



The SAWEN Bulletin



South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network's bulletin on wildlife crime issues

Volume 44 (May-August 2025)

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Editorial Note: This bulletin contains wildlife crime related news compiled from various online sources. The news contents are not verified by SAWEN Secretariat and hence the Secretariat is not responsible for any inaccuracies. Please contribute to the bulletin by sharing wildlife crime news or any other reports pertaining to wildlife crime from your country.

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Twelfth Executive Committee Meeting

30-31 July, 2025

The 12th Executive Committee Meeting of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) was held in Colombo. The meeting was attended by focal persons from all eight SAWEN member countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in person, while India joined virtually.

The meeting focused on reviewing SAWEN's progress, addressing regional challenges in wildlife law enforcement, and strengthening collaborative mechanisms to combat wildlife crime across borders. The meeting also set the stage for the upcoming First General Assembly, which shall firmly establish wildlife crime prevention as a key priority within South Asia's environmental and security agendas. The meeting underscored the urgent need for: regional solidarity in tackling organized wildlife crime; improved in-country coordination of enforcement actions; inclusive partnerships with civil society to sustain enforcement outcomes; and united efforts to protect biodiversity, safeguard ecosystems, and support communities. Collectively, these commitments reflect a growing realization that wildlife crime is not just a conservation issue but also one of governance, security, and justice.

SAWEN Updates

South Asia Judicial Symposium on Wildlife Crime

7-8 May, 2025

SAWEN and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) jointly organized the South Asia Judicial Symposium. The symposium was organized in a hybrid



mode, with representatives from India, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka attending in person, and the rest of the member countries attending virtually. The symposium focused on assessing the current situation and legal framework surrounding Wildlife Crime. The support for the event was provided by the United Kingdom Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).





Interaction Meeting of SAWEN and SLAWEN

31 July, 2025

In collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Conservation and Environmental Foundation Ltd. (EFL), under the INL fund, USA, an interaction meeting was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The interaction was regarding the legal and institutional systems for biodiversity conservation in respective countries, including national laws, enforcement agencies, coordination mechanisms, and policy measures guiding wildlife protection and shared best practices in transboundary wildlife crime investigation.

MoU between Environmental Foundation Ltd. (EFL), Sri Lanka, and SAWEN

18 June, 2025

The Environmental Foundation (EFL) and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2025 to strengthen regional cooperation in combating wildlife crime, marking a key milestone in EFL's long-term pursuit of Justice for Nature. EFL, a leading public interest environmental organization in Sri Lanka since 1981, has been at the forefront of environmental litigation, research, and advocacy. Over the past years, EFL has led one of Sri Lanka's most substantive and sustained interventions on counter-illicit wildlife trafficking, working closely with enforcement agencies and regional partners to dismantle trafficking networks, enhance multi-agency coordination, and strengthen regulatory frameworks across the criminal justice chain, bringing a coordinated approach that has thus far been largely overlooked in Sri Lanka. The MoU outlines a shared vision between SAWEN and EFL to build long-term collaboration through joint initiatives, strategic interventions, research, and outreach. This partnership represents a significant step forward in addressing escalating biodiversity threats through united and sustained regional action.



ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION (GUARANTEE) LIMITED #JusticeForNature

RECRUITMENT OF OFFICIALS AT THE SAWEN SECRETARIAT

August, 2025

The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) Secretariat re-appointed the Finance Officer. Mr. Ganesh Giri joined the Secretariat to oversee the finance portfolio and institutionalize the finance set-up, adhering to the national and international compliance. He will help the secretariat in financial planning, fund management, budgeting, taxation and compliance, and financial reporting.



Workshop on the High-altitude tiger conservation

01 July 2025

SAWEN representative attended the workshop organized by the Global Tiger Forum in New Delhi. It was emphasized in the workshop that wildlife crime is a critical threat to our planet's biodiversity in South Asia and beyond, and the role of SAWEN - South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network is vital in regional cooperation. Collaboration needs to be stepped up by tackling cyber wildlife crime, money laundering, illegal pet trade, and transcontinental spread.



Training on Wildlife Crime Investigation to Prosecution

11-16 August, 2025

SAWEN in cooperation with the Government of Nepal organized a training program on "Wildlife Crime Investigation to Prosecution". The training was in collaboration with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) Nepal and Himalayan Nature, with financial support from the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund. The training was conducted in Chitwan, Nepal, from 11 to 16 August 2025, for 27 frontline officers from protected and non-protected areas participating in theoretical and practical sessions to strengthen their capacity in investigating and prosecuting wildlife crime.

SAWEN Joins Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime as International Champion

June, 2025

As 47th International Champion SAWEN joined the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC), a growing global network of organizations committed to combating wildlife crime and strengthening the environmental rule of law. As a regional inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body, SAWEN's work focuses on policy harmonization, institutional capacity strengthening, intelligence and knowledge sharing, and collaboration with regional and international partners to address illegal wildlife trade across its eight member countries in South Asia.



SAWEN Participation on Interagency Cooperation on IWT Workshop

August, 2025

On 7th August 2025, SAWEN representative presented on title "Inter-agency cooperation in combating wildlife crime" to the officials representing Government of Nepal from various departments including Customs, Wildlife, CITES, Prosecutors, and Police. The workshop under "WCO INAMA India and South Asia Project" aims to promote understanding of each agency's distinct role, facilitate the sharing of best practices in interagency collaboration, investigations, and prosecutions, and encourage coordinated efforts to address IWT as organized crime, contributing to dismantle the networks behind it. Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (US DoS INL) and supported by Nepal Customs, this program represents a significant step forward in bringing together key actors in the fight against IWT.

Trans-national Wildlife Crime

UNIQUE SPECIES IN AIR PASSENGER BAGGAGE EXPOSES GLOBAL REACH OF THAILAND-INDIA WILD LIFE SMUGGLING

MUMBAI-INDIA, May 2025 (traffic.org): Indian customs uncovered a major wildlife smuggling attempt in late May at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, intercepting an Indian passenger arriving from Thailand with 52 rare desert reptiles originating from Iran and Iraq. The incident highlights the expanding global reach of wildlife trafficking through the Thailand-India air passenger baggage route.

PUNE AIRPORT CUSTOMS SEIZE RARE WILDLIFE, ARREST TWO PASSENGERS FROM BANGKOK

PUNE-INDIA, 18 July, 2025 (paryawaran.com): Pune Customs seized 13 live Green Tree Pythons, 4 Fig Parrots, and 2 rare Sumatran Striped Rabbits from Bangkok passengers. The animals, found in poor condition, are under care for repatriation. A case was filed under wildlife protection laws, with investigations ongoing to trace smuggling networks.

AUTHORITIES INTERCEPT WILDLIFE SMUGGLING VIA THAILAND-INDIA PASSENGER FLIGHTS

BENGALURU-INDIA, 26 May, 2025 (Khaosod English): Authorities seized 20 live blue iguanas and two sulcata tortoises on May 26 from a returned baggage shipment linked to Thai Airways flights between Bangkok and Bengaluru, uncovering an attempted wildlife smuggling case involving an Indian passenger.

SRI LANKAN PASSENGER ARRESTED AT SUVARNABHUMI AIRPORT FOR LIVE WILDLIFE SMUGGLING

SUVARNABHUMI-THAILAND, 26 May, 2025 (Khaosod English): Thai authorities arrested a Sri Lankan passenger at Suvarnabhumi Airport for attempting to smuggle live wildlife, including black cockatoos, meerkats, and a prairie dog, on a flight to Colombo. The suspect faces charges under Thailand's wildlife, customs, and animal health laws, highlighting ongoing inter-agency efforts to curb illegal wildlife trafficking.



Spider-tailed viper ©Mumbai Customs @mumbaicus3



Officials seize live Black cockatoos found in a Sri-Lankan passenger's luggage at Suvarnabhumi Airport

National News



BANGLADESH CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE CAPTIVITY

8 May, 2025 (Mongabay.com): On May 8, the Forest Department's Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) team and a few local volunteers, led by wildlife inspector Nargis Sultana, rescued the animals from the mini zoo, located about 124 kilometers (77 miles) north of Bangladesh's capital city, Dhaka. Some animals suffered from severe injuries, while the other animals were served rotten feed, and their accommodations were uncomfortably congested.



Source: Mongabay



Source: BSS

42-KG VENISON SEIZED IN SUNDARBANS

8 May, 2025 (BSS News): The Forest Department seized 42 kilograms of venison and a small boat during an anti-poaching patrol near Hular Bharani Khal in the Dhangmari area of the Sundarbans. While patrolling the eastern Sundarbans, forest officials spotted a suspicious boat in the canal. As they approached, the poachers abandoned the vessel and fled. A subsequent search revealed the venison on board. A case has been filed under the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act, naming Shajahan Fakir of Dhangmari as the prime suspect. Authorities are still working to identify the other three individuals involved.

TWO POACHERS JAILED, DEER HIDE, HEADS RECOVERED FROM SUNDARBANS

27 May, 2025 (BSS News): A court here sent two poachers to jail as they were arrested with a deer hide and heads from the Sundarbans in Mongla upazila of the district. The arrestees were identified as Mamun, 33, and Md. Abdur Rahim, 21 both from the Chandpai area of Mongla upazila. According to the case documents, forest guards arrested Mamun and Rahim from Kokilmoni Forest Camp while they illegally entered the sanctuary area on Monday morning to collect crabs. The forest guards seized 40 kilograms (Kgs) of crabs, 21 'charu' (different types of fishing net), and a solar panel after searching two boats at the scene, it added. Moreover, a deer hides and three heads of deer with antlers were found hanging from a nearby tree.



Source: BSS



Source: BSS

TWO POACHERS JAILED, DEER HIDE, HEADS RECOVERED FROM SUNDARBANS

27 July, 2025 (BSS News): During a joint drive, the Department of Forest and Bangladesh Coast Guard seized a trawler with 730 kg of crabs from the Charamukha Canal area of Kopotakkho River under Khulna Range of the Sundarbans West Forest Division yesterday. Kobadak Forest Station Officer, Md. Anwar Hossain said that an engine-driven trawler with 730 kg of crabs was seized in an abandoned condition during the joint drive of the Forest Department and the Coast Guard. However, no one was arrested in this connection.

EIGHT POACHERS WITH VENISON, CRAB HELD FROM SUNDARBANS

15 Aug, 2025 (BSS News): A coastguard team during a drive arrested eight poachers and recovered a large quantity of venison and crab from their possessions in the Harbaria area of the Sundarbans last night. On information, the coastguard team conducted a special drive in the areas adjacent to Harbaria Dighi and arrested eight poachers along with 13 kg of venison, one deer head, four legs, 18 Kg crabs, and five liters of poison, he said. The team also seized two boats, traps, and nets used for hunting. The arrestees and seized items have been handed over to the Chandpay forest office for further legal action.



Source: BSS

70 SMUGGLERS HELD, HUGE DEER TRAPS, TRAWLERS SEIZED IN SUNDARBANS

12 August, 2025 (BSS News): The Forest Department members have arrested 70 alleged smugglers and seized around 14,000 feet of deer-trapping snares along with 148 fishing trawlers and boats from various locations in the eastern Sundarbans during the last one-month in July amid the restricted entry period. The detainees were sent to Bagerhat District Jail through the court.

COAST GUARD SEIZES 850 KG CRAB IN SUNDARBANS

KHULNA, Aug 26, 2025 (BSS): Members of the Bangladesh Coast Guard seized 850 kg of crab worth about Taka 3.82 lakh in a special operation from Koira in the Sundarbans, said Coast Guard West Zone Media Officer Lieutenant Commander Muntasir Ibne Muhsin this morning. Being informed, a Coast Guard team from Koira station conducted a raid in the Gharlal Bazar area adjacent to the Kapotaksha River in the Sundarbans and seized the crab from a boat. However, sensing the presence of the Coast Guard, the smugglers fled. Later, the seized crab was handed over to the Kobadak Forest Office.



Source: BSS

**MANAS POACHING CASE UNRAVELS GLOBAL WILDLIFE SMUGGLING RING**

26 May, 2025 (Guwahati News): Assam Police's investigation into the poaching of two elephants in Manas National Park uncovered what appears to be an organized wildlife crime network with possible international links. Following the discovery of the elephants' carcasses in early May 2025 near the India-Bhutan border, authorities launched "Operation Hasti Bandhu" and so far, arrested nine suspects from villages around the park. The suspects allegedly entered the forest, hid for days, and killed the elephants, removing tusks from at least one using handmade firearms, and police recovered weapons, tusks, and bear claws during the operation. Officials believe the case may involve cross-border smuggling of wildlife parts, and the investigation is ongoing with potential for more arrests.



Source: PIB Mumbai

DIRECTORATE OF REVENUE INTELLIGENCE AND FOREST DEPARTMENT RECOVER TIGER CUB CARCASS, 61 BONES AND NAILS IN SEONI, MADHYA PRADESH

11 July, 2025 (PIB Mumbai): Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Nagpur Unit under Mumbai Zonal, conducted a joint operation with officials from the South Seoni Forest Division in Seoni, Madhya Pradesh, resulting in the seizure of nine nails, sixty-one bones, and the decomposed carcass of a tiger cub. The team acted on specific intelligence that a group of individuals had killed a tiger cub and subsequently buried its carcass in a forested area near Sarekha Khurd village. Officials intercepted six individuals attempting to sell the tiger's body parts in violation of wildlife protection laws.

30 KG OF PROCESSED SEA CUCUMBER, MEANT TO BE SMUGGLED TO SRI LANKA, SEIZED IN NAGAPATTINAM

2 July, 2025 (The Hindu): Coastal Security Group police in Nagapattinam seized 30 kg of processed sea cucumber, valued at about ₹4 lakh, allegedly intended for illegal export to Sri Lanka. Acting on a tip-off, authorities recovered the consignment from Keechankuppam after suspects fled the scene, and the seized items were handed over to the Forest Department for further action.



NEPAL

RED PANDA THEFT ATTEMPT FROM CENTRAL ZOO, NEPAL

13 May 2025 (*The Kathmandu Post*): Two men breached the security of the Central Zoo in Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, to steal an endangered red panda. The suspects, identified as Mohammad Tafik (an Indian national) and Krishna Gurung (from Dhading), were later arrested by the Lalitpur police. They had reportedly planned to sell the animal for approximately 500,000 INR.



PAKISTAN

WILDLIFE DEPT ARRESTS SEVEN ILLEGAL HUNTERS

28 July, 2025 (*The Nation*): The Punjab Wildlife Department continued a province-wide combing operation on the instructions of Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, resulting in the arrest of seven illegal hunters and the recovery of around a dozen birds, including pheasants, parrots, and pigeons, in Gujranwala, Narowal, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, and DG Khan. The accused were fined over Rs 100,000 under the Wildlife Act; all recovered birds were released into their natural habitat, and a rescued pangolin in Narowal was also safely returned to the wild.

PUNJAB WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL HUNTING, FILES OVER 125 FIRS

17 August, 2025 (*Pakistan Today*): The Punjab Wildlife Department has intensified action against illegal falcon and quail hunting during the ongoing season, registering over 125 FIRs and rescuing more than 300 wild birds across the province. Authorities targeted poaching hotspots in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, the Salt Range, and South Punjab, where migratory birds are illegally trapped using nets and other inhumane methods, reaffirming zero tolerance for wildlife violations.



Source: Pakistan Today

