



July 2009

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editorial

Hello, and welcome to the first **INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme** newsletter. We plan to issue this newsletter three times a year, with additional releases for important events.

Since the beginning of the year we have been busy operationally, working on projects targeting specific aspects of environmental crime as well as assisting environmental law enforcement agencies in our member countries with their own operations.

On a strategic level, we have **restructured** the Environmental Crime Programme, reassessing its mission and goals in order to render it both **sustainable** and **robust**. A part of this has been our attempt to secure sustainable funding and support.

Crimes against the environment are varied and include the exploitation of **flora and fauna**, the disposal and transport of **hazardous materials**, the exploitation of **fisheries**, **illegal logging**, and numerous emerging issues relating to climate change. A wide range of international treaties and national laws exist with the aim of regulating human interaction with the environment. However, **environmental crime crosses borders and continents** unconstrained by geographic and moral boundaries, and it tests both legislation and the response of the law enforcement community. Consequently, the fight against environmental crime must be conducted from a **global perspective** to match this transnational threat.

As we work internationally to bring together environmental law enforcement agencies, non-governmental agencies and civil society in general, **I hope that you will work with us** in contributing to the conservation of the world's environment, biodiversity and natural resources.

DAVID HIGGINS
MANAGER, ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME PROGRAMME





news

INTERPOL ASSISTS BRAZIL'S OPERATION OXOSI

Operation Oxossi was Brazil's largest operation against wildlife crime in a decade, resulting in the issue of 102 arrest warrants, 140 search warrants and the recovery of 3,500 wildlife specimens. The operation was conducted by the Brazilian Federal Police with assistance from the Environmental Crime Programme and the Czech Environmental Inspectorate. Through INTERPOL's systems, one suspect – a Czech national wanted in Brazil – was arrested in Indonesia while another Portuguese national was intercepted at Rio de Janeiro airport.

INTERPOL JOINS INVESTIGATION INTO SMUGGLED ANIMAL PELTS

We are assisting the US Fish and Wildlife Service in their investigations of a yacht discovered to contain illegal animal pelts with a street value of EUR 61,300. A US Judge fined the ship's owner USD150,000.

INTERPOL WINS HUMANE SOCIETY OF CANADA AWARD

The Humane Society of Canada (HSC) presented INTERPOL with its Heroes for Animals award – the first time an international organization has received the honour – which recognizes individuals or organizations for their efforts to protect wildlife. HSC's Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, Michael O'Sullivan, said "no one else has the specialized infrastructure, expertise and dedication to effectively crack down on global organized crime that harms people, animals and the environment."

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE



Humane Society Chairman, Michael O'Sullivan (right), presents the award to INTERPOL's Executive Director of Police Services, Jean-Michel Louboutin



*Wildlife seized as part of Operation Oxossi
Photo: Brazilian Federal Police*





programme activities

RECENT PROJECTS

Our three main aims are to:

- combat specific types of environmental crime;
- provide support to law enforcement officers and agencies;
- examine emerging trends.

We recently co-ordinated **training in the use of night vision goggles** provided by INTERPOL's Project OASIS to the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS). These night vision instruments are now distributed among KWS wildlife protection units deployed to intercept commercial poaching gangs.

A new project provides **support to the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network** in three areas of law enforcement: communicating, exchanging and analysing intelligence; managing and responding to investigative requests; and assisting in the co-ordination of operational activities.

We are setting up an **international wildlife forensics network**. The first of its kind, the network will provide unprecedented benefits to wildlife law enforcement nationally and internationally.

Our **Climate Change Crime and Corruption** project aims to identify those areas within the Kyoto Protocol which are potentially vulnerable to criminal activity and to develop strategies to combat their exploitation.

We are developing a web-based system to allow concerned members of the public to send us **anonymous tip-offs about environmental crime**.

Project Clean Seas is preparing a training course and manual on conducting investigations of vessels suspected to have been dumping hazardous wastes, including oil, at sea.

*Trainer and Kenyan Wildlife Service Rangers set up their night vision goggles.
Photo: Bill Clark*



INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

In recent months, we have participated in a number of meetings organized by environmental organizations around the world.

- **Special Investigations Group Meeting of the ASEAN-WEN**

Bangkok, Thailand (January)

Discussed and planned operations against wildlife crime in the region, specifically the poaching and trafficking of endangered tigers and pangolin.

- **Environmental Crimes in the Arab States, organized by the United Nations Development Programme and the Lebanese Ministry of Justice**

Beirut, Lebanon (March)

Encouraged dialogue between the participating states and explored ways to improve co-operation.

- **US Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) In-Service Training session**

Shepherdstown, USA (May)

Raised the profile of INTERPOL's role and capabilities in combating international wildlife crime among our colleagues in the US FWS.

- **8th Meeting of the Asia Forest Partnership**

Bali, Indonesia (May)

Highlighted to policy-makers and stakeholders from civil society the importance of law enforcement in combating illegal logging and associated crimes.

- **The European Police College's Nature and Environmental Awareness Seminar**

Lisbon, Portugal (June)

Raised awareness of INTERPOL's roles and responsibilities with regard to environmental crime to an audience of 25 law enforcement officers from six European countries.

- **The CITES Enforcement Expert Group Meeting**

Oregon, USA – FWS Forensics Laboratory (June)

Provided guidance on international enforcement capabilities to 22 of the world's leading experts in wildlife law enforcement.



STRATEGIC PLAN

We have produced a two-year **strategic plan** with the mission of assisting INTERPOL's member countries in the effective enforcement of national and international laws and treaties, thereby contributing to the conservation of the world's environment, biodiversity and natural resources.

The strategic plan provides clear goals that not only render the Programme's existing areas (pollution and wildlife crime) more robust but allows our expansion into **emerging areas** of environmental crime. These include:

- Fisheries
- Climate change
- Illegal logging
- Oceans
- Water resources
- Natural resources
- Bio-security

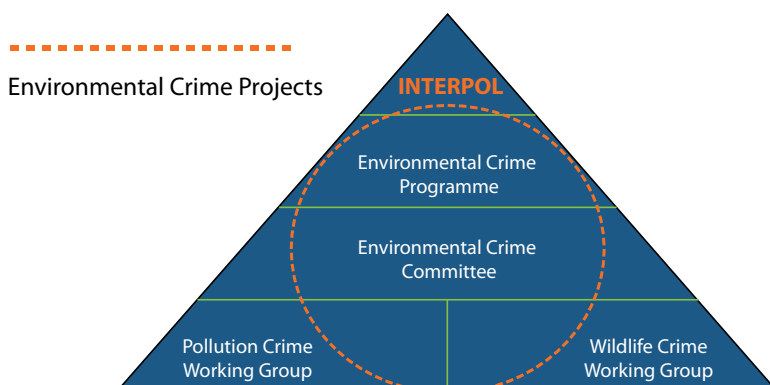
We have also produced a **sustainable funding model** and a **visionary structure** document which aim to secure the future of the programme and its expansion in the long term.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The Environmental Crime Programme at the General Secretariat is staffed by the Programme Manager and Specialized Officer for Wildlife Crime, David Higgins, and the Programme's Assistant. Later this year we expect to be joined by a Specialized Officer for Pollution Crime. Meanwhile, negotiations are under way in order to secure funding for a new post of wildlife crime officer at INTERPOL's liaison office in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Environmental Crime Committee is made up of investigators and/or decision makers from our member countries working under INTERPOL's auspices, while two working groups, composed of representatives from member countries, provide guidance and support in activities surrounding pollution and wildlife crime respectively.

Environmental crime projects involve members from all the various bodies, as indicated by the red circle in the diagram below. This includes some staff at the General Secretariat who are not affiliated to the Environmental Crime Programme, such as analysts, who may assist in a specific area of a project.



resources

REPORT ON THE LINKS BETWEEN ORGANIZED CRIME AND ELECTRONIC WASTE DISPOSAL

Handled incorrectly, electronic waste (such as discarded computers and televisions) can release poisonous materials into the environment. With the Pollution Crime Working Group, we have published a report entitled **Electronic Waste and Organized Crime: Assessing the Links**, which will help us plan global and multi-sector responses to the problem.

Visit our website to download the report

CONTROLLED DELIVERIES MANUAL

In conjunction with the CITES Secretariat, we have produced a manual on controlled deliveries as a technique for investigating wildlife crime. This is for law enforcement officials to use in investigations and during operations and is available from the restricted area of the Programme's website.

MARKETING DOCUMENTS

We have started to use a series of marketing documents including a brochure (available on our website), posters, electronic presentations and this newsletter. These were designed and produced by Viv-id, a British company based in Manchester (www.viv-id.co.uk), and were generously funded by the UK Environment Agency.

WEBSITE RESTRUCTURE

Extensively renewed and expanded, the environmental crime section of the INTERPOL website now contains a range of information about the Programme alongside regularly updated news from around the world. A restricted area provides law enforcement officials access to investigative manuals and materials from our conferences and working group meetings. Law enforcement officials can **apply for restricted access** via the website.



future plans

Following the restructure of the Programme, we are now focusing on **investigations and operations**. Past activities have established international networks for the environmental law enforcement community, through which we can now **actively co-operate and co-ordinate on the ground in order to counter criminals**.

We are also calling upon the broader NGO and inter-governmental community to work with greater co-ordination and collaboration. Environmental crime is a global problem and we are positioning our Programme at the heart of a global response.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

We are currently organizing the annual meetings for the Wildlife and Pollution Crime Working Groups. These meetings will be opportunities for our members to review and assess existing projects and develop strategies to address emerging crime areas.

What? 21st INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group Meeting

Where? Tropical Manaus Hotel, Manaus, Brazil

When? 21 - 25 September 2009

Who? The first two days are an open meeting with non-governmental organizations and civil society welcome. The remaining three days will be for law enforcement officers only.

What? 15th INTERPOL Pollution Crime Working Group Meeting

Where? INTERPOL General Secretariat, Lyon, France

When? 7 - 9 October 2009

Who? The first day will be an open meeting with non-governmental organizations and civil society welcome. The remaining two days will be for law enforcement officers only.

get involved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

January saw the Programme face a challenge to its own existence as funds ran out. As the Programme is funded solely by external sources we made an informal request to the environmental community, including governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector, for financial, technical or logistical support. We would like to thank all those who responded:

Non-governmental organizations

- The International Fund for Animal Welfare
- The Leonard X. Bosack and Betty M. Kruger Foundation
- Care for the Wild International
- Humane Society International

Governments

- UK Environment Agency (specific funding for marketing documents)
- Swiss Department of Wildlife (specific funding for the Concealment Guide Project)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The nature of the Programme means our appeal for funding is ongoing. Please contact us if you, your agency, or someone you know is willing or able to offer their support.

We need you to spread the word, lobby for support or join our initiatives, as only together can we make a difference against environmental crime the world over.

Please feel free to contact us

by email at:

environmentalcrime@interpol.int

Or by post at:

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ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME
IT'S GLOBAL THEFT