

Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2015)

Project Ref No	IWT014
Project Title	Bi-national Collaboration to Eradicate Wildlife Trafficking in Belize and Guatemala
Country(ies):	Belize and Guatemala
Lead Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Collaborator(s)	Asociacion Balam, Environmental Justice Forum, Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas, Friends for Conservation and Development, Ministry of Forests, Fisheries and Sustainable Development
Project Leader	<i>Roan Balas McNab</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR1)	<i>Oct 31 2015 , HYR1</i>
Project websites	http://www.wcsguatemala.org/es-es/desaf%C3%ADosglobales/proyectoIwt.aspx ; http://www.asociacionbalam.org.gt/ http://www.fcdbelize.org/1378 ; http://fjapeten.org/portalfja/index.php/noticias/64-colaboracion-binacional-guatemala-belice

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

The project has established a cohesive binational partnership, including support from the governments of Guatemala and Belize to address trans frontier IWT with the support of national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Specific activities advances include:

Output 1: Improved Enforcement/Belize

Activity 1.1 (Completed): The threats map and strategy document prioritising priority interdiction areas in Belize was developed by FCD, and used to guide nest protection activities during the 2015 nesting season.

Activity 1.2 (Partially Completed): The Belizean anti-poaching Task Force members were identified and convened by the Belize Forest Department (FD) to coordinate roles and responsibilities during the nesting season. FD convened the Belize Police Department, Belize Defence Forces (BDF), and project partners Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD). Nevertheless, follow up by FD throughout the nesting season was intermittent, and in most occasions FCD patrolled nesting areas without government accompaniment. The Task Force also reviewed and proposed revised protocols for the roles of partners at the key Conservation Outposts located along the Belize-Guatemala adjacency zone, to improve coordination and lead to greater awareness about IWT issues along the border.

Activity 1.3 (Completed): In April, FCD staff received a two-day training on the “SMART Lite” field patrol monitoring system from WCS personnel. On August 24th, WCS, FCD and FD personnel held a workshop in Belmopan to share the SMART system with FD, leading to a request from FD to provide assistance with expanding the SMART system to other protected area partners in Belize.

Activity 1.4 (Completed): FCD led Task Force field patrolling of scarlet macaw nesting sites throughout the macaw nesting season. A total of 245 man-days were spent protecting nests in extremely remote areas, covering Y kilometres. Results of parallel nest monitoring activities

indicated that no macaw chicks were poached; a total of 11 active nests were monitored by FCD of which 6 were climbed by poachers when chicks were not present nor eggs hatched. With WCS support a complementary intervention was initiated by FCD in 2015, consisting of the removal of at-risk chicks for hand-raising in an in-situ laboratory and subsequent release into the wild. A total of 8 chicks successfully fledged in 2015 using this method. This is the first nesting season in which no poaching has occurred (at monitored nests) since FCD began monitoring in 2010. Despite the fact that no poachers were physically apprehended, several near captures of poachers in the early-mid part of the nesting season likely had a dissuasive effect. In one occasion, an entire set of climbing gear, a rifle, and a cell phone were confiscated from a poacher who fled. Information extracted revealed the phone to belong to a Guatemalan national. Through project partners the phone was subsequently provided to Guatemala's Environmental Prosecutor, revealing a photograph of a scarlet macaw and other wildlife.

Output 2: Prosecution/Guatemala

Activity 2.1 (Completed): May 13-14, 2015 19 colleagues participated a workshop led by the Environmental Justice Forum of Peten (EJF) to identify threats, wildlife smuggling routes, key actors, and potential for further investigation and interdiction. Institutions included FCD (Belize), the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), Asociacion Balam, and WCS. A draft wildlife trafficking interdiction strategy document was developed by Asociación Balam, and used to guide interventions with the Natural Resource Police (DIPRONA), representatives of the Environmental Prosecutor's (EP) office.

Activity 2.2 (Completed): The EJF organized and led a workshop on June 3rd, 2015, with 23 representatives from CONAP, EP, the Attorney General's office (PGN), the Ministry of the Environment, and judges in Peten (OJ). WCS wildlife trafficking experts Dr. Tim Wittig (Kenya) and Mr. Dwi Adhiasto (Indonesia) shared their experiences regarding the rapidly spreading global threat of IWT and effective measures for reducing threats.

Activity 2.3 (Completed): Macaw trafficking investigations were undertaken collaboratively by Asociacion Balam, WCS, and EJF personnel as a first line of research. Leads were then turned over to governmental institutions (CONAP, and the DIGICI investigative and intelligence unit of the National Police). These efforts have led to two targeted arrests. One of an illegally obtained 4-month old macaw in a Guatemalan household near Belize; and one of a macaw trafficker offering a bird for sale on Facebook. Five cases continue advancing under investigation. Overall results of interventions undertaken, including mobile checkpoints include: 3 people arrested for illegal possession of wildlife; capture of a vehicle used to transport a scarlet macaw; and confiscation of 7 psittacines (parrots) destined for the pet market.

Activity 2.4 (Completed): The EJF has continued providing technical accompaniment of both CONAP, and Environmental Prosecutors (MP), as they investigate suspects, obtain warrants for legal searches, and post capture support prosecutors to strengthen legal cases against detainees. The EJF continues providing legal accompaniment regarding two individuals arrested with macaws; both were confined to jail and remained there through the Sept 30 reporting period. The EJF continues to play a key role in sensitizing the newly named Environmental Judge in Peten as to the importance of effective sentencing.

Output 3: Cross-border Collaboration

Activity 3.1 (Partially Completed): FCD (Belize) and Balam (Guatemala) continued to lead national civil society demands for greater governmental cooperation between Guatemala and Belize. Some advances have been obtained. For example, representatives of both governments participated in the official IWT project inception workshop, pledging to cooperate in reducing trans-frontier IWT. That said, Belizean national elections planned for November have delayed more substantive advances in obtaining the formal ratification of sweeping bi-national agreements signed in 2014, including an agreement on environmental cooperation. Please see the section on notable problems.

Activity 3.2 (Partially Completed): Balam continues to serve as the Secretariat of the *Mesa Inter-sectorial de Tierra y Ambiente* (MITA; in Guatemala), as a key multisector forum for cross-frontier dialogue. Two MITA meetings have served to raise awareness about the IWT project; the first on March 10th in which the project was initially presented to MITA members, and the second on September 14th in which the protocols for IWT investments in improved livelihoods ("*Seed Funds*") was presented by Balam. Completion of this activity remains pending since due to scheduling conflicts FCD has not been able to participate in the MITA to date.

Activity 3.3 (Completed): Regular updates on project activities have been provided to the UK Embassy in Guatemala by WCS staff, and to the UK High Commission Office in Belmopan, Belize, by FCD staff. Updates were provided in March, June, and October. On June 1st, UK High Commissioner Mr. Peter Hughes participated in a IWT Press conference held in Belize City with 29 members of the press and national governmental and NGOs; on June 3rd UK Ambassador Sarah Dickson participated in a IWT Project Press Conference held in Flores Peten.

Output 4: Improved Sustainable Livelihoods

Activity 4.1 (Completed): The diagnostic workshop held in May 2015 (Activity 2.1) served as the basis for identifying communities in Guatemala most affected by illegal wildlife trafficking routes. Balam staff subsequently followed led additional consultations with CONAP, FCD, DIPRONA, and MITA staff to identify ongoing/potential legal, environmentally sustainable economic alternatives for communities exposed to IWT. Balam also engaged the *Coordinadora de Asociaciones Campesina Agropecuarias de Petén* (COACAP) as a leading second tier organization representing indigenous *campesino* families, as a local organization with extensive experience in promoting economic alternatives (i.e. cacao, xate palm harvesting, improved agriculture), in the project focal area.

Activity 4.2 (Completed): Through coordination detailed in 4.1, Balam developed a resulting strategy document developed to guide project livelihoods investments. This document prioritises investments in the following economic alternatives: Cocoa, coffee, plantains, cardamom, avocado, xate palms, pepper, and home gardens. It also identified four target communities for investment, based on their exposure to principal macaw trafficking routes: La Rejoja, San Marco, Monte los Olivos, and Las Brisas de Chiquibul. This strategy will subsequently be used by the MITA as a broader fund-raising strategy for the broader population settled in the Guatemalan adjacency zone.

Activity 4.3 (Completed): Through meetings held in the framework of the MITA, community leaders, COACAP representatives, and Balam staff reached consensus regarding the use of the livelihoods seed funds, adding in discussions representatives from the four municipalities of the adjacency zone (MANMUNISUR) as a potential source of additional investment.

Activity 4.4 (Completed): The seed fund was created under Balam's leadership as a public-private mechanism of collaboration between the MITA, the MANMUNISUR, COACAP, and WCS as a "mechanism for the reduction of wildlife trafficking in communities in the Guatemala-Belize adjacency zone. Through discussion with partners, COACAP was selected by Balam as the best potential implementing mechanism for the investment of seed funds. A document detailing the norms for seed fund investment was developed by Balam to guide investment by COACAP in Year 2 of the project. Formal public signing events with villages participating in the economic alternative seed fund is planned for November-December, 2015.

Activity 4.5 (Not Completed): Balam is developing baseline surveys of attitudes towards wildlife trafficking in the four IWT target villages identified in 4.2.

Activity 4.6 (Not Completed): Pilot distribution of in-kind investments is planned to initiate in November-December, 2015.

Activity 4.7 (Not Completed): Participatory evaluation of the impacts of seed funds is planned for Year 3.

Activity 4.8 (Not Completed): In three of the four target villages identified in 4.2, Balam and COACAP have initiated the collection of socio-economic data to establish the project baseline. Data collection remains pending in the village of La Rejoja.

Output 5: Greater Awareness

Activity 5.1 (Completed): A radio outreach campaign with two radio "spots" (20-30 seconds each) was designed and implemented by Balam personnel and broadcast over the Guatemalan adjacency areas, in coordination with Radio Utunkaj (in Q'eqhí Maya language) and Radio Felicidad (Evangelical radio). The spots also ran on Radio Peten, Radio Mopán, and Radio Popular, stations with coverage of vast majority of the Department of Peten. Balam leveraged additional support from the US Department of Interior and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to broadcast two live radio interviews where CONAP personnel discussed the impact of wildlife trafficking locally, nationally, and at the global scale.

Activity 5.2 (Completed): An outreach campaign strategy document was produced by WCS personnel in collaboration with CONAP's Wildlife and Public Relations Departments entitled

“Awareness Campaign to Reduce Illegal Commerce of Wildlife”. This strategy is largely focused on decision makers in Guatemala City, leaving open the possibility for additional support to address the general public if additional resources are identified. Strategy initiation is planned for November, 2015. Parallel to strategy development, on June 3rd a public outreach event was held in Flores, Peten, with the visiting WCS IWT experts detailed in Activity 2.2. A total of 26 reporters from the local, national, and international press received presentations within a conference entitled “Reflections on the Illegal Wildlife Trade: Experiences in Africa and Asia and how to prepare for this global challenge”. Roan Balas McNab of WCS presented on the broader trends in wildlife trafficking worldwide; Dr. Tim Wittig presented on the links between wildlife trafficking and organized crime, and provided examples from Africa; M.Sc. Dwi Adhiasto presented on interdiction techniques used by the WCS Wildlife Crimes Unit to disrupt wildlife trafficking in Indonesia; and Julio Madrid of CONAP presented data on wildlife confiscations in Peten and Guatemala. The conference was attended by UK Ambassador to Guatemala Sarah Dickson, Ing. Benedicto Lucas, Executive Secretary of CONAP, and EU representative Mr. Jan Miklavc.

Activity 5.3 (Incomplete): A baseline survey instrument has been designed, and will be applied during the remainder of 2015.

Activity 5.4 (Completed): WCS, Balam, FCD and EJV websites have been expanded to include information on the project and wildlife trafficking issues faced by each institution. Project partners plan to expand the website with relevant project indicators, to the degree these do not expose personnel and/or reduce efficacy of project interventions. The Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009806056721>) was launched and has over 300 members. A concerted outreach campaign through Facebook is planned for 2016. Outreach has also included national partner “Bulletins” sent as PDFs via emails through the respective networks of each partner.

Activity 5.5 (Pending): The project white paper summarizing lessons learned is planned for Year 3.

Activity 5.6 (Pending): Participation in international fora will likely occur in Years 2 & 3 of the project.

Some examples of outreach include:

1. www.fjapeten.org/portalfja/index.php/noticias/64-colaboracion-binacional-guatemala-belice
2. www.asociacionbalam.org.gt/index.php/2-uncategorised/34-alianzas-para-reducir-el-trafico-ilegal-de-vida-silvestre-guatemala-belice
3. www.asociacionbalam.org.gt/index.php/2-uncategorised/35-proyecto-colaboracion-binacional-para-erradicar-el-trafico-de-vida-silvestre-guatemala-belice
4. <http://www.conap.gob.gt/index.php/servicios-en-linea/noticias/809-ofrecen-alternativas-economicas-para-erradicar-trafico-ilegal-de-animales-en-linea-de-adyacencia-guatemala-belice.html#prettyphoto/1/>

Publications in international media:

5. http://caracol.com.co/radio/2015/06/03/internacional/1433353500_791023.html
6. <http://www.proceso.hn/tecnologia/item/103605-reino-unido-coopera-con-proteccion-de-la-biodiversidad-en-guatemala-y-belice.html>
7. http://www.holaciudad.com/holaciudad/latinoamerica/Reino-Unido-biodiversidad-Guatemala-Belice_0_812919149.html
8. <http://noticias.terra.com.ar/ciencia/reino-unido-coopera-con-proteccion-de-la-biodiversidad-en-guatemala-y-belice,c79d05d03398e8420e3d410e6647ad0f5m70RCRD.html>
9. <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/espanol/2015/06/03/reino-unido-coopera-con-proteccion-de-la-biodiversidad-en-guatemala-y-belice/>
10. <http://www.eleconomistaamerica.com/medio-ambiente-eAm/noticias/6765604/06/15/Reino-Unido-coopera-con-proteccion-de-la-biodiversidad-en-Guatemala-y-Belice.html>
11. <http://www.desgobiernodechile.cl/2015/06/reino-unido-coopera-con-proteccion-de-la-biodiversidad-en-guatemala-y-belice/>
12. <http://www.fao.org/forestry/43329-06f0bb00d54c02b5afc2ff253ae2cde16.pdf>

Other publications and Facebook:

13. <https://www.facebook.com/notisur2015/photos/a.1612484912315971.1073741828.1612479145649881/1709128475984947/?type=3&theater>

14. https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=861804767229796&set=a.439512429459034.1073741825.100002008421346&type=3&hc_location=ufi
15. <https://www.facebook.com/264801210256522/photos/a.799766026760035.1073741829.264801210256522/886364884766815/?type=3&theater>
16. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=998461683550754&set=pcb.998462526884003&type=3&theater>
17. <https://twitter.com/PNCdeGuatemala/status/646681732243156992>
18. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=861804767229796&set=a.439512429459034.1073741825.100002008421346&type=3&theater>
19. https://twitter.com/mvaldez_s21/status/646688210089672705
20. <http://development.today/guatemala-y-belice-contra-el-trafico-ilegal-de-animales/>
21. <https://www.facebook.com/264801210256522/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/882945778442059/?type=3&theater>
22. <http://conap.gob.gt/index.php/servicios-en-linea/noticias/804-rescatan-loros-y-quacamaya-en-peten-capturan-a-una-persona.html>
23. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=885999358121286&set=a.449407965113763.119469.100001336914845&type=3&theater>
24. <https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/photos/pcb.871019162946546/871018292946633/?type=3&theater>

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The only significant challenge encountered to date consists of the national elections in Belize, in which the leading opposition party (United Democratic Party) has highlighted the recent advances in collaboration with Guatemala as a leading political issue in the upcoming national elections, planned for November 4th. Should the UDP gain power, we expect some changes in Belizean authorities, as well a (possibly temporary) period of resistance to collaboration with Guatemala on diverse issues including this project, despite its importance to the conservation of extremely threatened scarlet macaws in Belize.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Joanne Gordon at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 001 IWT Half Year Report**