

Working Together to Fight Wildlife Crime

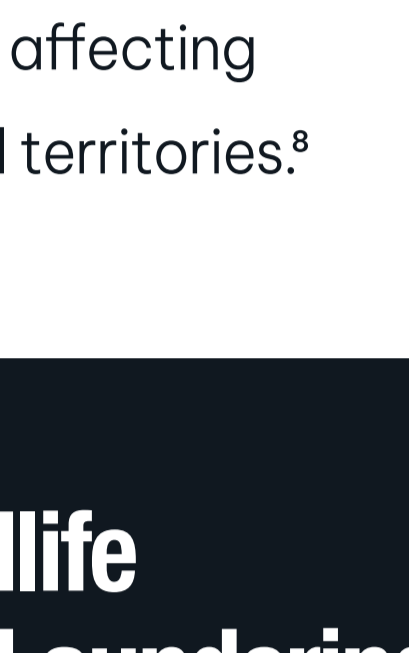
Impact of Wildlife Crime

Wildlife crime is the illegal poaching, smuggling and transport of species or animal products for financial profit or material gain.

-  Wildlife crime causes loss of biodiversity. There's a catastrophic 73% decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations in just 50 years.¹
-  Of 150,300 species threatened, more than 42,100 species are threatened with extinction, including 27% of mammals and 13% of birds.²
-  Over 60% of all emerging infectious diseases worldwide are transmitted from animals to humans. Zoonoses is responsible for HIV, Ebola, SARS, MERS and Coronaviruses.³
-  Wildlife crime reduces funding for public services and increases economic and food insecurity for local communities.⁴

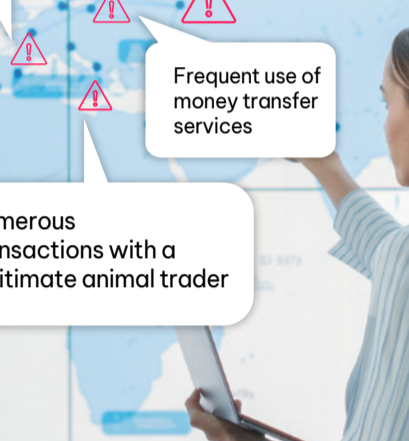
The Size of Wildlife Crime is Staggering

The value of illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth up to **20 billion USD** a year on the black market.⁵



Pangolins are the most trafficked mammal on earth, with over **1 million** pangolins trafficked in the past decade.⁶

Monetary value of environmental crimes is estimated at between **USD 91-259 billion** annually.⁷



The illegal trade is transnational crime affecting **162** countries and territories.⁸

The Intersection of Wildlife Crime and Anti-Money Laundering

Wildlife poachers, exporters and importers, and end buyers all exploit weaknesses in the global financial system to facilitate wildlife trade. They launder proceeds using methods like trade-based money laundering.

With access to behavioral and relationship information and transaction activity, AML teams are uniquely positioned to identify red flags and report suspected wildlife trafficking.

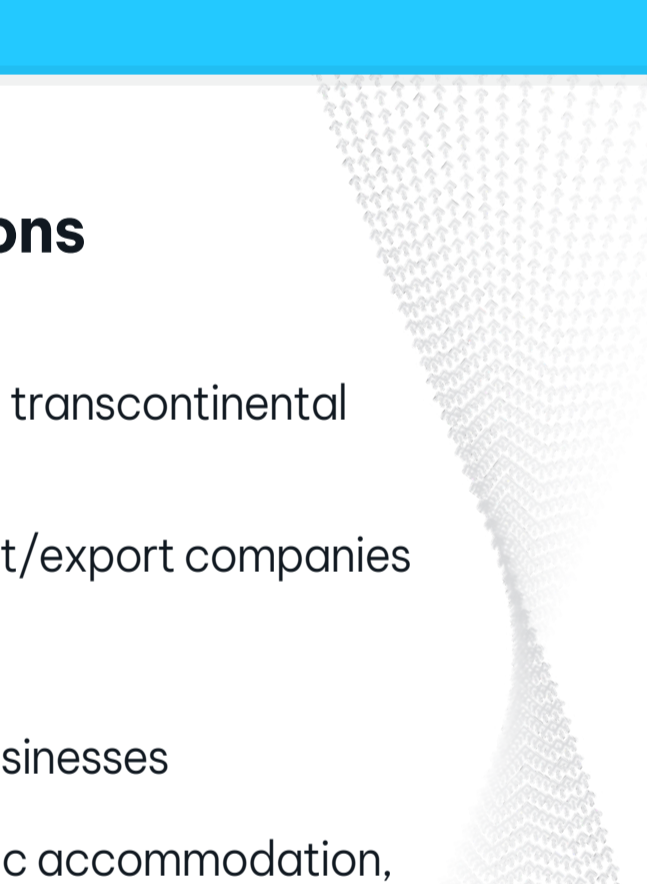



Wildlife crime is a low risk, high reward activity. In the US, it appears the vast majority of wildlife violations are not handled criminally.⁹

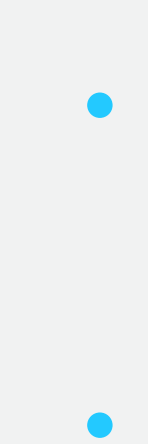
Although **86%** of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) indicate they are impacted by wildlife trafficking, only **26%** state they have performed any wildlife crime-related financial investigations.


Red Flags of Illegal Wildlife Trade

Some common red flags of wildlife trafficking include:

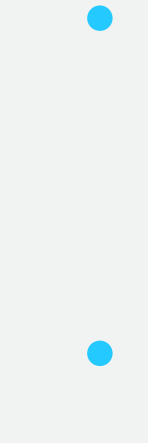


-  **Transactions with Risky Counterparties**
 - PEPs and wealthy people with wildlife-related interests or businesses
 - Legal wildlife-related entities and employees of these entities
 - Companies/owners from industries that use wildlife products
 - Low value, high volume agricultural product producers that produce goods such as coffee, tea and beans, which may be used to hide illicit wildlife products
 - International trade and logistics companies

-  **Adverse Media Connected to Wildlife or Environmental Crimes**

-  **Trade-Based Money Laundering Activities**
 - Shipments of legal wildlife with suspicious CITES certificates
 - Discrepancies between the products ordered and reported to customs and the actual value of the goods shipped
 - Use of common containers, consignees, transporters, clearing agents, or exporters
 - Switched bills of lading
 - Use of shipping routes that are known trafficking routes

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

-  **Suspicious Transactions**
 - Escrow payments for cross-border and transcontinental shipments
 - Unusual loans between trading or import/export companies
 - Middleman transactions
 - Payments for gold, or to gold trading businesses
 - Transactions for hired vehicles, domestic accommodation, airline tickets or courier/packing services through third parties or when out of the country
 - Transactions using the names of traditional medicine ingredients or products, specimen names or referring to CITES species

For a complete list of red flags, please refer to FATF's report on **Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade**.

How You Can Help Fight Wildlife Trafficking

Better Understand Your Customers and Their Risks

- Use identity resolution to move toward single, holistic and comprehensive entity risk profiles
- Ensure your KYC program thoroughly assesses customers including purpose of account, intended transaction geographies, volumes and values
- Screen environmental crime watchlists, corruption watchlists and media for known traffickers and corrupted officials

Improve Detection of Illegal Wildlife Trade

- Leverage typology reports to create detection models that spot wildlife crime red flags
- Implement keyword flags on words related to CITES-species, like 'animal', 'bird', 'parrot', 'ivory', or 'rhino'
- Evaluate transaction counterparties to identify activity with individuals or organizations at high-risk for wildlife trade
- Capitalize on technologies like optical character recognition (OCR) to monitor for trade-based money laundering risks

Report Suspected Wildlife Trafficking

File a SAR/STR/CTR when you suspect wildlife trafficking and document any evidence in your narrative

Build Strategic Partnerships

Partner with government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks to share intelligence

Keep Training

- Complete FinCrime-specific trainings on wildlife trafficking
- Train banking staff on signs of wildlife crime

Join the fight against wildlife trafficking with NICE Actimize.

[Learn more about wildlife conservation](#)

[Explore AML solutions](#)

1. World Wildlife Fund (WWF): Catastrophic 73% Decline in the Average Size of Global Wildlife Populations in just 50 Years Reveals a 'System in Peril' (2024)
 2. World Economic Forum: This is One of the World's Largest, and Most Profitable, Criminal Activities, According to INTERPOL (2023)
 3. World Wildlife Fund (WWF): Reducing Zoonotic Disease Risk from Wildlife Trade (2024)
 4. Nature Food: Wildlife Harvests can Advance Food Security and the Food Systems Agenda (2024)
 5. World Economic Forum: This is One of the World's Largest, and Most Profitable, Criminal Activities, According to INTERPOL (2023)
 6. World Wildlife Fund (WWF): The Fight to Stop Pangolin Extinction (2024)
 7. UN Environment: The State of Knowledge of Crimes That Have Serious Impacts on the Environment (2018)
 8. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Wildlife Trafficking Persists Worldwide with more than 4,000 Species Affected (2024)
 9. Frontiers in Conservation Science: Profiling Wildlife Crimes Prosecuted Federally by the United States (2022)
 10. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Enhancing the Detection, Investigation and Disruption of Illicit Financial Flows from Wildlife Crime (2017)