



THE LATIN AMERICAN REGION, including Mexico and the Caribbean, is often overlooked in the discussion on wildlife trafficking. However, in the last decade, from 2005 to 2014, 13,325 shipments of wildlife and wildlife products—out of 49,334 worldwide—originated in Latin America and were denied entry by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at U.S. ports of entry. Those shipments were made up of 18,835 segments, containing 54,886 live animals, 620,014 individual specimens and 3 million pounds of wildlife and wildlife products. The majority of this trade was sourced from wild populations and imported for personal use or consumption. The magnitude of this trade is of particular concern because the Latin American region is home to the greatest biological diversity in the world with several countries classified as megadiverse. Unfortunately, biodiversity in this region has declined sharply since the 1970s, due in large part to exploitation.¹

Top 5 Countries of Export

The country of export is the country that exported the shipment directly to the United States, which is not necessarily the country where the shipment originated. Shipments were exported from 45 of the 72 countries and territories in the Latin American region. Mexico, which is likely used as a hub for shipments originating further south, exported more than over 70 percent of the shipments. Together, the top five countries exported 83.1 percent of all shipments exported from this region (Table 1).

Table 1. Top 5 Countries of Export

Rank	Country of Export	Number of Shipments	Percentage of Shipments
1	Mexico	9,386	70.4%
2	Haiti	644	4.8%
3	Peru	502	3.7%
4	El Salvador	358	2.6%
5	Bahamas	225	1.6%

Top 5 Trade Routes

Four of the top five trade routes had Mexico as the country of export and used land-crossing ports of entry located on the U.S.-Mexico border. Together the top five trade routes were used by 57.9 percent of the shipments (Table 2).

Top 5 Ports of Entry

Shipments exported from Latin America were denied entry at 47 out of 64 different U.S. ports of entry. Four

Table 2. Top 5 Trade Routes

Rank	Country of Export	Port of Entry	Number of Shipments	Percentage of Shipments
1	Mexico	El Paso, TX	3,614	27.1%
2	Mexico	Nogales, AZ	1,616	12.1%
3	Mexico	Laredo, TX	1,151	8.6%
4	Mexico	San Diego, CA	722	5.4%
5	Haiti	Miami, FL	627	4.7%

of the top five ports of entry are land-border crossings located on the U.S.-Mexico border. Only one of the top five ports of entry, Miami, is strictly an air-and-sea port. Together, the top five ports of entry denied 67 percent of the shipments (Table 3).

Table 3. Top 5 U.S. Ports of Entry

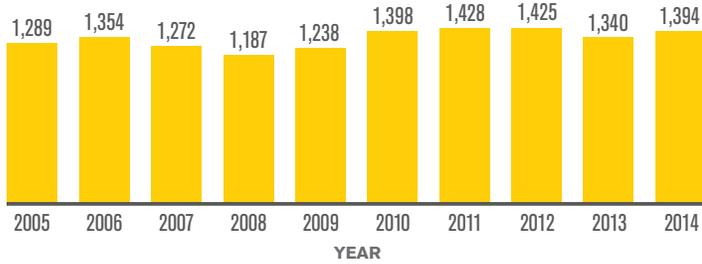
Rank	Port of Entry	Number of Shipments	Percentage of Segments
1	El Paso, TX	3,620	27.1%
2	Miami, FL	1,825	13.7%
3	Nogales, AZ	1,616	12.1%
4	Laredo, TX	1,152	8.6%
5	San Diego, CA	735	5.5%

Annual Trends

In the last decade, 13,325 shipments were exported from Latin America and denied entry at U.S. ports of entry (Figure 1). The number of shipments denied clearance each year ranged from 1,187 to 1,428 with a yearly average of 1,332.5 shipments.

¹World Wildlife Fund Living Planet Report 2014

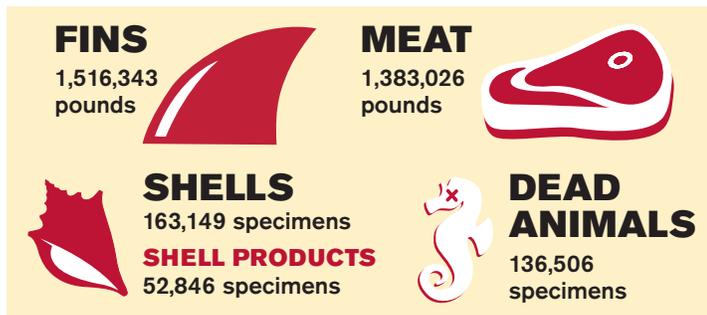
Figure 1. Annual Number of Shipments Exported from Latin America



Top 5 Products by Volume

Sixty-four different types of wildlife and wildlife products were exported from this region. The most common exports were fins, meat, shells, dead animals and shell products (Figure 2). Combined, the weight of fins and meat products exceeded 2.8 million pounds, while the number of shells, dead animals and shell products was over 350,000.

Figure 2. Top Products by Volume



Live Animal Trade

Of the 13,325 shipments exported from Latin America, 777 (5.8 percent) contained live animals or animals that died during shipment. Within those shipments were 54,886 individual animals.

Sources

At least 15,499 segments (82.2 percent) contained wildlife or wildlife products sourced from the wild. Only 699 segments (3.7 percent) contained wildlife or wildlife products sourced from captive facilities.

Purpose of Import

Of the eight different purposes of import found in the data, imports for personal purposes were by far the most common with 12,981 segments (68.9 percent) declared for this use. Commercial imports were a distant second with 4,777 segments (25.3 percent).

Top 5 Genera

Trade from Latin America contained wildlife or wildlife products from 556 different genera. The top five genera made up a total of 31.6 percent of all segments. Only 2.6 percent of the segments did not contain genus information while 50.2 percent of the segments did not contain species information (Table 4).

Table 4. Top 5 Genera

Rank	Genus	Number of Segments	Percentage of Segments
1	<i>Odocoileus</i>	1,689	8.9%
2	<i>Strombus</i>	1,363	7.2%
3	<i>Crotalus</i>	1,092	5.8%
4	<i>Caiman</i>	994	5.2%
5	<i>Crocodylus</i>	853	4.5%

Taxonomic Classes

Of the 11 taxonomic classes present in the data, the top five represented 88.9 percent of all the segments, with the top two taxonomic classes—Reptilia and Mammalia—making up more than 50 percent of the segments alone (Table 5).

Table 5. Top 5 Taxonomic Classes

Rank	Taxonomic Class	Number of Segments	Percentage of Segments
1	Reptilia	6,697	35.5%
2	Mammalia	3,915	20.7%
3	Aves	3,028	16.0%
4	Mollusca	2,110	11.2%
5	Pisces	1,036	5.5%

CITES

Seven thousand ninety four shipments (53.2 percent) contained at least one animal, or product made from an animal, listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Nine thousand one hundred twenty five segments (48.4 percent) contained animals, or products made from animals, listed under CITES, showing that wildlife and wildlife products derived from CITES-listed animals are dispersed throughout the trade from Latin America to the United States. Overall, some 11,561 live animals, 314,994 products, and 779,794 pounds of wildlife and wildlife products were sourced from CITES-listed animals.

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For a full report on combating wildlife trafficking from Latin America to the United States, more fact sheets and updates on the illegal wildlife trade, visit www.defenders.org/combating-wildlife-trafficking