

Newsletter

July 2018



Rangers on a speedboat patrol for poachers, Cambodia, Credit: Wildlife Alliance

The UK government is hosting an international conference about the illegal wildlife trade from 11 to 12 October 2018. The conference will bring together global leaders to help eradicate illegal wildlife trade and better protect the world's most iconic species from the threat of extinction.

Follow #endwildlifecrime on social media for latest news and information.

The Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) is a serious criminal industry worth up to £17 billion each year, threatening both wildlife and people. Funded by the UK Government, the IWT Challenge Fund tackles the illegal wildlife trade and, in doing so, contributes to sustainable development in developing countries. It funds projects which address one or more of the following themes:

- developing sustainable livelihoods and economic development, to benefit people directly affected by IWT
- strengthening law enforcement
- ensuring effective legal frameworks
- reducing demand for IWT products



Department
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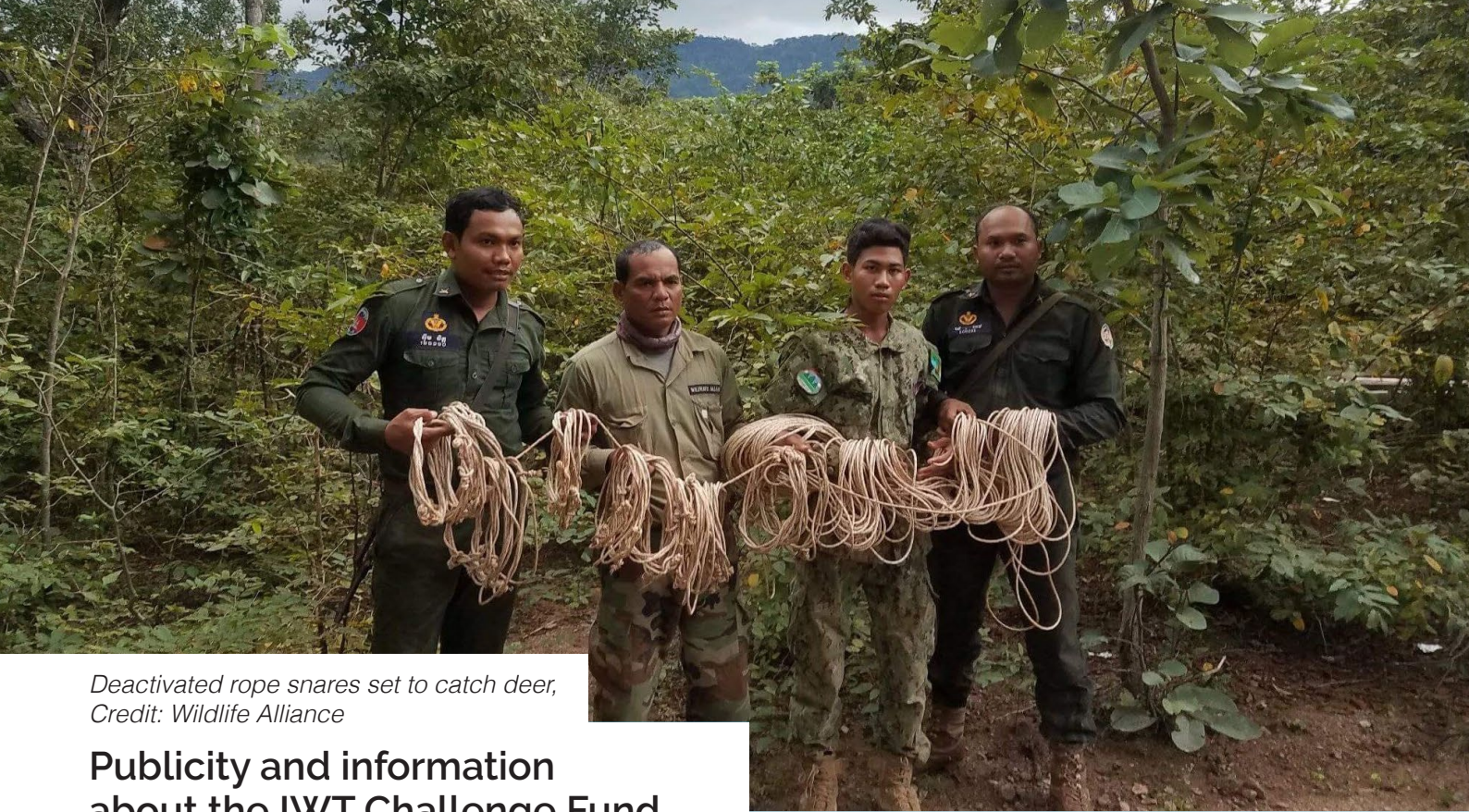
**[gov.uk/government/collections/
illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund)**



Pangolin scale used in training of detection rats, Credit: EWT/APOPO

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*Deactivated rope snares set to catch deer,
Credit: Wildlife Alliance*

Publicity and information about the IWT Challenge Fund

For more information about the IWT Challenge fund, please visit gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund

If you would like any further information about the IWT Challenge Fund, please email the team at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk

If you would like to submit an article about your project for a future edition of the IWT Newsletter, please email an article of no more than one side of A4, alongside any pictures, to IWT-Newsletter@ltsi.co.uk

Publicity and referencing IWT Challenge Fund

We kindly remind project leaders that if they are publicising their work then it is important that they make every effort to recognise UK Government support through the IWT Challenge Fund. This is important as it helps us to ensure the IWT Challenge Fund retains a high profile and to secure continued Government funding.



Snares removed from the Cardamom Rainforest, Credit: Wildlife Alliance

Introduction

July 31st is World Ranger Day, an annual event which commemorates wildlife rangers killed or injured in the line of duty. World Ranger Day is promoted by the International Ranger Federation and celebrates the critical work rangers do to protect the world's natural and cultural treasures. In recognition of World Ranger Day, this edition of the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Newsletter celebrates the amazing work of wildlife rangers on a variety of IWT supported projects.

Wildlife rangers are often the first line of defence for endangered species threatened with poaching and illegal trade. As such, rangers are crucial to the work of the IWT Challenge Fund. Whether it be through support and facilitation, community engagement, monitoring and reporting, or front-line protection, wildlife rangers provide crucial services to the IWT Challenge Fund teams.

Wildlife rangers are usually significantly underfunded and often have limited capacity and minimal training. A number of IWT Challenge Fund projects not only work with rangers, but seek to empower them, to build their capacity, and improve their processes.

The project articles in this Newsletter look at projects focused on such activities, from providing equipment or additional resources, to training existing rangers on modern monitoring and reporting techniques. The benefits of this approach to empowerment are evident in these articles and it is clear that strong cooperation between conservation initiatives and wildlife rangers is an effective way to enhance the fight against illegal wildlife trade.



IWT is a global issue that requires a global effort to tackle. We need to work together if we are to stand any chance of eradicating it.



#EndWildlifeCrime

An update on the London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference

The UK Government is busy preparing to host the upcoming Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London from 11 to 12 October 2018. This international conference will bring together global leaders to inspire and deepen global commitment and action to eliminate the illegal wildlife trade. The conference will also recognise IWT as a security issue, affecting people as well as animals, and it will seek to strengthen partnerships across borders and beyond government.

Find out more

You can read more about the Conference here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/london-conference-on-the-illegal-wildlife-trade-2018>, and follow #endwildlifecrime on social media for the latest news and information.



Rangers using SMART on patrol in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Credit: Mustapha Nsubuga

Using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) for ranger-based wildlife law enforcement monitoring in Uganda's National Parks

The past two decades have seen an increase in many of the large mammal populations within Uganda's national parks and wildlife reserves, tribute to enhanced management effectiveness. However, an upsurge in poaching began again from 2011 onwards, particularly the poaching of elephants for ivory, pangolins for scales and hippos for teeth. This has raised concerns in the conservation community given the limited animal population in the region.

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Prior to interventions by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), it was estimated that the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the country's lead conservation agency, was spending 45-75% of its Protected Area budgets on law enforcement. Prior to this project, WCS and the University

of York tested an approach that showed patrolling could be made significantly more effective for the same cost if data was to be used strategically to inform patrol deployment.

With funding from the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund, WCS partnered with UWA to improve the capacity of local law enforcement officers in protected areas so as to use the new skills in the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to efficiently and effectively conduct ranger patrols. SMART is an easy and innovative law enforcement management tool that facilitates application of standardised and sufficiently rigorous approaches to collect, manage, evaluate and communicate ranger-based law enforcement monitoring data.

The IWT funded team of SMART experts has worked diligently to build the capacity of UWA rangers and wardens to enable them to detect illegal activities in a more efficient and effective manner. UWA has integrated feedback from SMART into its management cycle to improve patrolling efficiency. Today, the government agency is now able to generate integrated reports and maps of patrol data that enable rapid visual assessment of patrol performance and illegal activity hotspots; this enables the patrol impacts and effects in various periods to be compared at park level.

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Consistent collection and storage of SMART data has made it possible for UWA's protected area managers to establish the patrol effort and intensity within the protected areas over a given timeframe. The patrol effort and intensity can also be visualised in easy-to-interpret maps directly produced from SMART. UWA has also used SMART to discover the distribution and concentration of different illegal activities across their protected areas. This information is used to plan patrols intended to remove snares and other traps from the park in order to safeguard the wildlife.

Through this project, the team have learnt that for SMART to effectively support law enforcement, it is important to adopt uniform standards of equipment for data

collection and versions of SMART that are used across the protected area network; this calls for centralised management and decision making. In addition, simplifying the language used in data models has enhanced the accuracy of data collection. All rangers are not conversant with scientific names and the terminology of the ecology. Because of this, the previous SMART data model that had scientific species names did not make it easy for rangers to identify them. Once the names were simplified, by introducing common names, an improvement in data collection was seen.

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This article features project IWT029 “An integrated, multi-scale approach to combating wildlife trafficking in Uganda”, led by Wildlife Conservation Society, which works in Uganda.



WCS staff training rangers in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Credit: Andy Plumtre



A speedboat patrol looking for poachers, Credit: Wildlife Alliance

Wildlife Alliance, rangers, and the protection of forests and wildlife in the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape, Cambodia

The Cardamom Rainforest Landscape, Southwest Cambodia is critical for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, supporting more than 50 IUCN threatened species of vertebrates, whilst also being the country's most important watershed, largest climate regulator, and carbon sink. Wildlife Alliance's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund project is working with local communities and government to mitigate impacts of the illegal wildlife trade on the unique biodiversity of this landscape through a combination of developing community based ecotourism, and implementing effective law enforcement and patrolling.

The project supports 14 rangers from the Ministry of Environment and the Royal Gendarme Khmère, together with two Wildlife Alliance technical supervisors, who are based at the remote Chhay Areng ranger station in the heart of the rainforest. The role of these rangers is to prevent illegal poaching and hunting and to ensure offenders are apprehended and sent to the provincial court, 75km away. During the first year of project operations a total of 442 law enforcement patrols covered 18,230km resulting in the removal of 1,819 snares, the rescue of 41 live animals from the illegal wildlife trade, the confiscation of 77 chainsaws, 17 vehicles, and four guns, and 20 legal cases being filed against offenders. Live animals rescued from poachers by the patrol teams included one Sunda pangolin, *Manis javanica* (IUCN Critically Endangered), 27 Southeast Asian box turtles,

Cuora amboinensis (IUCN Vulnerable), and one Burmese python, *Python bivittatus* (IUCN Vulnerable). All were released back into the forest following IUCN protocols.



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Lida Leng, the Wildlife Alliance Law Enforcement Assistant said *“through ensuring patrol rangers are given the equipment and supervision required to effectively patrol the landscape and that they receive full health and life insurance we are able to keep them motivated and happy in often remote and difficult conditions in the forest. During the rainy seasons it rains heavily and knowing that the ranger station is fully equipped, and that they will have a hearty meal of rice at the end of the day, helps keep the rangers patrolling and protecting these critical forests”*.

Learn more about the work of Wildlife Alliance and their forest rangers here: <https://www.wildlifealliance.org/everything-is-connected/>

This article features project IWT035 “Sustainability through ecotourism: improving livelihoods and disrupting wildlife trade, Cambodia”, led by Wildlife Alliance, which works in Cambodia.



A camera trap photo of a tiger with a wild pig near Sama Dua village, Credit: WCS Indonesia

Strengthening community participation in mitigating human-tiger conflict in the Leuser landscape, Indonesia

Tigers were once widespread across the Indonesian island of Sumatra. However, due to poaching and habitat loss over the past century, and especially over the past 20 years, only two very large populations (100-150 individuals) of tigers remain: in the Kerinci Seblat landscape of west-central Sumatra, and the massive Leuser landscape of northern Sumatra. A third significant population of 40-50 adult tigers is in Bukit Barisan Selatan NP, in southern Sumatra.

The Leuser landscape includes more than 25,000 km² of continuous forest and, despite habitat loss over the past 50 years including legal and illegal logging and encroachment, Leuser remains the largest single block of forest in Sumatra. Leuser includes habitat ranging from lowland primary rainforests, to montane forest and sub-alpine habitats atop the highest peaks, several of which exceed 10,000 feet. The Leuser landscape is believed to support 100-150 tigers, making it one of the largest tiger populations in Southeast Asia. The natural carrying capacity of the Leuser landscape is thought to be 300-400 tigers.

Due to the nature of Leuser's topography and the agricultural practices found on Sumatra, the edges of much of the Leuser landscape and lowland areas are now a graded mix of secondary forests and agriculture, a setting in which wild pigs thrive. As wild pigs are a major prey species for tigers on Sumatra, they follow the pigs into this mosaic habitat where their encounters with people increase, leading to increased human-tiger conflict.

Before Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) engagement, the edges of much of Leuser had very high levels of retaliatory killing of tigers due to perceived or real human-tiger conflict, primarily when tigers killed livestock. Such human-tiger conflicts also acted as a cover for professional poaching, and tigers killed in 'conflict' frequently disappeared only to re-emerge in the illegal trade. WCS estimated that from 2006-2007, more than 47 tigers were killed in the Leuser landscape through deliberate poaching or retaliatory killing. A further 24 tigers were killed or captured in conflict or poaching incidents between 2008 and mid-2010.

Starting in 2007, WCS established human-wildlife conflict mitigation teams (Wildlife Response Unit), with a total of five teams by 2016. Maintaining these response teams is important to generate villagers support in tiger conservation. With the support from the IWT Challenge Fund (between April 2016-March 2018) and other donors, WCS has been able to maintain the operation of these teams.

“ There was only one tiger killed in all of 2014, and one in 2015 in contrast to an average of approximately 15 tigers killed or removed per year prior to WCS engagement ”



The WRU team assisting a villager in setting up a Tiger Proof Enclosure, Credit: WCS Indonesia

WCS conflict mitigation teams first ascertain areas of high conflict, then build communication networks through individuals called Community Wardens and localised hotlines in those conflict-prone regions. These teams have been highly successful in reducing the number of tigers killed or removed from the GLNP region due to conflict. For example, there was only one tiger killed in all of 2014, and one in 2015 in contrast to an average of approximately 15 tigers killed or removed per year prior to WCS engagement. Within the 24 months of IWT support, WRUs responded to 85 incidents of human-tiger conflict in 43 incidents in the Leuser landscape. Despite the loss of 25 livestock through tiger attacks there was no retaliatory action taken by the communities in any of these cases. This represents considerable progress, as previously tigers would be hunted down and shot by villagers.

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In addition, in areas prone to high human-tiger conflict, WRUs also support communities in building and maintaining Tiger Proof Enclosures, with a total of 273 Tiger Proof Enclosures constructed since 2008 until 2017 - the IWT project supported 47 new Tiger Proof Enclosures. These house domestic livestock at night so that they are safe from being preyed by tigers and reduce the incidents of tigers entering the villages. IWT

support to villagers has also been used to empower communities and to leverage financial support from the district government for continuation of human-wildlife conflict mitigation. This process is still on going, but is already proving successful, with several of Tiger Proof Enclosures built using a combination of financial support from villagers and local government.

“ The main objective for human-wildlife conflict mitigation is not to eliminate conflict, but to manage it by understanding ways to avoid human and wildlife casualties so that they can live side by side in harmony

Human-wildlife conflict will continue to exist in villages that are located near the wildlife habitats. The main objective for human-wildlife conflict mitigation is not to eliminate conflict, but to manage it by understanding ways to avoid human and wildlife casualties so that they can live side by side in harmony. WCS will continue to support the operation of human wildlife conflict teams in the Leuser landscape, to empower the community and encourage active government participation in dealing with human-wildlife conflict.

This article features project IWT027 “Strengthening institutional frameworks to combat wildlife trafficking in Indonesia 2”, led by Wildlife Conservation Society, which works in Indonesia.



Detection rats in the training facility, Credit: EWT/APOPO

Ratting on wildlife crime – an update

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and APOPO are examining the abilities of its African giant pouched rats (*Cricetomys ansorgei*) to detect wildlife contraband. These giant rats are in training to detect the world's most widely smuggled mammal, the pangolin, and the hardwood African Blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) that is commonly illegally logged and trafficked.

Eleven rats are undergoing training and have learned to indicate the presence of the two target scents: pangolin scales and blackwood, whilst ignoring common masking materials found in trafficking containers, such as coffee beans or washing powder.

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At the current advanced training phase rats are identifying pangolin and hardwood samples at 80% accuracy on average with very few indications on non-targets (false alarms)

All animals have successfully completed the early stages of training. At the current advanced training phase rats are identifying pangolin and hardwood samples at 80% accuracy on average with very few indications on non-targets (false alarms).

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The rats will soon advance to the final training phase where they will have to identify 12 targets within a set of 100 samples

Currently the rats are exposed to 50 samples per training session with only 12 targets presented (six pangolin samples and six hardwood samples). The rats will soon advance to the final training phase where they will have to identify 12 targets within a set of 100 samples.”

The rats will ultimately be trained to detect the targets within a mixture of non-target samples (e.g. a pangolin scale hidden in coffee beans). This will allow us to determine how much pangolin or hardwood needs to be present in a shipping container for the rats to detect it.

The knowledge we obtain from these laboratory experiments will allow us to explore the optimal method for the rats to combat trafficking in real-life settings.

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*This article features project IWT039 “A novel system to detect illegal wildlife in shipping containers”, led by The Endangered Wildlife Trust, which works in Tanzania. Read the first part to this article in our **last edition of the newsletter.***



The Wildlife Response Unit team assists villagers in setting up a Tiger Proof Enclosures, Credit: WCS Indonesia

Newsletter Contacts

If you have any general queries about how the IWT Challenge Fund operates please e-mail us at IllegalWildlifeTrade@defra.gsi.gov.uk

For any queries on project applications or existing projects please contact our IWT Administrators (LTS International) at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk

This is the second edition of the IWT Challenge Fund newsletter. The intention is that the newsletter will be produced quarterly. To include an article on your project in an upcoming edition, please contact us at IWT-Newsletter@ltsi.co.uk

The UK Government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund provides financial support to practical projects around the world which are:

- developing sustainable livelihoods and economic development, to benefit people directly affected by IWT
- strengthening law enforcement
- ensuring effective legal frameworks
- reducing demand for IWT products

To date through the Challenge Fund, around £18.5 million has been allocated to 61 projects.