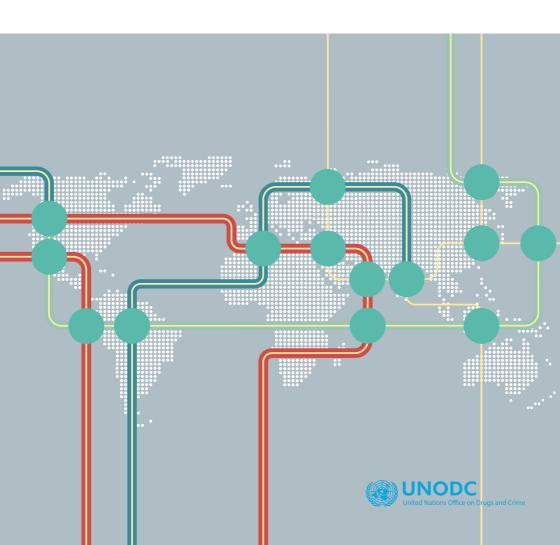
Wildlife and Forest Crime: A field guide for frontline officers



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This publication contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 16 that seeks to: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"





The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030.

INTRODUCTION

Wildlife crime is a lucrative criminal enterprise, worth an estimated USD \$20 Billion dollars annually and ranking it fourth in the world behind drug trafficking, human trafficking and the sale of counterfeit goods.

As a frontline law enforcement officer, you may encounter shipments of wildlife and wildlife products or suspects who are in possession of them. This field guide will help you to understand what steps you can take when confronted with a crime of this type.

You should carry this field guide with you while you are on duty. It contains quick-reference tools to address situations you are likely to experience in the course of your duty.

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1. WHAT IS WILDLIFE CRIME

The definition of wildlife crime can be broken down into two parts. Firstly, the definition of wildlife means all fauna and flora. 'Fauna' are animals and birds but also include fish. 'Flora' are plants such as orchids or cacti, but also include timber and timber forest products. The definition of crime refers to any acts committed contrary to national laws and regulations.

It is important that we understand these definitions when we investigate these types of crimes. You should be aware of the definition of wildlife crime and the species that are afforded protection in your country.

For the purpose of this handbook wildlife means live wildlife and/ or wildlife products including animals and plants but does not include fish.



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments designed to ensure that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. All import, export and re-export and introduction from the sea of species covered by CITES has to be authorised through a licencing system. This system is managed by your countries CITES Management Authority.

There are 183 signatories to CITES. CITES classifies species in three appendices, I, II, III made up of approximately 5,800 species of animals and 30,000 species of plants.



- Appendix 1: Species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens
 of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
 Examples in the GMsR include the Elephant, Rhino, Tiger, Sun Bear,
 Sunda Pangolin and Clouded Leopard.
- Appendix II: Includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival. Examples in the GMsR include Indian Star Tortoise, Delacour Langur and the Fishing Cat.
- **Appendix III:** Contain species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties in assistance in controlling the trade.

There will be many shipments of wildlife that are afforded protection under CITES that will be traded legally. These shipments must always be accompanied by documentation including CITES import, export and re-export permits.

There are no offence provisions contained within CITES. Any offences arising from your investigation must be contained in the provisions of your national legislation.

The UNODC and its partners have assisted government agencies in the region to draft best practice legal frameworks to address transnational organised wildlife crime. For example, in the last few years Viet Nam and Lao PDR have introduced new provisions within their penal code to address exactly this issue.

However, in many countries in this region there are not one, but several overlapping pieces of legislation or government decrees that may be relevant to the investigation of wildlife crime. It is important that you understand your domestic legislation and your departments roles and responsibilities as this may impact on the admissibility of any evidence

you collect and your ability to exercise your powers. You should keep yourself up to date with the legislation relating to wildlife crime in your jurisdiction.

During the investigation of wildlife crime, and in particular Transnational Organised Wildlife Crime, several dif-



ferent agencies may play a role. An importation of wildlife products into your country may fall under the jurisdiction of the Customs Department assisted by the Police and/or the relevant Forestry or National Parks departments whereas domestic trade in wildlife products may only require input from the Forestry or National Parks departments. Other crimes arising from wildlife trafficking such as money laundering and corruption may be the responsibility of the Police or a dedicated anti-corruption agency.

Several UNODC reports may assist you in gaining a greater understanding of the legal frameworks in your country and those of your neighbours. These reports can be found here:

https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/resources/toc/wildlife.html

4. INVESTIGATING WILDLIFE CRIME

The investigation of wildlife crime is generally like the investigation of any other crime. Often these investigations will be reactive, such as a result of a seizure. Others may be proactive, such as where you are targeting an organised criminal network. Irrespective of the type of investigation you undertake there are several important things to consider, including:

- Have I identified the species subject to my investigation?
- Is this species protected under national legislation?
- Do I have a legal basis for my investigation?
- Have I identified the offences that have been/suspect of being committed?
- Do I have sufficient resources to undertake the investigation?
- What are my department's procedures?
- Have I identified a suspect for the crime?

Once you do this you will need to plan your investigation. You should prepare an investigation plan whether your investigation is reactive or proactive.

Some investigation plans may be very comprehensive, while others may be only 1 page. For all criminal cases your investigation plan should as a minimum include:

- Relevant legislation and offence(s) committed?
- Suspect (if identified)?
- Resources you will need, human, financial and material?
- Does this case have a transnational component?
- Other agencies that may assist you.
- Species identification.
- Identify relevant investigative methods
 - Surveillance physical and electronic
 - Undercover
 - Technical phone interception
 - Controlled delivery
 - Informants
 - Crime Scene
 - Analytical support

You should utilise the full range of tools at your disposal to investigate wildlife crime.

5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information can be gathered from a range of different sources.

These can be divided into categories:



6. THE INTERNET AND WILDLIFE CRIME

The internet has revolutionised the way we live. As technology has developed so too has the way that criminals use this technology to facilitate their illegal activities. The advent of web-based encrypted communication applications, email, internet banking and the increased sophistication of mobile telephones have provided criminals with greater flexibility, security and reach.

Wildlife crime facilitated via the internet is a major issue for law enforcement and conservation agencies. The main platforms used by criminals to facilitate wildlife crime include:

- Facebook
- Line
- WeChat
- WhatsApp
- Messenger
- Snapchat
- Telegram
- Instagram
- Alibaba
- Zalo



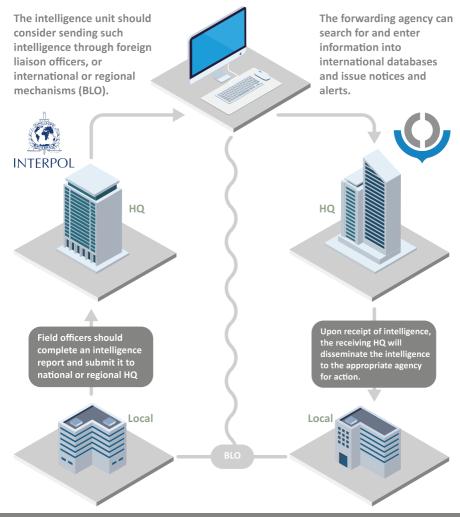
While these platforms make it easier for criminals to commit crime, they also present opportunities for investigators. You can use them as possible entry points for undercover investigators and for collecting intelligence and potentially evidence. Never use your own account to communicate with suspects on any of these sites. You should create or utilise covert accounts for your communications.

6. THE INTERNET AND WILDLIFE CRIME

Should you communicate with suspects on these sites with a view to collecting evidence remember to:

- Ensure that your actions are legal within your jurisdiction
- Ensure that you have sought the permission from your supervisor
- Always use a covert account
- Screenshot the suspects profile this can be changed by them at a later date
- Screenshot any messages between you and the suspects
- · Record any videos or messages they send to you
- Always ask for proof of possession ask for a video with your covert name and the date
- Do not share your photograph with a suspect
- · Refrain from talking via video with the suspect
- It is imperative that you know the market cost of the wildlife

If the intelligence you have collected may assist a foreign law enforcement agency, then it should be forwarded to your national intelligence unit or Interpol for dissemination.



In addition to the systems above, some countries use mechanisms such as border liaison offices (BLOs) to assist with exchanging information directly.

8. DOCUMENTATION

Wildlife, plants, and wood products usually require documents when they are transported across borders. The documents needed vary from country to country. They also depend on whether trade in the species is controlled under CITES, or national law.



Species of wildlife, plants and wood products may require some or all of the following documentation.

DOCUMENT	CITES SPECIES	PLANTS & WOOD	WILDLIFE
CITES Import Certificate	X	X	X
CITES Export/Re-export Certificate	X	X	X
Quarantine documents	X		X
Phytosanitary Certificate	X	X	
Timber Legality Assurance/ V-Legal Certificate	X	×	
Non-CITES timber import/export documents		×	
Bill of Lading	X	X	X
Certificate of Origin	X	X	X
Chain of Custody documents	Х	X	X
Packing list	X	X	X

- Check documentation carefully and make sure it meets the legal requirements of both the importing and exporting country.
- If you are suspicious of a shipment because of discrepancies with the documentation, consider inspecting the shipment more thoroughly and questioning persons connected with the shipment.
- Check with your Customs department or CITES Management Authority for further guidance.

You may encounter wildlife under many different circumstances. You may find wildlife in or on:

- Containers
- Trucks
- Vehicles
- Vessels
- Aircraft
- Mail
- People
- Premises
- In the forest



Now consider how many containers enter and leave your country every year? How many passengers fly into or out of your airports or how many trucks cross your border? Trying to find wildlife or other contraband amongst all of these circumstances is very difficult without some way to narrow your focus.

9. RISK PROFILING

To help you identify the potential trafficking of wildlife it is important that you develop or utilise a risk management system. This system will help you identify shipments or passengers that pose a greater risk of having wildlife products through analysis of risk indicators. Examples of risk indicators include:

- Declared goods are not consistent with type of business of consignee/consignor
- High shipping costs for declared low value consignment (shipment is not economically viable)
- Shipment is a heavier (or lighter) weight than is normal for the declared goods
- Description of goods on the shipping documents does not match Harmonized Systems (HS) code (e.g. using HS code with lower rate of customs import duty)
- Declared goods are known to be used as cover materials for smuggled goods (e.g. scrap plastic, tea, coffee beans, fish, handicrafts, etc.)
- Incomplete/false company names/addresses
- Fraudulent use of genuine company details
- P.O Box or hotel/suite/apartment address is listed
- Mobile phone number listed as contact point
- Loading/destination ports used should be consistent with consignor/ consignee address
- Importer/exporter is recently established
- First time importing/ exporting
- Check for any known adverse compliance history (of any parties involved – importer, exporter, transporter, logging company)
- Passenger movement history
- Passenger route of travel
- When the passenger was issued their passport
- Funds carried by the passenger
- Time in country and reason for visit
- Intelligence

This list is not exhaustive and often risk indicators will be species specific, however it represents a good starting point. If you detect one or more of these risk indicators you should consider undertaking an inspection or search.

As mentioned in section 2, there will be many shipments of wildlife that are afforded protection under CITES that can still be traded legally. However, criminals will often utilise look alike species or falsely declare products to illegally transport wildlife and they may use a CITES permit to facilitate this.

Risk indicators for CITES permits include:

- Validity date has expired or been altered
- Source code is incorrect or unfeasible
- Appendix number is incorrect or unfeasible
- Customs export endorsement is missing or incorrect
- Security seal(if there is one) must be in contact with signature and/or security stamp
- Document does not match actual shipment in terms of species/ quantity/ weight
- Scientific name is false or incorrect
- False declaration of origin (e.g. artificial propagation, plantation timber)
- Signs of document fraud: forged signature, signs of alteration, incorrect document format, incorrect CITES logo/position

If you detect one or more of these risk indicators on a shipment accompanied by a CITES permit you should consider undertaking an inspection of it.

10. IDENTIFICATION OF WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

The identification of wildlife and wildlife products is an essential requirement for the administration of the CITES convention and for the enforcement of your domestic legislation. However, given the huge number of species that are afforded protection under CITES and your domestic legislation it is very difficult for any one person to be able to identify all of them.

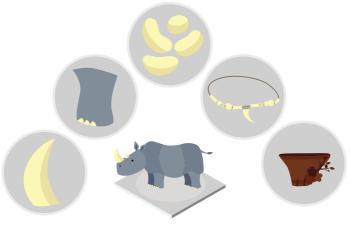
It is important that you know the main species that are found in the trade in your country, or that transit through your country. It is also very important to understand what products are associated with these species.

Some of the high-risk species and their derivatives that you may encounter in the GMsR include:

Animals

- Tiger
- Live tiger
- Tiger carcass
- Tiger skin
- Tiger canines and claws
- Tiger bones
- Tiger bone wine
- Tiger bone paste
- Tiger meat

- Rhino
- Rhino horn
- · Rhino feet
- Rhino horn shavings
- Jewelry
- Libation cups and bowls
- Elephant
- Ivory
- Skin



10. IDENTIFICATION OF WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

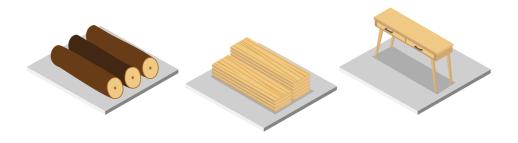
- Feet
- Tail
- Jewelry (ivory & skin)
- Bones
- Pangolin
- · Live pangolin
- Dead pangolin (whole)
- · Pangolin meat
- Scales
- Clothing made from pangolin scales

- Freshwater turtles and tortoises
- Live animals
- Dead animals
- Shells
- Meat
- Jewelry
- Sun Bear
- Live animals
- Bear parts feet
- Bear canines
- Bear bile

Timber

- Dalbergia cochinchinensis
- Whole logs
- Sawn timber
- Veneer sheets
- Furniture

There may be other species that only occur in your local area that also appear in the trade. You should also be able to identify these species and their derivatives.



10. IDENTIFICATION OF WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

Some wildlife specimens may be poisonous and contact with them may be life threatening. Always ensure that you identify a species before you begin to handle it.

If you are not sure of the identity of a wildlife specimen you should ask your supervisor or colleagues. If you are still unable to identify it there are other resources available to you. These include:

- People from your own agency
- Experts from government laboratories
- Local and international experts
- Internet

Irrespective of who or how you identify the specimen if you wish to use this identification in Court as evidence then the person who makes the identification must be recognised by the Court. Once you have identified that you need to conduct a search for wildlife ensure that you have the following items at hand to undertake the search (if available).

Video and still camera with a tripod

Storage cards (SD)

External batteries and cables

Evidence bags

 Exhibit item numbers (can be handwritten)

- Rubber gloves
- Stationary (pens, notebook, markers)
- Evidence Continuity Forms
- Crime Scene Tape
- Protective clothing
- Bolt cutters
- Bags, cages or containers for wildlife
- Reptile tongs

You will use some or all these items when searching for and documenting wildlife products. It is better to be prepared and have them readily available in a search kit.

- If you are dealing with live animals, such as snakes, bears or tigers, you may need experts to assist you in handling these animals. You will need to take this into account in your planning.
- You may also be required to seize large quantities of wildlife such as whole logs or ivory, or containers that will need transportation to another location. You will need to take this into account in your planning.



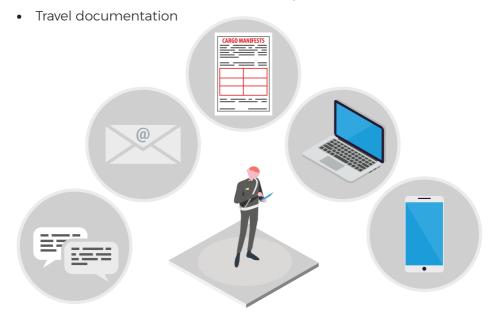
You should only search for and seize wildlife if you are lawfully entitled to do so.

There are many ways that evidence relating to wildlife crime may come into your possession. It may be as a result of a person search, vehicle or vessel search, searching baggage, a container or searching a residential or business premises. Irrespective of how this evidence comes into your possession you must document the scene and record the actions you take when you seize the digital media device or other supporting evidence.

This evidence may consist of live wildlife or wildlife products but also evidence that helps prove this trafficking. This may include:

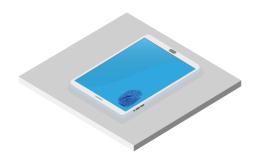
- Cell phones
- Cargo manifests
- Computers
- Bank statements

- Accommodation documentation
- Cash
- Transporter documentation
- Digital media devices



Prior to the search you should:

- Photograph and/or video the search area
- Draw a map of the scene
- If you have other officers to assist you assign each a specific role i.e. search, exhibit officer, officer in charge and photographer
- During the search you should:
 - Search the area systematically
 - Video the search
 - Document the location where each item is found
 - Bag or secure items seized clearly labelling each with a unique identification number
 - Create a record of all items seized
 - Complete chain of custody documentation
 - If you seize live wildlife, ensure that it is safely secured and has adequate access to food and water. You may also need to consult a veterinarian or specialists within your or other government agencies.



Wildlife specimens may also contain traces of DNA and fingerprints. You should enquire with your Supervisor whether your agency have the facilities to collect and analyse this type of evidence. It may be crucial evidence in identifying suspects where the wildlife was sourced.



Chain of Custody refers to the chronological documentation and/or paper trail showing the seizure, custody, control, transfer, analysis and disposition of evidence. Because evidence can be used in court to convict someone of a crime, it must be handled in a careful manner to avoid allegations of tampering or misconduct which can potentially compromise a case.

You are responsible for making a record of any wildlife that comes into your possession and what you subsequently do with that evidence. If you hand it to another officer, or to an expert, or even back to the suspect you must make a record of this movement on a Chain of Custody form.

There are many examples of Chain of Custody forms available on the internet, but you should first check whether your Department has its own form before using one of these.

A chain of custody form should as a minimum include the following information about the evidence you have seized:

- Date Collected
- Time Collected
- Item Number or Barcode Number
- Case or Event Number
- Who collected the item
- Where the item was collected
- The suspects name
- A through description of the item
- Offence for which the item was collected
- Where the item is stored
- Any person who came into possession of the item, the reason for this, and the date and time that this occurred



14. CONTROLLED DELIVERIES

Seizure is not the only option available to you when you discover a shipment of wildlife. Often, the person who is detected in possession of the wildlife is not the person who is making the most from the crime. Controlled deliveries are a useful technique allowing you to monitor the movement of illicit goods, and may help to identify the destination of contraband, and the main people involved in trafficking.

Consider these steps when planning a controlled delivery:

- Do you have the appropriate authority to conduct the controlled delivery?
- Do you have cooperation from national and international counterparts?
- Is there sufficient time to launch an operation?
- Be careful not to disturb the goods arousing suspicion
- Replace some of the contraband with substitutes
- Where possible use a tracking device.

When interviewing suspects:

- Have two officers present
- One officer should take notes
- · Record the interview wherever possible
- Consider the welfare needs of the suspect
- Ensure that female suspects are protected and that they feel safe
- Consider the need for an interpreter
- If the suspect is a juvenile, consider the need for a social worker or other authorised support person

Sample Interview Questions:

Questioning wildlife and forest crime suspects

What countries have you visited on this journey and where did you stay?

- What was the purpose of your journey?
- Is this yours?
- Where did you get it?
- How much did you pay for it?
- Who asked you to transport this?
- Who do you work for?
- How much money do you make from this work?
- What other income do you have?
- Where do you get your animals?
- How many suppliers do you have?
- How much do you buy and sell wildlife for?
- Where do you keep records of purchases and sales?
- How do you arrange to buy wildlife? How is it transported?
- Who are your customers?
- What are your bank account details?



Questions of persons smuggling wood or timber products

- What kind of wood is this?
- Where did you load it?
- Who was present when you loaded it?
- Who owns the timber?
- Where are you transporting it?
- Who do you work for and how do you know them?
- How much were you paid to transport this?
- Where is the documentation for this?

Questions for suspects of forest crime

- Do you have other areas of land?
- Who gave you permission to use the land on which you harvest timber?
- Where are the documents giving you rights to use this land?
- What species of tree do you fell?
- Where do you process raw logs?
- How do you arrange export of logs?
- Where do you file your documentation?
- How much income do you generate annually?
- Where do you keep your company records?
- What major assets do you own? [House, car, savings, investments, other business]

Try to build up a complete picture of the person's involvement in the crime and their associates.

Many items of evidence can be subject to forensic examination. Consider the following techniques.

Fingerprints

Can be found on many objects, including smooth surfaces (including ivory) and paper. If authorised, take the suspect's fingerprints when you arrest them, even if they have been taken before.

Ballistics

Compare seized ammunition with seized firearms to determine which were used in crime. These items may match other unsolved crimes.

DNA

Can be taken from most animal or plant products, particularly fluids such as blood.

Chemical Analysis

Examine products such as paint, poisons or other chemicals to look for common characteristics linking crime scenes.

Mechanical Fit

Pieces of evidence may fit together in a unique way. These might include offcuts of timber, ivory, skin, or paper.

Tool Comparison

Carving tools, saws, knives may match with marks found on evidence such as ivory or timber.

Document Examination

Forensic examination of travel documents, identification cards or birth certificates may reveal that they are counterfeits or have been fraudulently altered

Handwriting Analysis

Compare the suspect's handwriting to that found on documents, cheques, notebooks, diaries etc.

Digital Evidence

Mobile telephones, Computers, Laptops, SIM cards, portable storage devices and cards may hold valuable evidence of contacts, communications or financial information.





Always seek advice from a forensic specialist

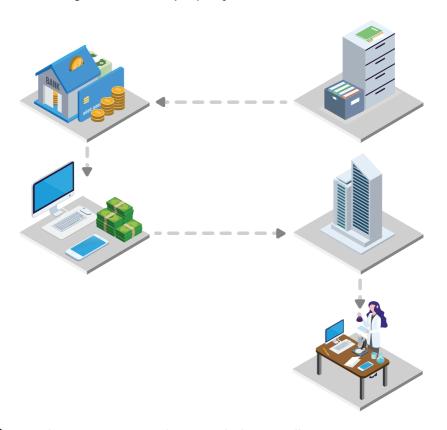
17. FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Suspects involved in transnational organised wildlife crime are engaged in criminal activity that requires the transfer of large sums of money to pay for wildlife and wildlife products. Always ensure that you consider a parallel financial investigation for money laundering. These types of investigations can help you identify those profiting most from the crime.

Steps that you can take to collect evidence of money laundering can occur at different times within your investigation. These include:

Suspect Profiling:

- Obtaining permission for examination of financial records, including bank records, phone records and tax returns
- Using services of a forensic accountant to examine financial records
- Conducting business and property checks



When conducting surveillance:

- · What banks do they use?
- What credit cards do they use?
- What vehicles do they use?

When searching a crime scene, look for:

- Mobile telephones
- Bank documents
- Property documents
- Business records
- Financial records
- Computers
- Cash
- Receipt books
- Invoices
- Passports
- · Digital recording devices

When interviewing a suspect:

- · What is their income and expenses?
- What properties and assets do they own or lease and how they were funded?
- What businesses or companies do they own?
- Who do they work for?
- What bank accounts do they have in your country or overseas
- Who is their accountant.
- Also consider:
- Conducting forensic examination of digital devices

After you seize live animals you have a duty of care for their wellbeing. You should always take steps to ensure that live animals that come into your control are well looked after.

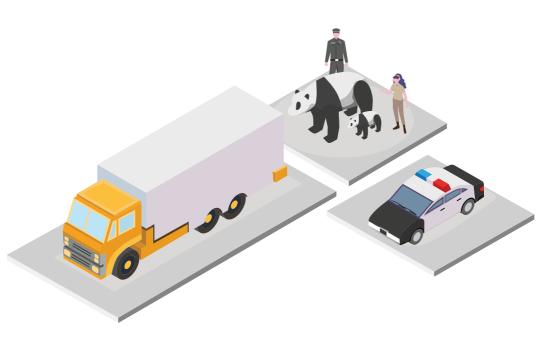
Transporting live animals

- Ensure your methods does not contravene legislation enacted to protect animals.
- Never transport live animals in a way likely to cause them unnecessary fear, injury, damage to health or undue suffering.
- Check the fitness of the animals before transporting.
- Ensure you have the necessary equipment to transport live animals safely.
- Check the weather before transporting animals.
- Ensure that the air quality and quantity appropriate to the species being transported can be maintained.
- Ensure adequate space for live animals do not overcrowd them.
- Ensure sufficient lighting to enable inspection during the transportation.
- Do not sedate an animal unless this is done under the supervision or by a veterinarian.
- Provide bedding for the animal that will adequately absorb urine and faeces
- Avoid urine and faeces falling on animals placed underneath.
- Adequate water supply.
- Ensure stability of the containers.
- Ensure that ventilation is not impeded.
- Animals must be handled or transported separately if:
 - Animals of a different species
 - Animals of significantly different sizes or ages
 - Sexually mature males
 - Animals with horns
 - Animals aggressive to each other

19. TRANSPORTING AND STORING WILDLIFE AND WII DI IFF PRODUCTS

Transporting timber or its derivatives

- Ensure your vehicle is adequate to transport the timber and/or its derivatives
- Ensure the load is secured correctly
- Ensure you have the correct machinery to load and unload the vehicle
- Ensure each item is initially labelled or marked
- Observe the loading of the timber to ensure chain of custody and that the correct exhibits have been loaded
- Provide an escort if possible



Storage of Wildlife and Wildlife Products

Wildlife and wildlife products may be perishable or require specialised storage facilities or caring. Sometimes the costs to care for live animals can be very expensive. You should always consult with your supervisor and follow your agencies policies and procedures around the storing of wildlife.

You should always ensure that wildlife and wildlife products are stored:

- In a secure location with restricted access.
- In a manner that will ensure the physical integrity of the exhibit
- In an appropriate container or cage
- Access to food, water and veterinary care (live wildlife)
- Animals must be stored separately if:
 - Animals of a different species
 - Animals of significantly different sizes or ages
 - Sexually mature males
 - Animals with horns
 - Animals aggressive to each other
- Be aware of animal imprinting
 - Temperature controlled (if possible)
 - Adequate light and ventilation
 - Adequate bedding
 - Adequate flooring

Some wildlife and wildlife products require specialist caring while others are perishable and may go off before the commencement of any court proceeding.

Some law enforcement agencies are permitted to dispose of wildlife and wildlife products prior to a court hearing in accordance with their national legislation or as per departmental policy. Check whether your department has rules and procedures around the disposal of wildlife.

Should you be authorised to dispose of the wildlife or wildlife products prior to a court case ensure that you have:

- Obtained permission to do so (if required)
- Taken or had taken any specimens that you will need for court
- Photographed the specimens
- Recorded on the chain of custody form how you have disposed of the wildlife
- Ensure that the disposal has been done in accordance with your departments policies

Failure to dispose of wildlife products correctly could potentially affect your case and bring adverse attention to you and your department.

You must always document the disposal of wildlife products.



Regional Office for South East Asia and the Pacific United Nations Building, 3rd Floor B Block, Secretariat Building Raj Damnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand Tel. (66 - 2) 288 100 Fax (66 - 2) 281 2129 E-mail: fo.thailand@unodc.org Website: www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific