

STOP Illegal Wildlife Trade

What is Wildlife Trade?

Wildlife trade is the sale or exchange of animals or plants taken from the wild. A wide spectrum of our activities and things we use in our everyday lives are possible because of this trade.

Live animals kept as pets, such as arowana fish and parrots, as well as wildlife products are traded. These include:

- Food products, such as caviar and sea cucumber
- Timber furniture and wooden musical instruments
- Exotic leather bags, shoes and clothes

When is Wildlife Trade Illegal?

Indiscriminate taking and selling of wildlife threatens the survival of endangered species globally and could lead to the **potential extinction of these species**.

Countries have come together to implement rules to facilitate sustainable wildlife trade and to fight against persons or organisations that seek to exploit the Earth's biodiversity for selfish gain.

Even as a small nation state, Singapore is committed to making a difference and doing our part in the global fight against the illegal trade in wildlife.



DID YOU KNOW?



Photo credit: Max Khoo

PANGOLINS

are believed to be the most trafficked wildlife in the world, due to high demand for their meat and scales.

Impact of Illegal Wildlife Trade...

Reduces biodiversity and disrupts ecosystems

Illegal wildlife trade drives **overexploitation**, **habitat destruction** and the **introduction of invasive species**, threatening our planet's biodiversity and disrupting ecosystems across the world.

Affects livelihoods and destabilises economies

The World Economic Forum found that over half of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is highly or moderately dependent on nature.

The loss of biodiversity can result in **loss of livelihoods** and can **destabilise economies** such as the fishing and timber industries.



52%
dependent on nature

Source: World Economic Forum, 2021

Increases the risk of disease transmission

Illegal wildlife trade evades biosecurity and sanitary controls. This **increases the risk of diseases being transmitted from animals to humans**. Such diseases are known as zoonotic diseases.

Wildlife of unknown origin may also harbour dangerous diseases which could harm both humans and animals.



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora (CITES)



Photo credit : CITES.org



In 1975, countries came together to sign a multi-lateral treaty to protect endangered animals and plants – CITES.

Today, CITES regulates the international trade of wild animals and plants to ensure that it does not threaten their survival.

In Singapore, the National Parks Board (NParks) is the authority that implements CITES regulations.

Here are some examples of species protected under CITES:

Appendix I

Species facing high risk of extinction. Commercial trade is prohibited.



Pangolins



Tigers



Sea Turtles

Appendix II

Species that may be threatened with extinction if the trade in them is not closely controlled. Commercial trade is permitted with CITES permits.



Agarwood



Seahorses



Axolotl

Appendix III

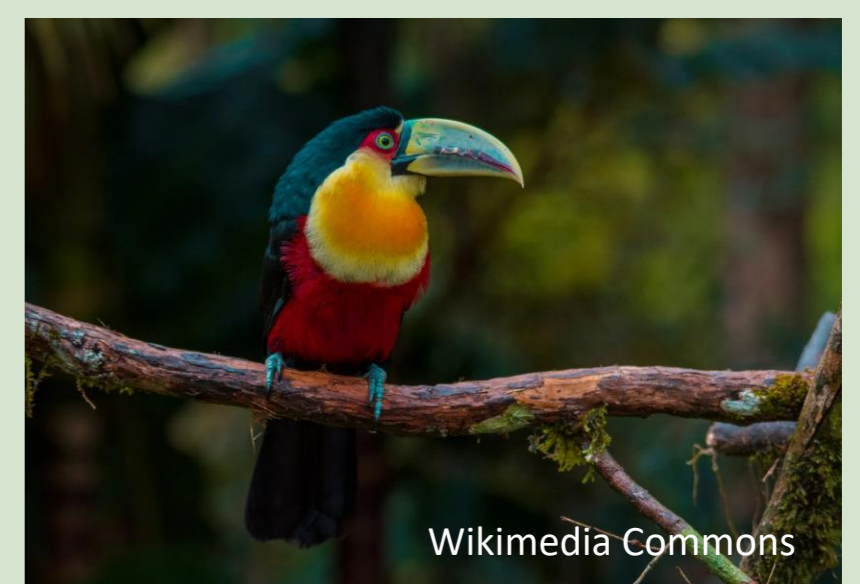
Species included at request of some countries to prevent illegal exploitation. Commercial trade is permitted with CITES permits.



Alligator Snapping Turtle (United States of America)



Ocellate River Stingray (Columbia)



Green-billed Toucan (Argentina)



Singapore's Approach to Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade

Singapore adopts a zero-tolerance stance on the illegal sale or keeping of wildlife, and smuggling of endangered species and their parts and derivatives. We have implemented measures to stop illegal wildlife shipments from passing through our borders. Our Whole-of-Government approach towards tackling illegal wildlife trade comprises:



Legislation & Regulation

Singapore became a signatory to CITES in 1986. The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA) is the principal legislation that supports the implementation and enforcement of CITES regulations in Singapore.



Enforcement

NParks, Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority implement a suite of measures to combat illegal wildlife trade, including the screening of cargo and travellers at our checkpoints. NParks also deploys a K9 team of sniffer dogs specially trained to detect wildlife and wildlife products.



Developing Capabilities

NParks has built up its wildlife identification and testing capabilities under the Centre for Wildlife Forensics. It will continue to enhance these capabilities through technology adoption and international collaboration, to better support investigation, enforcement and prosecution domestically and internationally.



**In Plain Sight:
Tackling online illegal
wildlife trade in Singapore**

12 August 2021

Community Stewardship

Community support is also key to the fight against illegal wildlife trade. All of us can play a part!

NParks works with partners such as World Wide Fund for Nature (Singapore) to educate individuals and organisations on the detrimental effects of illegal wildlife trade and how they can help to combat it.



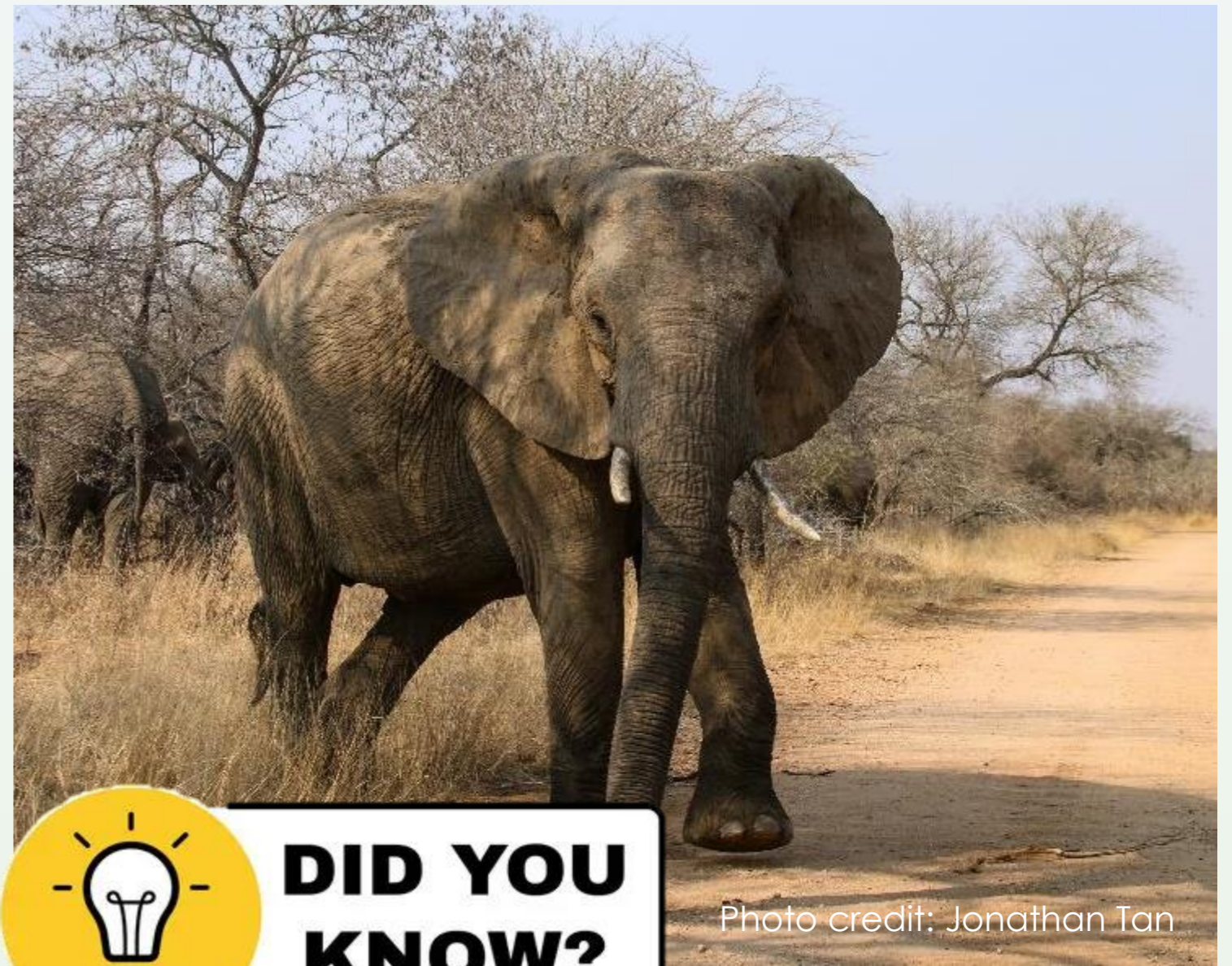
Singapore's Strict Laws and Robust Legislative Framework

The principal legislation in Singapore governing the trade in wildlife is the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA).

Under the ESA, you will need a CITES permit issued by NParks to import, export, re-export, or to bring a species protected under CITES in transit in Singapore.

Regulations may also be made under the ESA to ban the trade of specific species protected under CITES, based on the level of threat to their survival.

In addition, the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act allows for the investigation and confiscation of benefits derived from the illegal trade in wildlife.



DID YOU KNOW?

"Singapore's ban offers no exception, potentially making it the world's strictest ivory ban in scope and implementation."

- World Wide Fund for Nature (Singapore) in 2019

Domestic Ban on Ivory Trade

On 12 August 2020, NParks crushed nine tonnes of ivory to commemorate World Elephant Day. The ivory was estimated to have come from nearly 300 African elephants, and was worth S\$18 million.

The destruction of the ivory prevented it from re-entering the market and helped to disrupt the global supply chain of illegally traded ivory.

Singapore further strengthened our regulations against illegal ivory trade, by prohibiting the sale of, or public display of, elephant ivory or ivory products for the purpose of sale in Singapore from 1 September 2021.



Scan this QR code to view how NParks combats the illegal trade in ivory.



Enforcement and Developing Capabilities

NParks works closely with Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority to inspect shipments at our checkpoints, and investigate cases of illegal wildlife trade.

In 2019, NParks seized three record-breaking shipments of pangolin scales that were on their way from Africa to Vietnam. Two of them also contained large amounts of elephant ivory.

The scales and ivory seized across these shipments were estimated to come from around 38,000 pangolins and 300 elephants, and were worth more than S\$100 million.

All seized specimens were destroyed after samples were collected by the Centre for Wildlife Forensics for research.



A container was declared to contain “frozen beef” but upon inspection by NParks, Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, sacks of pangolin scales were found hidden among packs of frozen meat.

Opened in August 2021, the Centre for Wildlife Forensics provides NParks with technological capabilities to accurately identify animal or plant species and determine their geographical origins.

NParks collaborates with international experts and organisations to perform deeper analyses on different wildlife shipments and establish links between them.

Such insights can assist international organisations and source countries to take action against poachers, smugglers and criminal syndicates within their jurisdictions.



Scan this QR code to find out more about the Centre for Wildlife Forensics



DID YOU KNOW?

Before doing DNA sampling, researchers can do some basic identification through visual inspection of physical features of the items.



Community Stewardship

Everyone can support wildlife conservation by not contributing to the demand for the illegal trade of wildlife.

What you can do

DO check what a product is made of before you buy it.

For example, check the ingredient list of traditional medicines to ensure they do not contain parts of species protected under CITES.

DO ask for a valid CITES permit.

If you intend to buy a product which involves a species protected under CITES, ask the shop for a valid CITES permit for the product. You may check the validity of the permit with NParks before you purchase the product.

DO Contact NParks at 1800-476-1600 if you spot any occurrences of illegal wildlife trade. Information shared will be kept strictly confidential.

BE involved in our programme.

Scan the QR code below if you wish to be our ambassadors to contribute to the fight against illegal trade in wildlife.



DO NOT purchase items which may contain endangered animal parts or illegal wildlife products, whether in Singapore or overseas.

You will unwittingly fuel the illegal wildlife trade and may get into trouble with the law.

DO NOT buy wild animals.

This could encourage traders and poachers to take more animals from the wild and thereby affect our ecosystems.



Learn More About Our City in Nature

Join our activities and webinars to learn about the illegal wildlife trade, our efforts to combat it, and how you can play a part in transforming Singapore into a City in Nature!

Scan the QR codes on the right for more details on upcoming events, and check out our YouTube channel for videos of past webinars.

Scan this QR code for Upcoming events and activities



Scan this QR code for NParks' YouTube channel



Updating the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act

Why are we updating it?

The wildlife trade industry evolves constantly. We review our legislation and regulatory framework regularly to ensure these remain effective in tackling illegal trade and in protecting endangered species.



DID YOU KNOW?

More than **20**



closed door engagement sessions were conducted by NParks with stakeholders such as key traders, Singapore Logistics Association, environment law academics and non-governmental organisations to formulate the proposed amendments to the ESA.

Key Proposed Amendments

1. Stiffer penalties for illegal trade in species protected under CITES

For Appendix I species, and repeat offenders for Appendix II and III species:



Fine of up to S\$50,000 and/or 2 years' jail term to **max. \$100,000 fine and/or 4 years' jail.**



Maximum aggregate fine pegged to **market value of CITES species.**



Aligning illegal domestic and international illegal wildlife trade penalties.

2. Stronger enforcement powers for NParks to tackle illegal wildlife trade



Non-CITES species

used to conceal CITES specimens can be seized and forfeited as well.



Protection of informant's identity

to encourage more people to come forward to provide information on illegal wildlife trade.

3. Greater clarity for stakeholders on the scope of Singapore's wildlife trade regulations



Animal hybrids

of CITES Appendix I and II species are considered as **full species.**



Animal by-products

such as faeces and urine are excluded from the Act.



Clarify documents

needed for CITES species in transit/transshipment through Singapore.

"WWF applauds Singapore's commitment to ensuring the ESA remains updated and effective in alignment with CITES."

– World Wide Fund for Nature (Singapore), 2021

"We commend the Ministry of National Development and NParks for these proposed amendments, which will strengthen implementation of the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act and update it to be in alignment with CITES."

– TRAFFIC International Southeast Asia, 2021

We welcome your feedback and suggestions in the updating of the ESA.

Scan this QR code to share your thoughts with us

