITES related workshops; three Wildlife Crime Scene Investigator courses; a Covert Investigative



Techniques course held in South Africa; a Wildlife Law Enforcement Workshop in Mongolia; a Counter Wildlife Trafficking Assessment in Angola; a Tri-Lateral Law Enforcement Workshop was held in Peru; and a consultation between the Service and the Kenya Northern Rangeland Trust held at FLETC in Glynco, Georgia. In addition, two trainings were presented that focused on information management systems because the filing, maintenance, and quick retrieval of accurate records are vital to the foundation of any law enforcement action.

The National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy's (NCLELA) goal is to prepare new conservation law enforcement executives to carry out their job responsibilities effectively in a rapidly changing world. The focus is to provide the practical skills and knowledge needed by those in executive-level conservation law enforcement leadership roles in federal or state agencies. The goal of the ICCA is to build collaborative capacity between international conservation law enforcement agencies with focus to combat illegal domestic and international wildlife trafficking. These programs are unprecedented forums for managers of wildlife law enforcement programs and are student-centered with high degree of participant involvement.

The curriculums have the similar focus of adaptive leadership, strategic planning, and shaping organizational culture; however, the ICCA adds programmatic management training in areas of wildlife forensics, human-wildlife conflicts, illegal logging, illegal fishing and related trade, models of conservation, wildlife evidence management, green courts, women in law enforcement, and international training.

### **The National Wildlife Repositories**

The National Wildlife Property Repository (Repository) and National Eagle Repository (NER) are located near Denver, Colorado. The Repository is a unique facility which serves the OLE by receiving and storing wildlife and wildlife products seized and forfeited during OLE's investigation and inspection activities. No live wildlife is stored at the facility, but there are approximately 1.3 million items in inventory from whale products to rhino parts, mounted tigers to monkey skulls.

The NER supplies deceased eagles and eagle feathers and parts to enrolled members of federally recognized Native American tribes for religious and cultural use.



*Photos taken at ILEA training courses, courtesy USFWS*



*Products stored at the National Wildlife Property Repository, courtesy USFWS*

# *Help Protect Wildlife for Future Generations*

## **VI. Reporting Federal Wildlife Violations**

America's wildlife is a national treasure belonging to all Americans, and everyone has a part to play to keep this valuable resource safe. You can help protect wildlife reporting violations to the proper authorities.

To report federal wildlife violations, such as unlawful commercialization of wildlife; international and domestic smuggling of wildlife; environmental hazards and destruction of critical habitat negatively impacting protected species; and various other violations concerning take of marine mammals, threatened and endangered species, and migratory birds, submit your information by emailing us at: [fws\\_tips@fws.gov](mailto:fws_tips@fws.gov).

Be prepared to provide as much detailed information as possible concerning the incident including dates, time of day, exact locations, license plate numbers, vehicle descriptions, possible suspects, possible witnesses, and how you obtained this information

You may also contact the nearest law enforcement office at one of our field offices.

### **Reward Information:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, is authorized to pay rewards for information or assistance relating to investigations. This authority is linked to specific federal wildlife laws and the amount of the reward is commensurate with the information or assistance received.

To Report a Wildlife Crime:

Email: [fws\\_tips@fws.gov](mailto:fws_tips@fws.gov)

Call: 1-844-397-8477 (1-844-FWS-TIPS)



*Mexican Grey Wolf, courtesy USFWS*



# APPENDIX I: Applicable Laws, Acts, and Orders

## Brief descriptions of these various laws:

- The Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378) prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants taken or possessed in violation of federal, state, tribal, or foreign laws.
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird including their parts and products.
- The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668C) prohibits import, export, or take of bald or golden eagles including their parts and products without permits, and prohibits the sale, purchase, or barter of their parts or products.
- The Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) prohibits the importation, exportation, taking, and interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species.
- The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718) requires waterfowl hunters to purchase and possess a valid federal waterfowl hunting stamp before take of migratory waterfowl.
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407) establishes a moratorium on the take and importation of marine mammals, including parts and products.
- The Airborne Hunting Act (16 U.S.C. 742j-1) prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft.
- The National Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) provides guidelines for administration and management of all areas in the refuge system.
- The African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245) places a moratorium on the importation of raw or worked ivory from African elephant-producing countries that do not meet certain criteria.
- The Wild Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4901) limits or prohibits the importation of exotic bird species as necessary to ensure that their populations are not harmed by international trade.
- The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 5301-5306) prohibits the import, export, or sale of any product, item, or substance containing, or labeled or advertised as containing, any substance derived from tiger or rhinoceros.
- The Antarctic Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 2401) makes unlawful for any citizen to take, possess, or sell any native bird or mammal from Antarctica.
- The Archeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa) prohibits excavation, removal, damage, or alteration to any archaeological resource located on public or Indian lands without a permit.
- The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (PL. 101-644) is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States.
- In conducting investigations of wildlife crimes, Service OLE special agents frequently encounter and investigate violations of other federal laws to include conspiracy, smuggling, money laundering, narcotics, cybercrimes, unlawful possession and trafficking of firearms, mail fraud, tax evasion, wire fraud, corruption, and bribery.
- The Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act (PL. 114-231) authorizes support for law enforcement training, investigative capacity building, range state conservation programs, and other important tools to protect and sustain wild populations of imperiled species in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and other critical locations.
- The Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking (issued February 9, 2017) strengthens enforcement of federal law in order to thwart transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations, including criminal gangs, cartels, racketeering organizations, and other groups engaged in illicit activities. This Executive Order specifically lists wildlife trafficking as a targeted transnational crime that presents a threat to public safety and national security.

# General Statistics

## Staffed Wildlife Ports of Entry

Anchoarge, AK	Agana, GU	Atlanta, GA
Baltimore, MD	Blaine, WA	Boston, MA
Brownsville, TX	Buffalo, NY	Calais, ME
Champlain, NY	Chicago, IL	Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
Denver, CO	Detroit, MI	Dulles, VA
Eastport, ID	El Paso, TX	Erlanger, KY
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Honolulu, HI	Houston, TX
Laredo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	Louisville, KY
Memphis, TN	Miami, FL	Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
New Orleans, LA	New York, NY	Newark, NJ
Nogales, AZ	Pembina, ND	Philadelphia, PA
Portland, OR	San Diego, CA	San Juan, PR
San Francisco, CA	Savannah, GA	Seattle, WA
Sweetgrass, MT	Tampa, FL	

During FY 2019, Service wildlife inspectors processed 191,492 declared shipments of wildlife and wildlife products worth more than \$4.3 billion. The Nation's top 10 busiest ports of entry for wildlife trade are shown below:

Port of Entry	Shipments
New York, NY	29,900
Los Angeles, CA	27,622
Newark, NJ	23,002
Miami, FL	11,668
Louisville, KY	11,000
Dallas, Fort Worth, TX	9,004
Chicago, IL	8,601
Memphis, TN	8,301
San Francisco, CA	5,791
Honolulu, HI	5,608

## Agent and Inspector Staffing (As of October 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year)

Fiscal Year	Number of Special Agents on Board	Number of Wildlife Inspectors in Board
2011	202	124
2012	219	143
2013	222	140
2014	213	130
2015	211	124
2016	205	124
2017	229	126
2018	213	122
2019	215	113

## Budget

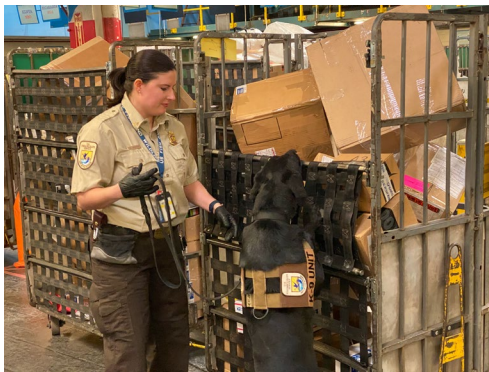
Fiscal year	Operations	Equipment Replacement	Total
2011	\$62,061	\$869	\$62,930
2012	\$61,168	\$975	\$62,143
2013	\$56,932	\$910	\$57,842
2014	\$63,365	\$910	\$64,275
2015	\$65,827	\$910	\$66,737
2016	\$73,815	\$910	\$74,725
2017	\$74,413	\$910	\$75,053
2018	\$76,143	\$910	\$77,053
2019	\$78,143	\$910	\$79,053

## Investigative Cases (by fiscal year)

Act Description	2016	2017	2018	2019
African Elephant Conservation Act	40	41	36	30
Eagle Protection Act	175	203	165	150
Endangered Species Act	6,699	7,279	6,727	6,256
Lacey Act	2,011	1,774	1,657	1,656
Marine Mammal Protection Act	304	230	208	177
Migratory Bird Acts	524	488	444	408
Other Federal/Foreign Law	438	482	567	558
Rhino Tiger Act	20	18	23	42
Wild Bird Conservation Act	52	47	42	58
Total of All Acts	10,263	10,562	9,869	9,344

## Annual Penalty Statistics (by fiscal year)

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
Criminal Fines	\$9.5M	\$2.2M	\$6.7M	\$7.7M
Civil Penalties	\$2.3M	\$3.6M	\$3.8M	\$608K
Prison (years)	44	31	57	58
Probation (years)	342	308	364	289



*Wildlife Inspector with Canine Partner*





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Office of Law Enforcement  
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