

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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DATA SOURCES AND VERIFICATION FOR THE WORLD WILDLIFE CRIME REPORTS

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat and prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in relation to SC74 Agenda Item 33.3, the CITES Secretariat's report on activities conducted under the auspices of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime since CoP18.

Noting questions related by some Parties, UNODC wishes to clarify the processes used in relation to data collection, verification and usage in the World Wildlife Crime Report. This note outlines (i) the types of data source used, (ii) the processing of and comparisons carried out between those data sources, and (iii) the pre-publication process whereby Parties are invited to review the data before it is included in the final analysis and report.

The aim of the World Wildlife Crime Report is to help CITES Parties and relevant stakeholders understand the nature and scope of the various illegal trade problems that exist. Understanding of such problems is fundamental to finding effective solutions to decrease the illegality and associated harm. In the context of wildlife seizures, the report acknowledges that the reporting of seizures indicates two aspects: first, they indicate efforts to address a problem of illegal wildlife trade, and those efforts should be commended. Secondly, however, the ongoing need for seizures also infers that the problem is ongoing.

When conducting the research for the World Wildlife Crime Report, UNODC relies on two types of data source: 1) the Annual Illegal Trade Reports (AITRs) submitted by Parties and allowed for use for research purposes and 2) data collected by UNODC staff and consultants for specific research studies, including additional seizure data not included in the AITRs.

The AITR reports are housed by UNODC in the CITES annual illegal trade database (CITES-AITR) after receipt by the CITES Secretariat and transmission to UNODC. Data collected from specific research studies are housed in the World WISE database.

The analysis presented in the World Wildlife Crime Report relies on these two data types. Collecting data from different sources allows triangulation between those sources, which is a common method used to help boost data quality and produce robust research. To minimise the risk of quality issues such as double counting seizures, UNODC has developed a de-duplicating algorithm and carries out additional manual checks to ensure data quality is high.

UNODC has always sought to work with Parties and asked Parties to review the data collected by UNODC before use for publication, via the pre-publication process. All global analytical reports produced by UNODC, including the World Wildlife Crime Report, are based on data validated by governments through this pre-publication process. During the process, all data which relate to seizures made by a country, or research conducted in the country, are sent to the Parties for verification.

The pre-publication process gives the opportunity to Parties to review national data on wildlife seizures collected in the CITES-AITR database and the World WISE database and any other numerical data specifically referencing them. This is done to:

- Ensure that these data are correct and comprehensive;

- Increase the data coverage of the databases, giving the opportunity to Parties to report additional wildlife individual seizure incidents;
- Provide the opportunity to Parties to review information from research activities, case study analysis, and analysis of data collected during fieldwork activities and not included in the databases to ensure that this information is correct.

Parties are provided these data for review prior to analysis through their Permanent Representatives in Vienna, Austria, where UNODC is based. They have an initial deadline to respond with any initial comments and amendments they would like made, and UNODC routinely liaises with Parties during this process and make amendments to the data as requested if errors are found or additional data has come to light. The analysis for the World Wildlife Crime Report is conducted using the final datasets once all existing Party queries have been addressed.

UNODC can confirm that this procedure was followed for the 2016 and 2020 World Wildlife Crime Reports, for all relevant Parties, and will be followed for future versions. This is in accordance with the procedures followed by UNODC for all global reports. A link to the Methodological Annex of the 2020 World Wildlife Crime Report is below, followed by a link to the full report.

2020 Methodological Annex: [WWCR2\\_Methods\\_Annext.pdf \(unodc.org\)](#)

2020 World Wildlife Crime Report: [World Wildlife Report \(unodc.org\)](#)

UNODC remain at Parties' disposal should they have any concerns or questions and encourages Parties to engage with us during the pre-publication process to ensure that they are satisfied with the accuracy of the data used and analysis produced.