

Newsletter

May 2018



Wild tiger and young cubs in India, Credit: Tigersintheforest

The UK government is hosting an international conference about the illegal wildlife trade from 10 to 11 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
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



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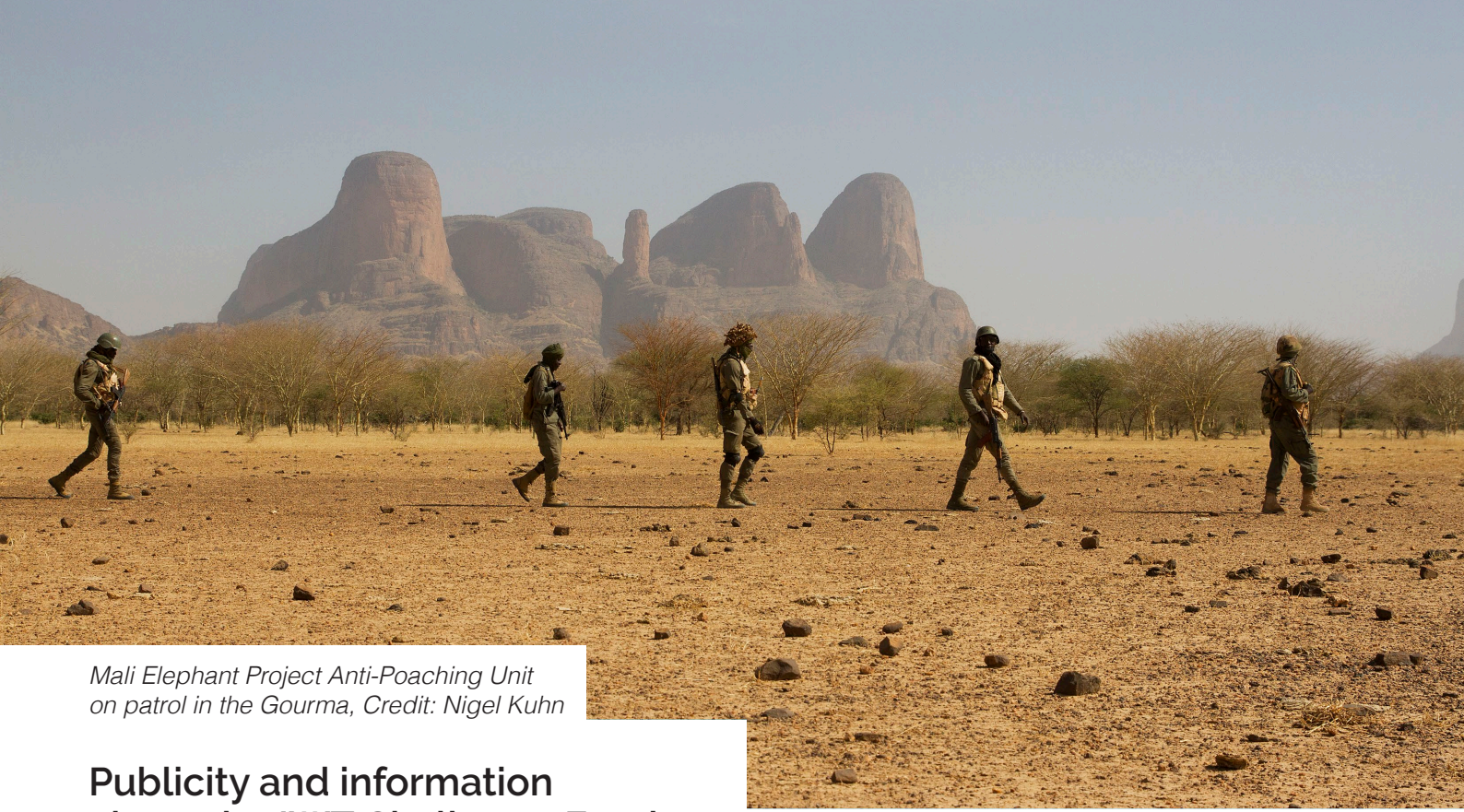
**[gov.uk/government/collections/
illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund)**



Trainees searching for wildlife in Bartang, Tajikistan, Credit: Panthera

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Mali Elephant Project Anti-Poaching Unit on patrol in the Gourma, Credit: Nigel Kuhn

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.



*Detection rat in training,
Credit: EWT/APOPO*

Introduction

Welcome to the first ever edition of the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund newsletter! The fund was started in 2014 following the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, to demonstrate the UK's commitment to tackling the trade worldwide. To date, the fund has supported 47 projects around the world with £14 million of financial support, and is currently in its 4th round of funding.

IWT Challenge Fund supports practical projects around the world. Projects work towards the four core objectives of the fund:

- 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

In this edition of the newsletter we invited projects to share updates on their work, highlighting how they have contributed towards meeting these objectives – their “Impact to Date”.

We present updates from projects on the ground in species range states, working to improve enforcement to tackle poaching. We also hear from projects which are developing innovative new approaches geared towards controlling the trade at key transit hotspots. And, finally, we hear from projects wrestling with the market forces driving the illegal trade, improving awareness of the issues surrounding IWT and striving to change consumer behaviours.



APOPO and EWT staff with the EWT rats, Credit: EWT/APOPO

Ratting on wildlife crime

We all know that dogs have an amazing sense of smell – so much so, they can be trained to sniff out drugs, ammunitions, and even cancer cells. Dogs are often used in national ports of entry and exit to detect wildlife contraband like rhino horn and elephant ivory. While dogs are a very effective and valuable tool in the fight against wildlife crime, they are not suited to working in all environments.

Shipping ports provide a very challenging environment for law enforcement as they move thousands of huge containers daily (the Dar es Salaam port in Tanzania moves over 600,000 containers per day). Disruptions in port operations are exceptionally costly, and inefficiencies cost some ports in the billions of US\$ per annum. Searching all these containers is logistically difficult and time consuming and in some of the best run ports in the world, only 3% of all incoming containers are scanned with x-ray. Thus, a novel method needs to be found to effectively detect wildlife contraband in this challenging environment.

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Giant African Pouched Rats could be the solution!

Giant African Pouched Rats could be the solution! They can be trained to detect and indicate items based on their smell, are fully trained in a matter of months, will work with any handler, and are relatively easy to keep and transport. Importantly, they are small and can be easily transported in confined environments - like ports.

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) Wildlife in Trade Programme has partnered with APOPO in Tanzania, an NGO that focuses on training Giant African Pouched Rats to detect various items of interest. Their flagship projects train rats to detect landmines and tuberculosis. They have detected over 106,000 explosives in Angola, Mozambique, and Cambodia to date and over 12,000 new tuberculosis cases. The EWT and APOPO are investigating the viability of training these rats to detect wildlife contraband in shipping ports.

APOPO has been training 11 Giant Pouched Rats for the EWT, to detect pangolin scales and a hard wood called black wood or *Dalbergia*. The rats have thus far performed very well, and they are able to detect a target scent amongst other items that are commonly transported with the contraband like coffee, socks, electrical cables and dengue beans. The next step is to develop a system that will be suitable for the port environment, which will be done in collaboration with port and customs authorities to ensure that the system is both workable for the rats and practical. It is also important to measure exactly how effective the rats are in detecting contraband. To do this, we will also be measuring the rats' abilities to detect pangolin and hard wood among other masking materials and odours. We hope to determine how much pangolin or hardwood needs to be present in a shipping container for the rats to detect it. We believe that this proof-of-principle project is truly just the beginning of us discovering the many uses for these rats in the wildlife sector - imagine them searching vehicles at game reserve gates!

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.



Group photo of the Global Coalition, Credit: WWF US

Chinese internet companies are leading the world on combating wildlife cybercrime

Rapidly developing digital technology has brought monumental change to global commercial transactions. Yet, alongside the everyday benefits brought by evolving technology, the internet has also provided new channels for criminals to trade in illegal products, including species of wild and endangered fauna and flora.

Incidences of wildlife crime that involved internet transactions ('wildlife cybercrime') have been rapidly increasing, forcing diligent collaboration between government regulators and the private sector in China to help address this emerging sector of online criminality.

Direct action by online trading platforms and social media is a necessary component of solutions to combat wildlife cybercrime. This responsibility has been clarified under China's updated Animal Protection Law which came into force in 2017; Article 3.32 states that illegal trade and utilisation of wildlife and its commodities are prohibited on any online platform.

Supported by Chinese government authorities and TRAFFIC, internet companies based in China announced the formation of an alliance to combat wildlife cybercrime on 22 November 2017. The move was initiated by

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three China-based internet giants—Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent—and subsequently garnered further support from an additional eight Chinese internet companies.

The companies in the alliance are committed to:

- Strictly adhering to China's Wild Animal Protection Law and incorporating Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) principles with Zero Tolerance towards illegal wildlife trade;
- Detect and remove illegal wildlife trade advertisements on their platforms and send warnings to and prohibit their users from releasing such information;
- Actively assist law enforcement agencies in investigations and prosecutions;
- Enhance collaboration among companies, share information including techniques and experience in dealing with illegal wildlife trade online, and establish sound collaboration mechanisms;
- Apply advanced technologies, such as big data analysis and artificial intelligence to detect illegal wildlife trade;
- Advocate for Green Consumption measures on their respective platforms to contribute towards the government's drive for "ecological civilization";
- Increase staff capacity to identify illegal wildlife products and raise awareness about wildlife cybercrime.



Training group at Baidu,
Credit: TRAFFIC

After this pioneering effort in China, TRAFFIC, WWF, and IFAW facilitated further collaborative engagement on a global scale. On 7 March 2018, all the Chinese alliance members joined together with Google, Facebook and other international tech companies to form a Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online. The coalition includes the following founding members: Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, Kuaishou, Baixing, Huaxia Collection, Shengshi Collection, Wen Wan Tian Xia, Zhongyikupai, Zhuanzhuan, 58 Group, Qyer, Google, Facebook, Instagram, Microsoft, eBay, Etsy, Mall for Africa, Pinterest and Ruby Lane. Coalition members have pledged to collectively reduce wildlife trafficking across platforms by 80% by 2020. Each company will develop and implement policies to help end wildlife trafficking online.

“ all the Chinese alliance members joined together with Google, Facebook and other international tech companies to form a Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online

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TRAFFIC's project funded by the UK Government through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund will support Chinese internet companies to share innovative solutions through this global coalition as part of collective efforts to address wildlife cybercrime. Meanwhile, TRAFFIC will help Chinese government authorities to enhance their efforts in combating illegal wildlife trade online through sharing China's success with other countries.

This article features project IWT042 "Combatting Global Wildlife Cybercrime: Building on Success in China", led by TRAFFIC International, which works in China, Vietnam, Tanzania and Cameroon.



Uganda Wildlife Authority Community Conservation staff participating in the training programme, Credit: Julia Baker

Mainstreaming community engagement into park-level planning in Uganda

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) was one of the first recipients of a grant from the IWT Challenge Fund. Working with the Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science (ICCS) at the University of Oxford, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) we undertook a project (IWT001) to better understand the drivers behind local involvement in wildlife crime so as to help UWA respond more effectively. The project built on work that we had previously conducted at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park with a Darwin Initiative grant, which provided a strong basis for our partnership with UWA.

This project, which focused on Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks (Uganda's two biggest protected areas) showed that while poverty is one driver of poaching and IWT, many people poach because they are angry about human-wildlife conflict or because there are no other ways of earning money. While recognising the importance of effective (but fair) law enforcement, we found that from a community perspective, the greatest reductions in wildlife crime were likely to result from mitigating human-wildlife conflict – including through supporting community-based wildlife scouts - and establishing small “wildlife-friendly” enterprises as a source of income.

Working with UWA wardens at each park (including both those charged with law enforcement and those charged with community engagement) we developed a “Community-based Wildlife Crime Prevention Action Plan” for each park setting out a series of activities to complement law enforcement and to address the community-level drivers of wildlife crime. We were delighted that UWA HQ endorsed these plans and that they were presented at a side event at the CITES CoP in October 2016 and then formally launched at our end of project workshop in March 2017 by the Executive Director.

“ Our approach includes supporting community-based wildlife scout initiatives to address human-wildlife conflict and increase reporting on wildlife crime ”

Last year we received a second IWT Fund grant (IWT036) to work with UWA to pilot the implementation of the Murchison Falls Park Action Plan. Our approach includes supporting community-based wildlife scout initiatives to address human-wildlife conflict and increase reporting on wildlife crime and, in partnership with rural development specialists Village Enterprise, establishing new enterprises as a source of income for the households that volunteer as wildlife scouts.



Credit: Julia Baker

One challenge UWA highlighted in our previous project was how to ensure coordination with the wide range of stakeholders who are investing in conservation at Murchison Falls – from small community-based organisations, to international NGOs to the French oil giant Total. A key activity for us will thus be convening a Murchison Falls Coordination Forum, under the leadership of Uganda Conservation Forum. To complement these on-the-ground activities we are also working closely with UWA's Community Conservation Department and building the capacity of their wardens and rangers to better engage with local people, more effectively target their interventions, and raise their profile as a key element of UWA's overall approach to tackling wildlife crime.

“ covering a wide range of issues from gender to conflict resolution to reporting

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Our first event was a 5-day training programme in March 2018 involving the 23 Community Conservation Wardens from UWA's protected areas, and covering a wide range of issues from gender to conflict resolution to reporting.

Its early days for this new project, but the partnership established with UWA, and the enthusiasm shown by their committed community conservation staff bodes well for a much more holistic and effective approach to tackling IWT – one that supports, and has the support of, local communities.

Written by Dilys Roe, Henry Travers, Julia Baker and Geoffrey Mwedde. This article features projects IWT001 “Building capacity for pro-poor responses to wildlife crime in Uganda” and IWT036 “Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT”, led by the International Institute of Environment and Development, which work in Uganda. Further details of the projects and links to relevant publications are available on IIED's website for both [IWT001](#) and [IWT036](#).



Credit: JABRUSON

Critical evidence to drive a reduction in Cambodia's ivory trade

A grant from the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is helping Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) to tackle illegal ivory trade in Cambodia. The funding is helping increase knowledge of Cambodian ivory markets and trade networks, and is developing a database of genetic markers for identifying the origins of ivory. This crucial information will then be used by FFI to support effective interventions and policy to stop illegal trade in ivory.

Shifting ivory markets in Southeast Asia

Cambodia has been identified as a country 'important to watch' for illegal ivory trade by the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), as it has the potential to become a major country for ivory sale in the future. There is concern that China's near complete ban on ivory trade might shift Chinese demand for ivory to other countries such as Cambodia.

In 2015 and 2016, FFI conducted market surveys to investigate the current level of ivory trade and consumer base in three major Cambodian cities: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Siem Reap. The data collected suggests that the country's domestic ivory market may be growing. Many of the shops and retailers selling ivory products were aimed at Chinese tourists.

One year into the Defra grant, FFI has been able to build on its understanding of Cambodia's ivory markets through

continued market surveys in these three cities. The results from the first year confirm that Cambodia's ivory is expanding, with the value of ivory documented in market surveys in November 2017 eleven times higher than in surveys in 2015. Nearly a third of the shops selling ivory were Chinese-owned, with over a quarter also admitting to selling ivory originating from Africa.



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Using DNA to help understand poaching networks

Being able to identify whether the ivory comes from African or Asian elephants is important in better understanding poaching and trade networks.

The grant is also enabling FFI and RZSS to build on their existing work with the Royal University of Phnom Penh to further support Cambodia's first conservation genetics laboratory, which they helped to create in 2016.

In the project's first year, this funding has enabled the laboratory to procure essential equipment and provide



Credit: Jeremy Holden, FFI

training to its staff enabling the analysis of ivory. Using elephant dung previously collected by FFI and the Cambodian Elephant Conservation Group, the project has produced genetic markers that will allow confiscated ivory to be tested to provide critical information on its origin, with four pieces analysed so far.

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Helping the Royal Government of Cambodia to close policy loopholes

African elephant populations have declined by 30% between 2007 and 2014 and it is estimated that more than 30,000 elephants are killed every year for their ivory. Through its market surveys, FFI has determined that the ivory currently on sale in Cambodia likely comes from African elephants.

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The sale of ivory has been prohibited in Cambodia since 1994, but this does not include ivory that originates from outside of Cambodia, such as African ivory

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The sale of ivory has been prohibited in Cambodia since 1994, but this does not include ivory that originates from outside of Cambodia, such as African ivory. Under the Defra grant, FFI is working with government partners to draft new legislation that addresses this gap in legislation, and which should be passed in the next year.

All of these actions will help to disrupt trade networks and ultimately reduce Cambodia’s role in the transit and marketing of ivory, making illegal trade just that bit harder.

This article features project IWT044 “Critical evidence to drive a reduction in Cambodia’s ivory trade”, led by Fauna and Flora International, which works in Cambodia.



TWC Trainees ready to hike in Alichur, Credit: Panthera

In the background no more: snow leopard conservation empowers local women in Tajikistan

Community-based conservancies (CBCs) are local organisations united towards the cause of sustainably managing their village lands and associated natural resources. Granted authority by local and regional government bodies, over 3000 km² are now protected in this manner in the remote Pamir Mountains of eastern Tajikistan through Panthera's work with local partners which began a decade ago. Here, community rangers actively patrol their lands to prevent poaching and monitor wildlife. Their goal is to stabilise and increase wild ungulate populations to allow sustainable use of wildlife through ungulate hunting and non-invasive tourism to provide an alternative income stream, as well as support and increase their local snow leopard populations.

To date, ranger and tourist guide work has always been conducted by the men of these villages in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region. Community meetings were entirely populated by men while the women carried out domestic duties; our interaction with local women was primarily within their homes. But through these limited interactions, we realised that these strong women represented a potentially powerful force for wildlife conservation. After discussions with the male leaders of two conservancies, "Burgut" in Alichur Village and "Parcham" in Ravmed Village, we found they were very receptive to the idea and have given their enthusiastic support to the project we launched in 2017.

Through Panthera's Tajik Women and Conservation Initiative (TWC), we have begun training 18 women from these two conservancies to become both wildlife rangers in the conservancies, and mountain and hunting guides for tourists. Our goal is to graduate ten successful

women from this pilot programme and then expand to additional conservancies in Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

The three-year programme for these women began in summer 2017 with basic backcountry hiking and guide training. Instruction continued last winter for the nine trainees from Alichur, with training provided by hunter Kelli Poole from Montana, USA, including identifying individual mountain ungulates to hunt, wilderness survival and safety, and camp management skills. In between trainings, TWC trainees shadowed hunts, assisted in guiding eco-tourists, and some are already working as rangers in their conservancies. Training will continue in summer 2018 with components including wilderness first aid and a more in-depth wildlife curriculum.

This programme provides an opportunity for snow leopard conservation to empower women and offer them a chance to be on an equal footing with men as rangers and guides. Our TWC Initiative Coordinator Shirin Muhametkadyr Kyzy of Panthera Kyrgyzstan, remarked on our impact to date: "The women were so motivated, full of energy, with an open heart to a completely new experience, eyes sparkling with enthusiasm ready to go and start their new career. The support from the men-rangers in the two conservancies, their families, sisters and brothers who encouraged the women's choices was outstanding."

We are grateful to the IWT Challenge Fund for supporting and empowering the active participation of Tajik women in conservation.

This article features project IWT037 "Conservation and community resilience: IWT Alternatives in snow leopard range", led by Panthera, which works in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.



Credit: Wim Ebersohn

Securing elephants in Chuilexi conservancy

Northern Mozambique's immense Niassa Reserve (4.2 million hectares) is one of the last great wilderness areas in Africa. Fauna & Flora International (FFI) has supported Niassa – and impoverished communities whose livelihoods depend on the reserve's natural resources – for 15 years, making tremendous strides towards reversing declining wildlife populations after years of conservation neglect.

The size of Niassa is its greatest attribute. However, it also presents its greatest management challenge. With the exponential rise in elephant poaching for ivory in 2012, the reserve was broken up into manageable concessions. FFI took the strategic decision to secure a key area of the reserve with the greatest wildlife densities. Chuilexi Conservancy, representing 14% of Niassa Reserve, was the result. The conservancy is a critical refuge for Mozambique's beleaguered elephants, which are being devastated by poaching for the illegal ivory trade.

Building blocks

FFI's immediate priority in Chuilexi was to combat the poaching onslaught by establishing conservancy-wide anti-poaching coverage. FFI is helping Chuilexi's growing ranger force to carry out anti-poaching and law enforcement activities throughout the conservancy. Today, rangers patrol Chuilexi thanks to a vehicle fleet, surveillance aircraft and nine airstrips, a state-of-the-art radio communications system, an extensive 750 km road network and six permanent ranger outposts.



The conservancy is a critical refuge for Mozambique's beleaguered elephants, which are being devastated by poaching for the illegal ivory trade



Power to the people

With Defra's support, FFI has made strides towards laying foundations for positive, long-term engagement of communities in the future success of the conservancy. The Defra grant has helped develop community incentives to protect wildlife through conservation-linked social and economic benefits. For example:

- A micro-credit scheme has been introduced, benefitting 60 women to date and helping to provide more employment opportunities for the women of Chuilexi, as well as improving household income.
- Since Defra funding began in April 2016, 'Lion Scholarships' have supported nine girls and nine boys to begin attending school, linking education benefits to lion conservation helps to provide further incentives for local communities to protect wildlife.
- Installing a seven-kilometre electric fence and training 15 community rangers has helped to reduce human-wildlife conflict – an issue prioritised by communities enduring daily crop raiding. There have been no recorded incursions by wildlife since.
- Tourism enterprise in Chuilexi has generated over US\$50,000 of income to Chuilexi in 2016.

These benefits have contributed to an increase in support for and trust in the conservancy amongst local people. 69% of household survey participants, at the end of year 2, said that Chuilexi is trusted a lot by their community and 77% said they think it is important to protect wildlife.

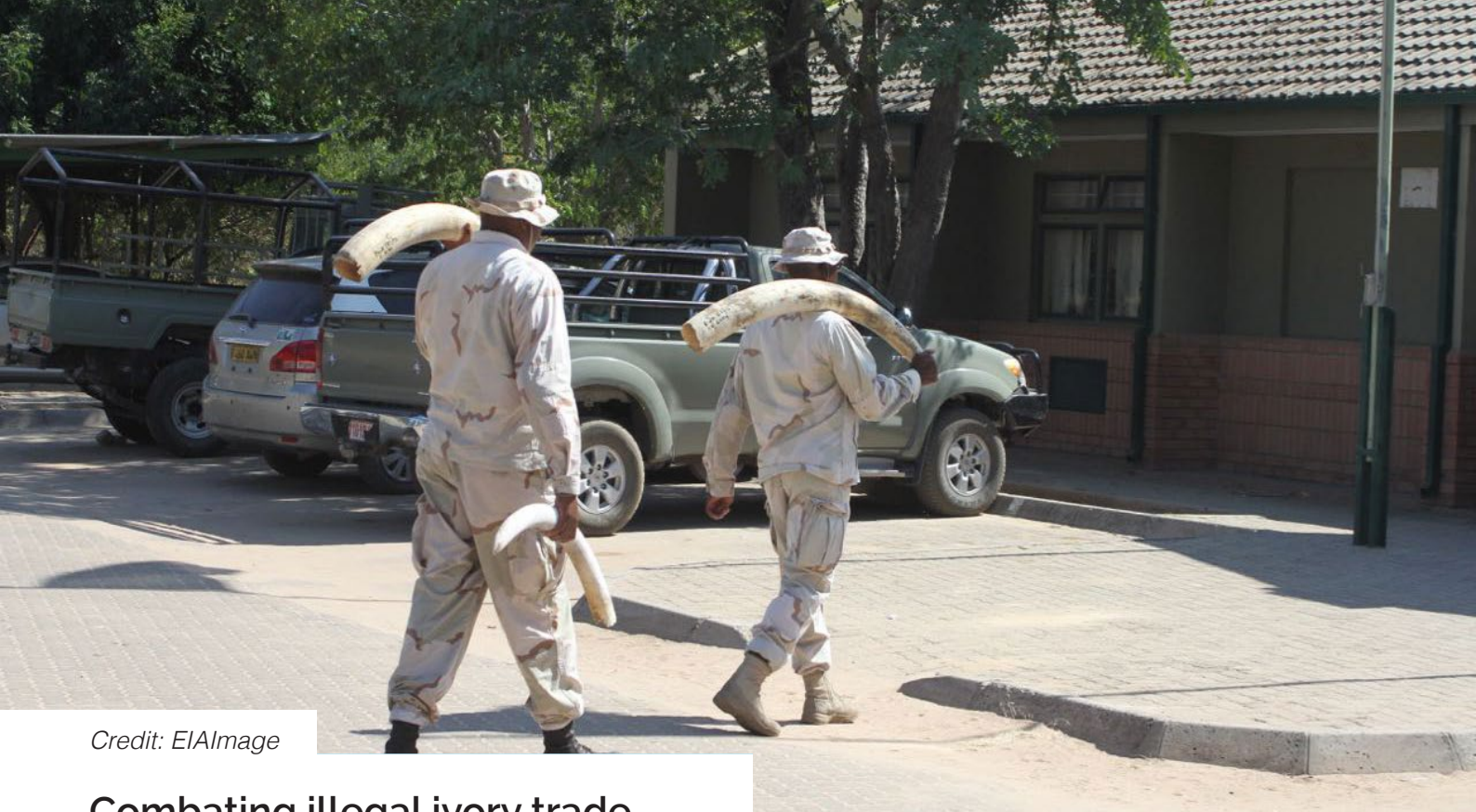
Moreover, Defra funding has enabled FFI to work with local men and women to create locally-led institutions that will form the basis of long-term effective community engagement, this will in time also include an equitable and transparent mechanism for sharing conservation benefits that will directly profit the communities. FFI's experience has shown that this is a vital component of effective and sustainable conservancies, and in winning the fight against illegal wildlife trade.

The poaching crisis is not over, and FFI continues to work hard to protect Chuilexi and its besieged elephants. However, Defra's IWT Challenge Fund has made a valuable contribution to Chuilexi Conservancy in maintaining viable elephant and lion populations. In laying the foundations for long-term engagement of local men and women, it has also enabled the conservancy to make considerable progress towards communities actively participating in and benefiting from Chuilexi's effective conservation management. Community based approaches are very long term and more than two years are needed to demonstrate the tangible impact that community engagement has had on IWT in Chuilexi, but with the help of IWT Challenge Fund this is just the beginning.

This article features project IWT034 "Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement", led by Fauna and Flora International, which works in Mozambique.



Credit: Wim Ebersohn



Credit: EIAImage

Combating illegal ivory trade through interactive training tools

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) not only works to expose environmental crime and abuse but also works with governments to try to raise awareness and improve capacity.

For the past two-and-a-half years, we captured best-practice enforcement techniques used to combat the illegal ivory trade, travelling to more than 12 countries to film and interview enforcement practitioners in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The results have been packaged up into an interactive training tool to assist enforcement personnel and agencies around the world.

This training tool includes a short film that provides a broad overview of the entire illegal ivory trade chain, and the enforcement responses at different points. Linked within this are 17 short modules providing examples on the more specialised techniques such as the use of trained sniffer dogs, crime scene forensics and controlled deliveries. English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swahili, Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai and Vietnamese language versions will be produced.

“ we captured best-practice enforcement techniques used to combat the illegal ivory trade

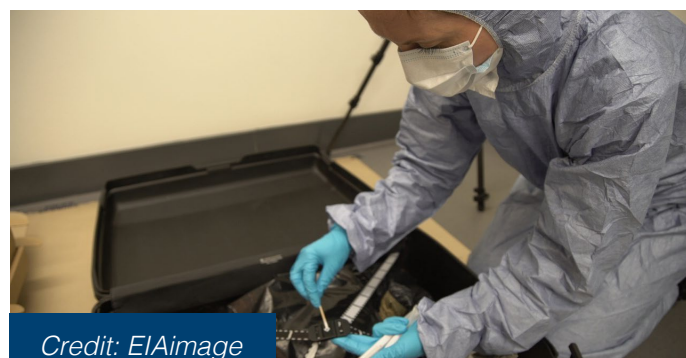
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We're extremely grateful to the rangers, customs officers and many other types of enforcement personnel who

took the time to help us and, in many cases, granted us rare behind-the-scenes access. We'd also like to extend our gratitude to the Defra Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund for helping to make ambitious, game-changing projects such as this possible.

We're incredibly proud of what we've achieved together and are confident that it will be a vital training resource in the fight against the ivory trade.

This article features project IWT030 "Combating illegal ivory trade: training film to aid enforcement officers", led by Environmental Investigation Agency, which works in Central and East Africa, South East Asia and the UK.



Credit: EIAImage

Ivory enforcement: an online training tool

For security reasons, we aren't able to share the website with the general public since it is aimed at the enforcement community but we hope you enjoy a short snapshot of the online tool available on **YouTube**.

Image above shows a forensic practitioner being filmed for module on Managing Seized Ivory.



Critically endangered cockatoos were rescued after being found stuffed in water bottles, Credit: Suryanto/Anadolu Ajansi

The revision of Indonesia's conservation law – harnessing the power of public opinion to stop wildlife trafficking

Public opinion plays an important but often undervalued role in driving policy reforms. For politicians, whose jobs depend on the public vote, public opinion is everything. In Indonesia, a country endowed with perhaps the greatest concentration of marine and terrestrial biodiversity on earth, and where wildlife trafficking is driving species loss at an alarming rate, wildlife protection has historically taken a back seat to the wider economic and social concerns driving the majority of the political agenda. However, there are now positive signs that this trend is shifting, and that new approaches to tackling wildlife trafficking are yielding powerful results.

In May 2015, an Indonesian news story broke across the world - dozens of Yellow Crested Cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) were seized by Indonesian customs officials from a shipment leaving Surabaya, one of Indonesia's major port cities. Destined for sale in overseas markets, each cockatoo was worth up to £650 to illegal traders, a significant financial incentive in a country where the average monthly income is around £125.

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Although already protected under Indonesian law and a critically endangered species, this was only one of the hundreds of illegal wildlife trafficking cases uncovered by the Indonesian authorities every year. What made this case different?

Recognising that public interest in the case within Indonesia was extremely high, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), through their IWT Challenge Fund project, moved quickly to develop an **online petition with Change.org** for the Conservation Policy Working Group (*POKJA Kebijakan Konservasi*) to call for an urgent revision of Indonesia's principal wildlife protection and conservation law (Law No.5/1990). The petition quickly gained massive public support, gathering signatures from more than 322,000 people in less than 3 months, an unprecedented level of interest for an environmental petition in Indonesia.

Although WCS had been supporting the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in revising Indonesia's conservation law prior to the breaking of the cockatoo story, moving quickly to harness and amplify public opinion gave this work the perfect momentum to rapidly accelerate this process. In its 25 years in force, the law had yet to receive any revisions or even a review by Parliament, and its multiple loopholes and inaccuracies meant that it was no longer strong enough to prevent the trafficking of protected and endangered wildlife in Indonesia. And yet within a month of the cockatoo seizure, after several meetings between WCS and Members of Parliament and the Minister of Environment and Forestry to present the petition, a formal decision was made to begin the process of revising the law.



Surabaya, Indonesia, where the cockatoos were seized, Credit: Everybody Sinks Sarco CC BY-SA 2.0 via Flickr

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Once the revision is finalised, Indonesia's legal framework for conservation and wildlife protection will be substantively overhauled, increasing sentences and fines for offenders to reduce the temptation to engage in wildlife trafficking, and making sure that the law allows the Indonesian authorities to keep pace with poachers, traders and traffickers for the next decade.

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Two years later in December 2017, with continued Defra support for ongoing technical meetings with the Government, a new draft law had been prepared and the Indonesian Parliament had agreed to schedule the revision of the law as a priority for 2018.

Once the revision is finalised, Indonesia's legal framework for conservation and wildlife protection will be substantively overhauled, increasing sentences and fines for offenders to reduce the temptation to engage in wildlife trafficking, and making sure that the law allows the Indonesian authorities to keep pace with poachers, traders and traffickers for the next decade. This case serves as an important reminder that, if harnessed well, public opinion can be a powerful tool in setting policy objectives, and in the age of social media and increased connectivity, recognising and amplifying these inflection points that demonstrate support for conservation is easier and more crucial than ever. For now, WCS Indonesia will continue to ensure that public attention remains focused on pushing the revision of Indonesia's conservation law over the finishing line within 2018.

Written by Sofi Mardiah (WCS) and Indra Exploitasia (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Government of Indonesia). This article features project IWT016 and IWT027 "Strengthening institutional frameworks to combat wildlife trafficking in Indonesia", led by Wildlife Conservation Society, which works in Indonesia.



Credit: Big-headed turtle emerging from its shell, Credit: Cris Hagen

Turning adversity into a bright future: hundreds of Big-Headed Turtles confiscated in Burma (Myanmar) used to establish a new conservation breeding programme

With lengthy, porous and conflict-ridden borders, traversed by major trade routes, Burma (Myanmar) has long been a conduit for illegal wildlife. Burma (Myanmar)'s 27 species of turtles - eight of which are endemic or near-endemic - have proved profitable for traffickers, and almost every population of turtles has been driven to near-extinction by a rampant and uncontrolled harvest.

Although trafficking in wildlife is prohibited under Burmese law, enforcement has been very limited due to low resources and personnel, coupled with a lack of expertise for handling confiscated wildlife. The latter concern is especially relevant for turtles, as they are usually traded alive, and after being confiscated authorities then have to care for large numbers of individuals, many of which are already in extremely poor physical condition.

Over the last few years the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), together with the Burma (Myanmar) Forest Department, have established a Turtle Rescue Centre in north-eastern Burma (Myanmar), situated on the main Mandalay-Lashio

highway, a major trafficking route into southern China. The mission of the Centre is to care for confiscated turtles with the goal of rehabilitating and returning them to the wild. The Centre has also played a key role in raising awareness about the plight of the country's threatened turtles.

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The mission of the Centre is to care for confiscated turtles with the goal of rehabilitating and returning them to the wild

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The Turtle Rescue Centre faced its first major challenge in November 2016, when officials confiscated over 1000 Big-headed Turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) being warehoused at a clandestine facility in eastern Burma (Myanmar). After suffering months of ill-treatment and neglect, many of the turtles were near-death. Indeed, authorities were alerted to the situation after neighbours complained of an overwhelming smell of decay emanating from the compound. Unfortunately, police and customs officials knew little about the extremely specialised needs of this unusual species, and in the days following the seizure, many turtles succumbed; ultimately only about 100 turtles survived. These representatives of a highly endangered and little-known species of turtles, will now become the nucleus



A surviving adult Big-headed turtle, rescued from the illegal trade, Credit: Tint Lwin

of a captive-breeding and assurance colony, producing offspring for release into the national protected area system.

Important lessons were evident in the wake of this confiscation, and with support from the IWT Challenge Fund, a team of national and international specialists was assembled by WCS and TSA to provide suitable care for the survivors, and conduct training workshops to familiarize border law enforcement personnel with trade regulations, species identification, and protocols for post-confiscation care of live animals, especially turtles.

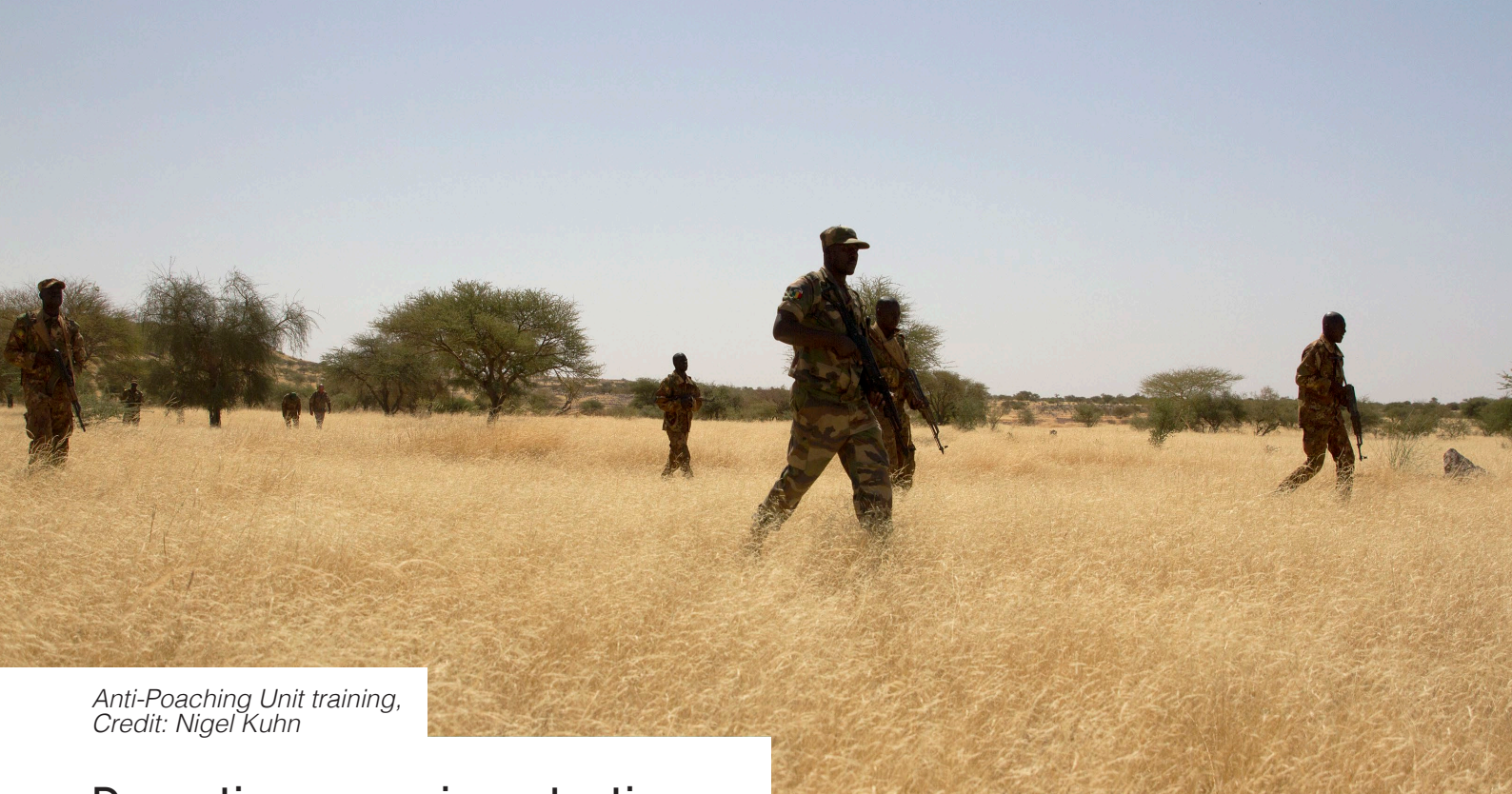
These efforts paid off in late 2017 when a second seizure of over 500 Big-headed Turtles occurred. This time, there was close coordination between government authorities and the rapid response team, and appropriate care was immediately administered, with the turtles quickly transferred to the Turtle Rescue Centre. The results were an astounding turn-around, and not a single confiscated turtle was lost.

The turtles will either be repatriated to the wild as part of an experimental programme to evaluate release

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These representatives of a highly endangered and little-known species of turtles, will now become the nucleus of a captive-breeding and assurance colony, producing offspring for release into the national protected area system
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strategies, or they will be incorporated into the nascent assurance colony. In February 2018, we received a generous private donation to construct a state-of-the-art facility at the Turtle Rescue Centre, to house the world's first Big-headed turtle breeding colony in the species' native range.

This article features project IWT023 “Securing the gateway - reducing wildlife trafficking from Myanmar to China”, led by Wildlife Conservation Society, which works in China and Burma (Myanmar). For more information about WCS work in Burma (Myanmar), see - <https://myanmar.wcs.org>



*Anti-Poaching Unit training,
Credit: Nigel Kuhn*

Dramatic success in protecting Mali's elephants, but it must be sustained

Despite a surge in poaching combined with a deepening insurgency, Mali has deployed its first ever anti-poaching unit to protect the remarkable desert-adapted elephants. The unit became fully operational in February 2017 and no elephant deaths due to poaching have been recorded since, despite high levels of violence associated with the current insurgency, a deteriorating security situation, and a government in disarray, seemingly unable to address the structural issues that contributed to the 2012 crisis.

This is down from a high of 63 elephants lost in the first 6 months of 2015 and, thanks to timely support from the UK government's IWT Challenge Fund, the **Mali Elephant Project** was able to respond by working with the government and international partners in Mali.

Poaching was unknown before the crisis of 2012, when the retreat of government and the occupation of the elephant range by armed jihadist and rebel groups rendered the area lawless. The Mali Elephant Project's **award-winning** work with local communities in providing benefits from elephant conservation provided a strong base from which to respond to the advent of elephant poaching and youth radicalisation.

Communities across the elephant range mobilised to protect elephants through elders establishing the social value that poachers were thieves, depriving local people of the benefits of elephant presence; supported by a vigilance network of local youth who detected poaching and discovered the identities of perpetrators. This contained poaching to 20 animals over three years until a

sudden involvement of international trafficking networks coupled with decreasing security caused the escalation at the beginning of 2015.

An armed enforcement capacity was essential but became increasingly difficult to mobilise as the insurgency shifted its focus to central Mali over those two years. The elephant range was in pole position, straddling trafficking routes and the open border area between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

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Despite a surge in poaching combined with a deepening insurgency, Mali has deployed its first ever anti-poaching unit to protect the remarkable desert-adapted elephants.

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Pre-conflict field studies suggested a population of around 500 elephants (although aerial sample counts tended to record 300-350). 20 were lost between 2012 and 2015 and another 143 over the next two years. In January 2016 it was estimated that if the 2015 poaching rate continued, population projections suggested that this internationally important elephant population could disappear by 2021.

It took two years to overcome a string of challenges in creating and mobilising anti-poaching capacity, but thanks to the dedication of Chengeta Wildlife's trainers, the result is a mixed unit of Malian foresters and soldiers, trained in a doctrine that is intelligence-based and adapted to the conditions of high insecurity. The doctrine



The Anti-Poaching Unit medic providing treatment for a child, Credit: Nigel Kuhn

is such that the unit builds on and complements the work already undertaken by the Mali Elephant Project in supporting local communities to protect elephants through empowering them to find solutions that benefit both people and elephants. The unit's method of operating is particularly effective when balanced with an approach to conservation that engages the local population in the conservation effort. Even more so, if they receive **benefits from conservation**, the operating philosophy successfully adapted to Malian culture by the **WILD Foundation** and its Canadian project partner, **International Conservation Fund of Canada**.

In the villages, camps and hamlets visited by the APU, they were called the *armée gentille* ("kind army") because of the community-friendly approach and the medical assistance administered to the most deprived: the women, children, and elderly.

The two-pronged approach (community empowerment plus government enforcement) to anti-poaching also has

relevance for stabilization efforts, as it reflects a need to balance investment in appropriate security-focused responses with support for responses that address the core drivers of conflict and embrace peacebuilding and development approaches implemented at the local level.

Despite the insurgency, Mali now has two tools at its disposal to protect its elephants: the community engagement work undertaken by the Mali Elephant Project and the new anti-poaching unit. However, this remarkable achievement needs sustained support by the Malian government and its international partners to prevent the slaughter of these unique and enigmatic elephants.

This article features project IWT018 "Developing long-term law enforcement capacity to protect the Mali elephants", led by The WILD Foundation, which works in Mali and Burkina Faso.



Rangers discussing patrol tactics near Kasungu National Park, Credit: Joseph K Haldeman

IFAW and partners – breaking the chain in Malawi's wildlife crime

In the past 24 months, support from the IWT Challenge Fund has significantly contributed to successes in the fight against ivory trafficking and illegal wildlife trade in Malawi.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and partners, specifically the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT) and the Department National Parks & Wildlife of Malawi, have significantly contributed to hundreds of IWT wildlife criminals being brought to book in the past 24 months.

While Malawi's elephant populations are substantially lower than those of its neighbours, its geographical location makes it both an important source and transit hotspot for smuggling and poaching. One of the most effective mechanisms in countering illegal wildlife crimes has been establishment of a government lead specialised investigation unit, together with other community-based law enforcement initiatives.

“ While Malawi has been a long-standing proponent of stopping the illegal trade in ivory and trafficking of wildlife through a moratorium on domestic ivory trade and other policy initiatives, there have been gaps in enforcing these actions due to capacity and resources

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While Malawi has been a long-standing proponent of stopping the illegal trade in ivory and trafficking of wildlife through a moratorium on domestic ivory trade and other policy initiatives, there have been gaps in enforcing these actions due to capacity and resources. This is where the “Disrupting Ivory Trafficking Conduits with Coordinated Law Enforcement in Malawi” project has had a significant impact.

Since April 2016 there have been some significant successes to report. From 2011 to 2015 there were only 65 wildlife crime cases prosecuted throughout all of Malawi. However, since March 2016, 189 arrests have been made directly as a result of our development of effective Community Enforcement Networks (CENs) and Wildlife Crime Investigation Units (WCIU) – referred to as CEN-WCIU.

“ Importantly, fines imposed on criminals have been greatly increased over the life of this project

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Importantly, fines imposed on criminals have been greatly increased over the life of this project – from a previous maximum of MKW40,000 to MKW2,250,000 (GBP39 to GBP2,195).

Overall, through IWT Challenge Fund's support, the impact on wildlife crime prevention has been a resounding success. The project has been effective in



*A Malawian police officer with a confiscated leopard skin,
Credit: Joseph K Haldeman*

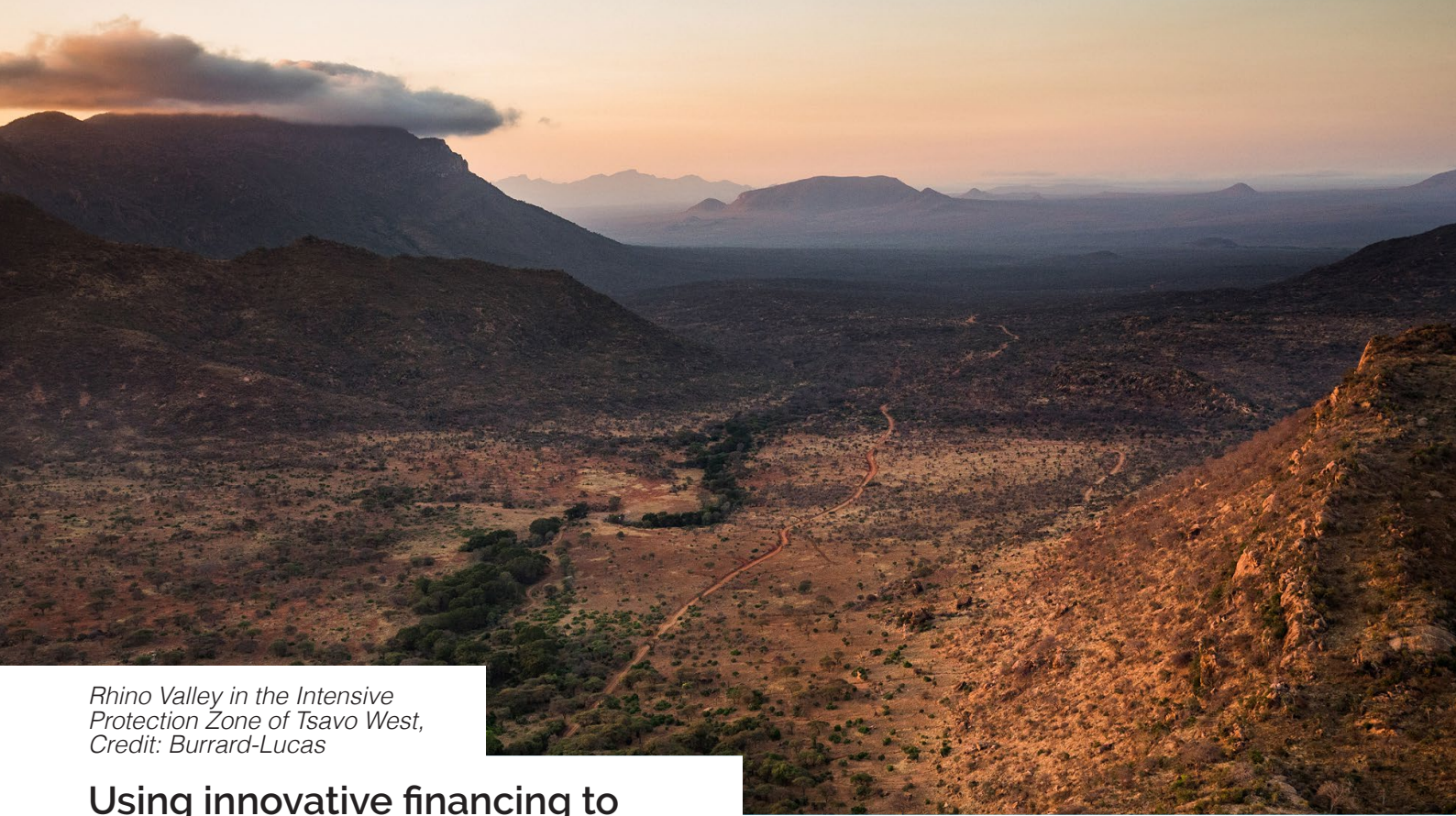
reaching all the objectives set out in the programme, while convincingly demonstrating its impact in disrupting and dismantling wildlife crime syndicates. This positive impact has placed mounting pressure on those intent on committing wildlife crimes at all levels: locally, nationally and regionally.

One of the challenges in combatting cross-border illegal wildlife trade is in establishing channels of cooperation between countries. Through the IWT project we have managed to facilitate regional workshops with participants from Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. This regional approach has proved invaluable in improving cross-border collaboration between enforcement officials.

This work of this project is considered vital by the Malawi Government, and the DNPW Director, Mr Brighton Kumchedwa, refers to it as critical in helping countrywide efforts to fighting wildlife crime.

Finally as this project draws to a close, we are happy to note that new funding has been secured to continue the work of IFAW, LWT and partners – this is sure recognition of the importance of the work started with IWT Challenge Fund support.

This article features project IWT022 “Disrupting ivory trafficking conduits with coordinated law enforcement in Malawi”, led by International Fund for Animal Welfare, which works in Malawi and Zambia.



Rhino Valley in the Intensive Protection Zone of Tsavo West, Credit: Burrard-Lucas

Using innovative financing to achieve rhino conservation outcomes

The costs of rhino conservation have increased dramatically in the last decade, with many protected areas facing funding gaps to effectively secure and grow priority African rhino populations. To address this, the **Rhino Impact Investment (RII) Project** is assessing the feasibility of using outcomes-based financing to ensure long-term funding for critical conservation areas, using rhinos as an initial focus.

A key component during the development of this project has been to test how performance metrics respond to interventions following a rhino-specific Theory of Change. Tsavo West National Park, under the management of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), was chosen as the pilot site. Tsavo supports a Key 1 black rhino population – i.e. a population with continental importance as determined by the IUCN’s African Rhino Specialist Group - and offers massive potential for growth having carried over 8,000 rhinos in the 1940s. By 1989, there were just 350 left in Kenya, and while rhino numbers have recovered since then, the recent poaching spike culminated in almost 10% of Kenya’s rhinos being poached during 2012. This project was developed in response to these unsustainable losses. The UK Government, through the IWT Challenge Fund, was one of the major funders for this phase, allowing the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), KWS, and Tsavo Trust to pilot conservation interventions in Tsavo West to understand the impact on law enforcement, monitoring, and black rhino habitat.

Interventions have delivered improved rhino monitoring in Tsavo West, resulting in 97% of the rhino population being physically seen in the past 12 months. Average sightings intervals (no. of days since each individual rhino was last seen) dropped from 474 days at project start to just 20 days. Simultaneously, law enforcement patrol coverage increased by 600% over the past two years, with distance patrolled per month increasing by 1000%. The pilot results not only support the feasibility of an outcomes-based financing mechanism but have also delivered critical rhino conservation outcomes in Tsavo West.

“
Tsavo is a vast wilderness, one of the few remaining in Africa. We’ve seen some incredible progress since the start of the RII Project, and the momentum that is gathering will help restore this landscape to the major wildlife area that it was in the 1950s

”

Dr Richard Leakey – Chairman of the KWS Board

Realising Tsavo’s growth potential requires securing of the unfenced Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ), an area totalling 2,000km² which surrounds the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary in Tsavo West and is home to a small black rhino population.



The new pipeline has ensured a permanent supply of water for this important rhino population, Credit: Burrard-Lucas

This requires better law enforcement, monitoring, intelligence gathering and community engagement. The IWT Challenge Fund project has laid the foundations to achieve this, such that KWS are prepared to focus more attention on the IPZ, using other Kenyan rhino sanctuaries as founder populations for stocking rhinos into this important rhino habitat. By supplementing the current IPZ population, achieving a 6% growth rate target (compared to 2% growth at present) will have a massive impact on growing both Kenyan and global black rhino numbers.

This article features project IWT010 “Securing rhino populations with effective law enforcement and Impact Bonds”, led by Zoological Society of London, which works in Kenya.

Rhino Impact Investment

Implementation of the RII Project is led by ZSL under United for Wildlife (UfW), a collaboration of the seven leading conservation NGOs and the Royal Foundation. The Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its implementing agent the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Oak Foundation, the Rufford Foundation, the UK Government through the IWT Challenge Fund, UfW and ZSL. The project was recently featured in a **UNDP photo essay**.



Wild tiger in India,
Credit: Tigersintheforest

Informing and invigorating global efforts to tackle tiger trade

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and its partner organisations Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) and Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) have embarked upon a process of gathering and analysing crucial information on transnational criminal networks trafficking tiger parts and products in South East Asia, and have used these some of these findings to launch a new report, advocating urgent action to end tiger farming.

Fewer than 4,000 wild tigers survive worldwide, with one of the primary threats to their survival being poaching and trade in their parts and products. Trade in the parts of tigers bred in captivity is exacerbating this threat by stimulating demand and complicating and undermining law enforcement efforts.

“ Fewer than 4,000 wild tigers survive worldwide, with one of the primary threats to their survival being poaching and trade in their parts and products ”

Despite tigers being functionally extinct in Laos, the country is a hotspot for the tiger trade – it is the location of four known tiger ‘farms’ breeding tigers for profit; tiger parts and products are widely available for sale mostly to Chinese customers; and Chinese, Thai and

Vietnamese criminal networks use the country as a transit route for tigers and other wildlife. Despite this trade being in contravention of CITES, the global agreement on wildlife trade, there has been almost no meaningful law enforcement action against criminals trading tigers across the region to date.

“ Despite tigers being functionally extinct in Laos, the country is a hotspot for the tiger trade ”

The research and analysis behind the partners report, *Cultivating Demand*, was funded under the IWT Challenge Fund. The report was released ahead of the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in November 2017 to communicate the scale of the problem. The report highlights the issue of captive tiger trade, profiles key facilities of concern and proposes urgent actions to be taken.



Big cat teeth openly for sale in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone, Credit: EIAimage



Tigers in a tiger farm in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Laos, Credit: EIAimage

While previous CITES meetings had recognised the threat of trade in captive tigers and adopted Decisions aimed at scrutinising the trade, little meaningful progress had been made on implementing these. EIA attended the Standing Committee to share our findings and campaign for urgent, meaningful action.

Also at the CITES Standing Committee meeting, EIA took part in a working group on CITES compliance aimed at Laos, which after years of failing to take adequate action to combat illegal wildlife trade was facing the risk of trade sanctions. As a result of the working group, Laos pledged a series of actions, including launching an audit of tigers in captive facilities and creating a committee on tiger farms as the first steps of a phase-out.

Since the meeting, we have been feeding the information gathered under this project into CITES processes to scrutinise tiger trade and farming to help maximise their

impact. For instance, encouraged by Laos' commitments, we have been urging authorities there to include all four tiger farms we have gathered information on in this process, rather than just the two facilities included in previous CITES actions.

As this project continues, EIA, ENV and WFFT will continue to research and document those responsible for tiger trade and will share information with law enforcement agencies to help bring criminals to justice. Meanwhile, we will use our findings to push tiger trade higher up the global agenda and get Asia's imperilled big cats the action they need to survive.

This article features project IWT046 "Enhancing Enforcement to End Tiger Trade in South East Asia", led by Environmental Investigation Agency, which works in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and China.



Angelababy billboard at Shanghai Pudong Airport, Credit: WildAid

Saving pangolins by reducing demand in Vietnam and China

An estimated one million pangolins have been poached in the past decade for their meat and scales, making them the most heavily trafficked wild mammal in the world. Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy and luxury item in Asia, while scales are used in traditional medicine and falsely believed to cure ailments from arthritis to cancer.

Once abundant, Asian pangolin populations have plummeted, some species up to 90%, primarily due to hunting for medicinal purposes. The poaching radius is expanding; pangolins are increasingly sourced from the Philippines, India, and now several African nations to meet Asia's demand for meat and scales. Overwhelming evidence from seizures indicates that pangolin trafficking follows some of the same routes as ivory and rhino horn, with involvement from criminal organizations that undermine enforcement and foster corruption in source, transit and market countries. All eight pangolin species are now threatened with extinction and it's not just biodiversity at stake. Disappearance of these natural pest controllers (who each eat up to 70 million insects annually) could be catastrophic if crop infestations lead to food insecurity in pangolins' 51 range states.

With this project, WildAid, with financial support from the IWT Challenge Fund, aims to educate the Chinese and Vietnamese public - the largest consumers of pangolin products - about the poaching crisis, and ultimately change individual and societal attitudes and behaviours to reduce their risk of extinction. Working alongside Vietnamese NGO CHANGE, we are dissuading consumers from purchasing pangolin products by



enlisting popular, respected celebrities and prominent figures to generate attention for these little-known creatures and dispel medicinal myths around their scales. We hope to build a groundswell of public and political support for pangolin conservation through media campaigning, and in doing so make the consumption of their meat and scales socially unacceptable. Such positive behavioural and attitudinal change toward pangolin consumption and conservation could help to alleviate poaching pressure across their range states, as markets and profit incentives from the illegal trade disappear. As behavioural change requires time, we are also working to disrupt the trade more immediately by strengthening the capacity of regional customs and enforcement agencies to intercept smuggled wildlife.

“ We are dissuading consumers from purchasing pangolin products by enlisting popular, respected celebrities and prominent figures to generate attention for these little-known creatures and dispel medicinal myths around their scales

” Since launching our programme in 2016, we've employed a combination of strategies to effect the change we seek. Our approach has included celebrity-driven media campaigns spanning TV public service announcements, billboards and print; online and social media campaigns; press outreach and education; briefings and consultations with government agencies and training sessions. We are using all of these tools to address the

lack of awareness of the trade and poaching crisis, build more pro-conservation attitudes, persuade consumers not to buy pangolin products, and support national and international enforcement efforts.

In two years, thanks to nearly \$80 million support in pro-bono media value, we've exposed 500 million+ viewers in China and Vietnam to pangolin campaign messages. These include eight public service announcements and six print ads featuring martial arts hero Jackie Chan, incredibly popular Chinese actress/model Angelababy, Taiwanese singer/actor Jay Chou, and Miss Universe Vietnam Pham Huong. We placed 1,000 billboard ads and PSAs starring Jackie Chan and Angelababy on dozens of TV networks and on over 160,000 video screens in subways, airports, hospitals, business and shopping centres, and government buildings in 37+ Chinese cities. In addition to engaging TCM practitioners in seminars and working with enforcement agencies to train 200 officers to improve interdiction of smuggled pangolin products, we successfully helped secure a CITES Appendix I listing (effectively an international trade ban) for all eight species.

“
We've exposed 500 million+ viewers in China and Vietnam to pangolin campaign messages
”

In late 2015, WildAid surveyed residents in six Chinese and the Vietnamese cities to measure awareness of the poaching crisis and gauge attitudes toward conservation. At that time, 70% of Chinese respondents and 72% of Vietnamese respondents (including those who knew the alleged properties but hadn't yet decided if they believed them) thought pangolin products have medicinal value, believing scales treat rheumatism, skin disorders, wound



Jackie Chan at the launch of his PSA and billboard campaign, Credit: WildAid

infections and cancer. By the end of 2017, we began to see evidence of change. In China, 50% of people (vs 70% in 2015) now think scales have medicinal value, with over a 100% increase in those who say scales have no medicinal value (17% in 2017 vs 7% in 2015). In Vietnam, the believers and potential believers now account for 61% (vs 72% in 2015).

After our launch with Jackie Chan, market research firm Kantar Millward Brown conducted a pro bono survey of 450 urban Chinese to measure effectiveness of the ad. Eighty-seven percent of people enjoyed the PSA and found it interesting, while 97% said it made them less likely to buy pangolin products.

We know there is a long way to go before pangolins can be considered safe – evidenced by the all-too-common large-scale, transcontinental seizures of scales – but we remain hopeful that with a continued, concerted effort to reduce consumer demand and disrupt the illegal trade, all eight species will rebound and thrive.

This article features project IWT025 "Saving Pangolins by Reducing Demand in Vietnam and China", led by WildAid, which works in Vietnam and China.

IT TAKES JUST ONE MOVE TO PROTECT PANGOLINS

Please say no to pangolin products, and help save them from extinction.
When the buying stops, the killing can too.

野生救援 WILDAID The Nature Conservancy 大自然保护协会



Trainees around recently planted seedlings, Credit: BPP Team

The Border Point Project: tackling illegal wildlife trade in Ethiopia

The Border Point Project (BPP) launched in March 2015 and is the first project of its kind in Ethiopia. The illegal wildlife trade robs states and communities of their natural capital and cultural heritage, with serious economic and social consequences. It undermines the livelihoods of those communities that depend upon natural resources and it damages the health of the ecosystems they depend on, undermining sustainable economic development.

The aim of this project is to enhance the capacity of countries in the Horn of Africa to detect, apprehend and prosecute wildlife criminals, leading to a significant reduction in cross-border illegal trade in key species, ultimately helping preserve their wild populations and 'keep wildlife in the wild'. The BPP team is made up of staff from the Born Free Foundation Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), in collaboration with the Federal & Regional Police, the Ethiopian Revenue & Customs Authority, the Defense Force & the respective Regional Authorities. It has also engaged with the judiciary, through the Justice Professional Training and the Legal Research Centre. The team has created a direct link between these authorities and the federal office of EWCA.

To date, the team has delivered face to face training to 5,253 border point officials and officers across almost 60 sites connected to the major land border points in all nine regional states across Ethiopia, as well as the Dire Dawa City Administration. A follow-up awareness-raising programme reached a further 2,036 officials and officers at 13 sites in the Oromia, South and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states. Furthermore, capacity-building training was delivered to 120 Oromia Police officers working along trade routes for live wild birds. Shashemene, Bishoftu and Nazareth were also identified as transit routes for ivory

trafficking, and training was provided to 50 investigators and members of the judiciary as a means of tackling illegal wildlife trade.

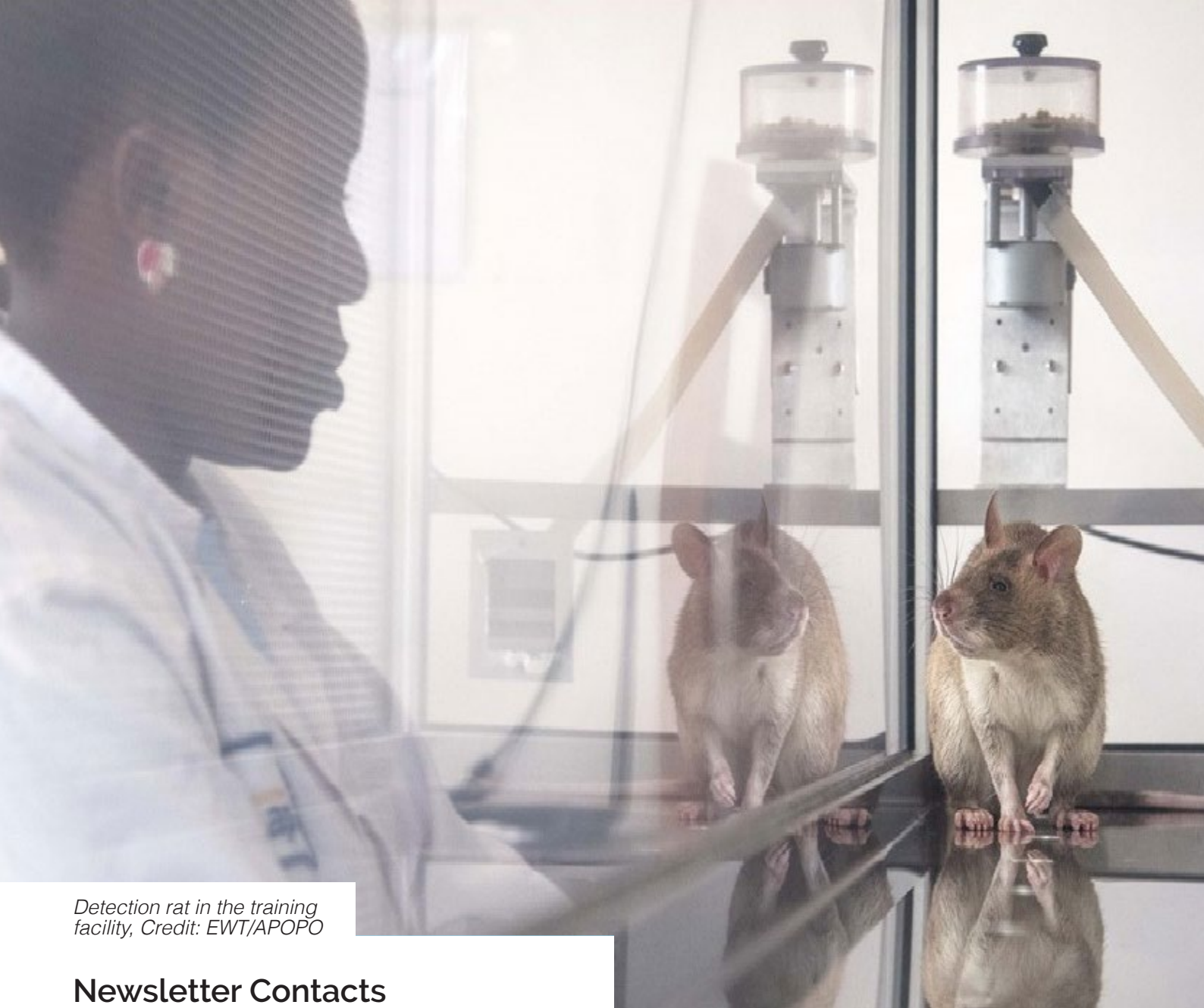
A broader aim of this project is to incorporate Illegal Wildlife Trade awareness into wider poverty alleviation and watershed management in Ethiopia. By adopting a "Training of the Trainer" approach, initial IWT awareness-raising training given to 1,109 participants is expected to reach 11 million people in 2018/19.

The BPP team also conveyed information about IWT to the public using loudspeakers at ten sites within six regional states in four different languages (Amharic, Oromo, Somali and Tigray) And, through the engagement with Ethio-telecom, a universal text message relevant to IWT was conveyed to 12.3 million mobile phone users (60% of all mobile lines available in Ethiopia).

Through printing and distribution of 32,500 copies of a law-enforcement training booklet in three local languages, 20,000 copies of an information poster in four different local languages, and 10,000 brochures in Amharic and Oromo people languages, the project has broadened awareness and understanding of IWT issues amongst key government personnel across the country.

The activities conducted to date have led to increased reporting of IWT incidences in Ethiopia, a number of which are currently under investigation by EWCA and the police. Born Free Ethiopia is now looking to the future and considering how we can build on these initial achievements.

This article features project IWT007 "The Border Point Project: Stopping Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Horn of Africa", led by Born Free Foundation, which works in Ethiopia.



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

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 first 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 £14 million has been allocated to 47 projects.