

Defenders Latino Newsletter

Fall 2017 Issue No. 1

Defenders of Wildlife is a conservation organization committed to protecting endangered species. Part of our work focuses on international conservation policy, specifically in Latin America.

We believe in the inherent value of wildlife and the natural world, and this singular focus defines our important niche in the environmental and conservation community and serves as the anchor for our organizational values.

Amazon Countries Play Large Part in Wildlife Trade

Although wildlife trade attention has recently focused on Africa, a new report by the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) spotlights the legal international trade in plants and animals from eight Amazon countries. The industry is worth approximately US\$128 million and it exports 14 million animals and plants every year. These animals include caiman and peccary skins for the fashion industry, live turtles and parrots for the pet trade, and arapaima for the food industry. The report emphasizes the need for monitoring, regulating, and enforcing sustainable harvest levels of wild animals and plants if the legal trade is to continue to thrive. These measures must be taken to prevent the loss of wildlife from the Amazonian forests and rivers.

www.unep-wcmc.org/resources-and-data/wildlife-trade-in-amazon-countries--an-analysis-of-trade-in-cites-listed-species

In this Issue:

Introduction	
Regulatory News.....	2
Latin America Region-wide News.....	2
National News.....	3
Wildlife Trafficking Reporting and Resources	8
Useful Websites.....	9

Also Including

CITES Notifications of Interest.....	2
Dates of Interest.....	3
2017 – 2018 CITES Calendar.....	3

1. CITES Notifications of Interest

No. 2017/043 – Notifying the parties that at the last meeting of the COP in 2016, the COP adopted several Decisions regarding *Totoaba*, including the interception of illegal shipments of the species and sharing the information with the 69th and 70th meetings of the Standing Committee.

No. 2017/014 – The Bahamas will not be affixing security stamps on its permits and certificates due to a shortage of stamps until further notice.

No. 2017/052 – Cuba will not be affixing security stamps on its permits and certificates due to a shortage of stamps until further notice.
of the Conference of the Parties.

No. 2017/031 – The Secretariat invites the Parties to submit any new information on shark and ray conservation and management activities. The purpose of providing this information is to give the Animals Committee the opportunity to examine new information provided by range States on trade and other available relevant data and information, and report their analyses at meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

No. 2017/029 – Guatemala submitted its reservation for including *Beaucarnea spp.* in Appendix II.

Regulatory News

Peru

Peru's New Plan of Action, August 2017

Peru approved the “National Strategy to Reduce Illegal Trafficking in Wild Fauna,” period 2017-2027, and its Action Plan 2017-2022. The plan was prepared jointly with more than 20 institutions whose purpose is to face the illicit trade in species. This trade is considered one of the largest threats to the extinction of our biodiversity, second only to loss of habitat.

www.serfor.gob.pe/noticias/peru-cuenta-con-estrategia-para-reducir-el-trafico-ilegal-de-fauna-silvestre-al-2027

Latin America Regional News

Report on Lucrative Trade in South America, March 2017

A recent report by the UN states that the wildlife trade in South America is worth about \$128 million every year from 2005 to 2014. In this region, there are approximately 12,000 species listed on CITES, most of which are under Appendix II.

www.eltiempo.com/vida/medio-ambiente/conozca-el-comercio-legal-de-especies-68968

The Most Endangered Species are Targeted the Most Often, June 2016

Due to the biological diversity found in Mexico, Central America, and the Amazon Rainforest, many plants and animals are trafficked from this area. The prevalence of this illegal trafficking on the “Deep Web” makes this problem more dangerous for endangered species. As Defenders of Wildlife’s Juan Carlos Cantú said: “trafficking is a huge threat for some of the rarest species, which are the species being targeted.”

www.caribbean360.com/news/closing-gaps-fight-wildlife-trafficking-latin-america-caribbean

USFWS Tracking Shipments of Wildlife from Latin America, March 2017

USFWS has confiscated many kinds of illegally trafficked wildlife products, especially coming from the Latin American countries. Between 2004 and 2013, they seized 31,226 kg of meat, 9,128 eggs, and 5,760 shoes at US ports exported from Latin America alone.

www.hakaimagazine.com/features/little-shop-wildlife-horrors

National News

Brazil

Brazil Abolishing Huge Amazon Reserve is a Huge Attack on Conservation, August 2017

The Brazilian president Michel Temer has abolished an Amazonian reserve that spans 46,000 sq. km on the border of the Amapa and Para. Conservationists said it will open the door for mining companies to enter Renca, which was set up in 1984 and encompasses nine protected areas.

www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/24/brazil-abolishes-huge-amazon-reserve-in-biggest-attack-in-50-years?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Poachers Punished with Millions of Dollars in Fines, October 2017

Brazil issues 18 fines totaling 7.2 million reais (US \$2.3 million) for poaching endangered Amazon river turtles and their eggs. IBAMA, the enforcement arm of the Environmental Ministry, can issue financial penalties that are 10 times higher for commercially hunting any CITES-protected species than fines for hunting non-CITES-protected species.

www.bna.com/brazil-issues-23-n73014470867/

New CITES and OTCA Project to Increase Effectiveness of Trade Monitories, April 2017

CITES and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (OTCA) have benefitted from long-standing collaboration. The focus of this regional project to manage, monitor, and control wild fauna and flora species endangered by trade (KfW Project) is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of management, monitoring, and control of wild plant and animal species threatened by trade in OTCA Member Countries. The Member Countries will provide the tools and mechanisms to legally and sustainably utilize the rich and unique biodiversity of the region.

www.cites.org/eng/news/sg/welcome-remarks-regional-project-manage-monitor-control-wild-fauna-flora-species-endangered-trade-kfw-project-brazil_25042017

Bolivia

Guaraní Indians Seek to protect the Last of the Guanacos, September 2017

Guaraní Indians promote reserve to save the last guanacos of the Great Chaco in Bolivia on a reserve of 284,670 hectares in Charagua. They seek to save from extinction the last 100 to 200 guanacos that are estimated to remain in the region. Habitat loss and fragmentation of their habitat, combined with wire fences of the cattle ranches, which permanently separate the guanacos and affect their possibility of reproduction, are leading to the disappearance of the species.

es.mongabay.com/2017/09/indigenas-guaranies-promueven-reserva-salvar-los-ultimos-guanacos-del-gran-chaco-bolivia/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=638393334d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_09_24&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-638393334d-70769631

2. Dates of Interest

14 – 22 November 2017: 25th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, Marrakech, Morocco

1 – 7 December 2017: 14th Regular Session of the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Manila, Philippines

14 – 18 May 2018: 9th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

3. 2017 – 2018 CITES Calendar

27 November – 1 December 2017: 69th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69), Geneva, Switzerland

01 October 2018: 70th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70), Sochi, Russia

New Members to CITES

In 2016, Tonga and Tajikistan joined CITES.

www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/chronolo.php

Chile

Huge Donation to Protect Chilean Habitats, March 2017

Former Patagonia CEO donated 1 million of the acres in Chile that she and her late husband worked to conserve to expand the country's national parkland.

www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/03/16/stories/1060051571

Colombia

Gold Mining Poses Mercury Poisoning Risk to Endangered Species, September 2017

Serranía de San Lucas in Colombia's department of Bolivar is a richly biodiverse area that is important to the jaguar corridor. However, gold mining in the area is releasing mercury into the environment, which could be deadly for the species who live there.

news.mongabay.com/2017/09/saving-the-serrania-de-san-lucas-a-vital-link-in-the-jaguar-corridor/

New Bill Could Protect Over One Thousand Threatened Species in Colombia, June 2017

Scientists and authorities evaluate new bill that could protect the 1200 threatened species living in Colombia that are on IUCN's Red List. The initiative proposes the creation of a National Committee of Threatened Species, made up of political authorities and scientific institutions that can decide on the protection of some priority conservation areas that are now threatened by investment projects.

es.mongabay.com/2017/06/especies-amenazadas-extincion-politicas-ambientales-biodiversidad/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=bba4ac96d4-

BOLETIN_2017_06_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-bba4ac96d4-70769631

Ecuador

Selling Endangered Frogs May Help Preserve Species, September 2017

Wikiri, a private company in Ecuador, has been breeding a variety of captive, endangered frog species in labs to undercut the black market demand for those same species that are being hunted in the wild to be sold in the pet trade. The company sells about 500 frogs annually, compared to the 7,000 frogs that are exported throughout Latin America each year.

news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/09/black-market-pet-trade-ecuador-frogs-spd/

Family Feud in Conserving 336 Acre Property, September 2017

Convinced that the region's biodiversity is much more valuable than its timber and grassland, Sergio Basantes has worked hard to show his family this is true. Their 336-acre home is great for bird watching, which promises to be an economic and conservation line of life for the Basantes family and the biodiversity on their land.

es.mongabay.com/2017/09/ecuador-la-larga-batalla-familiar-centro-turismo-observacion-aves/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=638393334d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_09_24&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-638393334d-70769631

Chinese Fishing Vessel Found Off Coast of Galapagos Islands Carrying 300 tons of Endangered Sharks, August 2017

The Ecuadorian Navy was alerted about the Chinese refrigerator ship Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999, which was 34.5 nautical miles off the island of San Cristóbal. The 20 members of the crew could face up to three years in prison. The Galapagos National Park covers over 51,000 square miles, making it the second largest protected area in the world. Ecuadorian environment minister, Tarsicio Granizo, says they will stay vigilant about illegal activity happening there.

Mexico

Bird Smuggler's Plans Thwarted, March 2017

A man was caught at Cancun International Airport trying to smuggle live birds to the EU. Sixteen birds died in transport and PROFEPA's specialized staff were immediately able to confirm that the birds had a high degree of stress due to poor conditions of movement.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/detienen-profepa-y-pgr-a-espanol-que-trafficaba-168-aves-ocultas-en-una-maleta-con-destino-a-alemania

Illegal Wildlife Trade Booming Between the U.S. and Mexico, March 2017

Illegal trade is booming across US-Mexico border. Of the nearly 50,000 illegal shipments of wildlife and wildlife products seized at ports of entry from 2005 through 2014, more than a quarter originated in Latin America, despite US attempts to thwart other illegal smuggling across the border.

news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/03/wildlife-watch-wildlife-trafficking-reptiles-mexico-united-states/

Four At-Risk Species in Mexico, September 2017

There are several species in Mexico whose populations are decreasing due to the loss of their natural habitat or by indiscriminate hunting. Those examples include the red macaw of southern Mexico, the ajolote, the vaquita, and the jaguar.

es.mongabay.com/2017/09/dia-de-mexico-cuatro-animales-peligro-extincion/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=ae08d5a1d6=&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-ae08d5a1d6-70769631

Threats to Jaguars More Serious than Previously Thought, March 2017

A recent study shows how much danger jaguars are currently facing. The IUCN has kept their status at Almost Threatened for 20 years, however the research done by Antonio de la Torre, José F. González-Maya, Heliot Zarza, Gerardo Ceballos and Rodrigo Medellín suggests that 25 of the 34 populations found in the Americas should be assessed as Critically Endangered.

es.mongabay.com/2017/03/jaguars-peligro-estudio-revela-estado-conservacion-critico/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=76c087adca-BOLETIN_2017_03_28&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-76c087adca-70769631

PROFEPA Continues to Monitor Many Shipments of Environmentally Regulated Goods, January 2017

PROFEPA verified during 2016 transportation of 125,000 environmentally regulated goods at the customs offices of Mexico. They also reviewed the legality of 7,000 movements of wild species that are subject to international trade regulations.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/verifica-profepa-125-000-movimientos-transfronterizos-en-2016

Birds Reintroduced into Wild after Confiscated from Smuggler, January 2017

PROFEPA intercepted 65 wild birds en route to Madrid, Spain from a man at Mexico City International Airport because he did not have the correct documentation. The birds will be reintroduced into the biological corridor of Ajusco-Chichinautzin.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/asegura-profepa-65-aves-silvestres-en-el-aeropuerto-internacional-de-la-ciudad-de-mexico

Sentencing for Traffickers Increased to 20 Years, February 2017

Reforms made to the Federal Organized Crime Law and the Federal Criminal Code have resulted in a maximum sentence of 20 years in jail for those found guilty of wildlife trafficking. This sentence adds 8 years to the previous maximum sentence of 12 years.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/trafico-de-vida-silvestre-sera-castigado-hasta-con-20-anos-de-carcel-profepa

PROFEPA Works with INTERPOL to Monitor Transportation of Wild Species, March 2017

PROFEPA teamed up with INTERPOL to make 774 verifications on transboundary movement of wild species that were either regulated or in some category of risk.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/participa-profepa-en-operativo-thunderbird-coordinado-a-nivel-internacional-por-interpol

501 Parrots Intercepted Before Reaching Destination., March 2017

On the road to Santa María Huatulco, Oaxaca, PROFEPA intercepted 501 parrots. The parrots were transported illegally and the smugglers intended to distribute and sell them in Tehuacán, Puebla. PROFEPA issued a report identifying the specimens and an administrative procedure was brought against the two responsible parties.

www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/profepa-y-policia-estatal-de-oaxaca-dan-golpe-al-trafico-de-psitacidos

20 Totoabas Discovered Dead in Gulf of California, April 2017

PROFEPA and the Secretary of the Navy (SEMAR) recovered 20 dead totoabas in the waters of the Gulf of California. The totoabas were likely sought after for their swimming bladders. Over a two-year period, 174 people have been detained and consigned to MPF for illegal fishing in the totoaba and vaquita protection zone. www.gob.mx/profepa/prensa/recuperan-semar-y-profepa-20-totoabas-enmalladas-por-pesca-furtiva-en-san-felipe-b-c?idiom=es

90% Mortality Rate for Primates Trafficked in the Pet Trade, February 2017

A report shows that 9 out of every 10 monkeys captured in illegal wildlife trafficking die before being pets. These primates go through horrendous

torture before becoming pets and health authorities are concerned about the diseases they can spread to people.

diariolaregion.com/web/9-de-cada-10-monos-capturados-mueren-antes-de-ser-mascotas/

Turtles Face Threats from Trafficking, March 2017

Hunting and illegal trade are posing huge threats to turtles in Peru. The taricaya turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*) is the highest seized freshwater turtle followed by mata mata (*Chelus fimbriatus*). Motelo de patas amarillas (*Chelonoidis denticulate*) is the land turtle most often seized.

es.mongabay.com/2017/03/tortugas-trafico-peru/



Tom Ballard Photography

Taking the Longview: Reviewing the Effectiveness of CITES through the Years, August 2017

New report reviews the effectiveness of CITES throughout the years while focusing on its impact in the modern world. One of the most important tools has been trade embargoes, though the study shows that by and large developing countries have been the subjects of sanctions under CITES. www.inece.org/library/show/59a83e3c5838d

Peru

61 Red-Faced Parrots Found Dead, August 2017

Forestry and Wildlife Directorate of the Regional Ayacucho Government reported that they found 61 dead red-faced parrots (*Aratinga mitrata*) in the vicinity of the Nery Garcia Zárate de Huamanga market. The birds come from the inter-Andean valleys and are protected by the Peruvian State. The authorities opened a process of investigation. www.facebook.com/SerforPeru/posts/1928540747362053

Timber Trafficking in Peru, April 2017

Homeland Security investigators in Houston, acting on intelligence from their Peruvian counterparts, halted 1,770 metric tons of Amazon rainforest wood — enough to cover three football fields. Peru has not been able to secure prosecutions against alleged perpetrators of illegal logging. apnews.com/8f4d73bdc605446c9c64bc2aedf7aa31

29 Turtles Seized after being Trafficked from Galapagos, April 2017

Police in Peru seized 29 turtles believed to have been smuggled out of Ecuador's Galapagos Islands and an investigation has been opened in the case. The Environment Ministry said in a 2015

report that wildlife trafficking is the third most profitable illegal activity in the world.

www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Ecuador-Investigates-How-29-Galapagos-Turtles-Ended-up-in-Peru-20170423-0003.html

Trafficking Attempt Proved Fatal for Turtles, April 2017

Of the 29 turtles found in Peru that came from the Galapagos, two had already died due to poor ventilation and excrement accumulated in the box. The stress and malnutrition these turtles faced would make it difficult for them to move when they were released.

es.mongabay.com/2017/04/peru-tortugasgalapagos-extincion-ecuador/?utm_source=Latam&utm_campaign=799153140e-BOLETIN_2017_04_26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bbd0521d-799153140e-70769631

254 Birds Rescued, February 2017

The Environmental Division of the National Police of Peru rescued 254 birds from being trafficked. The operation was carried out in coordination with officials of the National Forestry and Wildlife Service (SERFOR).

es.mongabay.com/2017/02/peru-mas-200-aves-rescatadas-del-trafico-fauna-silvestre/



SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) (smartconservationtools.org/smart-partnership/)

This tool is a free, open-source data collection tool that allows rangers and community members to report wildlife trafficking incidents and to view the data to make informed wildlife management decisions. SMART has already been implemented in several countries in Central and South America, including Peru, Guatemala, and Colombia. Many government, nonprofit, and corporate entities have joined forces to create this tool for combating wildlife trafficking around the world.

SMART software has helped protected area rangers and managers report, analyze, and manage field data to target their patrolling and management activities. SMART's new extension allows a user to centrally manage data uploaded from multiple sites and syncs changes made from various users of a database. SMART Connect wirelessly communicates field observation data from rangers on patrol to managers and colleagues watching remotely.

news.mongabay.com/wildtech/2017/10/smart-and-well-connected-reserve-patrol-data-system-adds-communications-capacity/

World WISE

(www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/World_Wildlife_Crime_Report_2016_final.pdf)

The World Wildlife Seizure database (World WISE) was constructed using seizure data provided to the CITES Secretariat by its Parties and to the WCO by its membership. These data were circulated to Member States for verification. This database alone is not sufficient to describe the nature and scope of illicit trafficking in wildlife on a global scale, but it provides key indicators and a potential early warning mechanism. If the database is maintained and supplemented with a broader program of research and assessments, it could provide the international community with the means to better understand and address the wildlife trade market.

The resources below do not represent an exhaustive list of all the wildlife trafficking reporting tools available. These resources were compiled as a short list of useful tools for reporting and tracking wildlife trafficking.

Wildlife Witness App (www.wildlifewitness.net/)

Australia's Taronga Zoo and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, partnered to create this app that allows locals and tourists to report wildlife trafficking from their mobile devices. This app gives the user the opportunity to take a photo of the wildlife trade incident and pin the location of the incident. This important data is sent to TRAFFIC. Wildlife Witness is available on Apple's App store as well as Android's Google Play.

Wildlife Alert app (apps.wcswildlifetrade.org/)

The U.S. Department of Defense and the Wildlife Conservation Society partnered to create this app, which helps the user identify the species from which the suspected trafficked item came. Anyone can follow the easy questions and quick tests to determine if the fur, horns, shells, or other trafficked items are from protected or unprotected species. The goal of Wildlife Alert is to protect biodiversity and prevent organized crime syndicates and insurgents from profiting off trafficking protected species.

Skylight (www.skylight.global/)

Vulcan is developing a system that uses satellite imagery and data-analysis software to help countries spot and catch unlicensed fishing boats. The system is being tested in the Pacific Island of Palau and the African nation of Gabon. Skylight uses technology to aid enforcement, especially in countries with thousands of miles of coastline to patrol and few resources to do so. The initiative was announced at the Our Oceans Conference in Malta on October 6. Stay tuned for more details about the success of this new anti-wildlife trafficking program.

Useful Websites

Species Survival Network www.ssn.org

Defenders of Wildlife www.defenders.org

UNEP Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean www.unep.org/americalatinacaribe

UNEP General Assembly www.unep.org/environmentassembly/assembly

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