



Preventing crimes that affect the environment

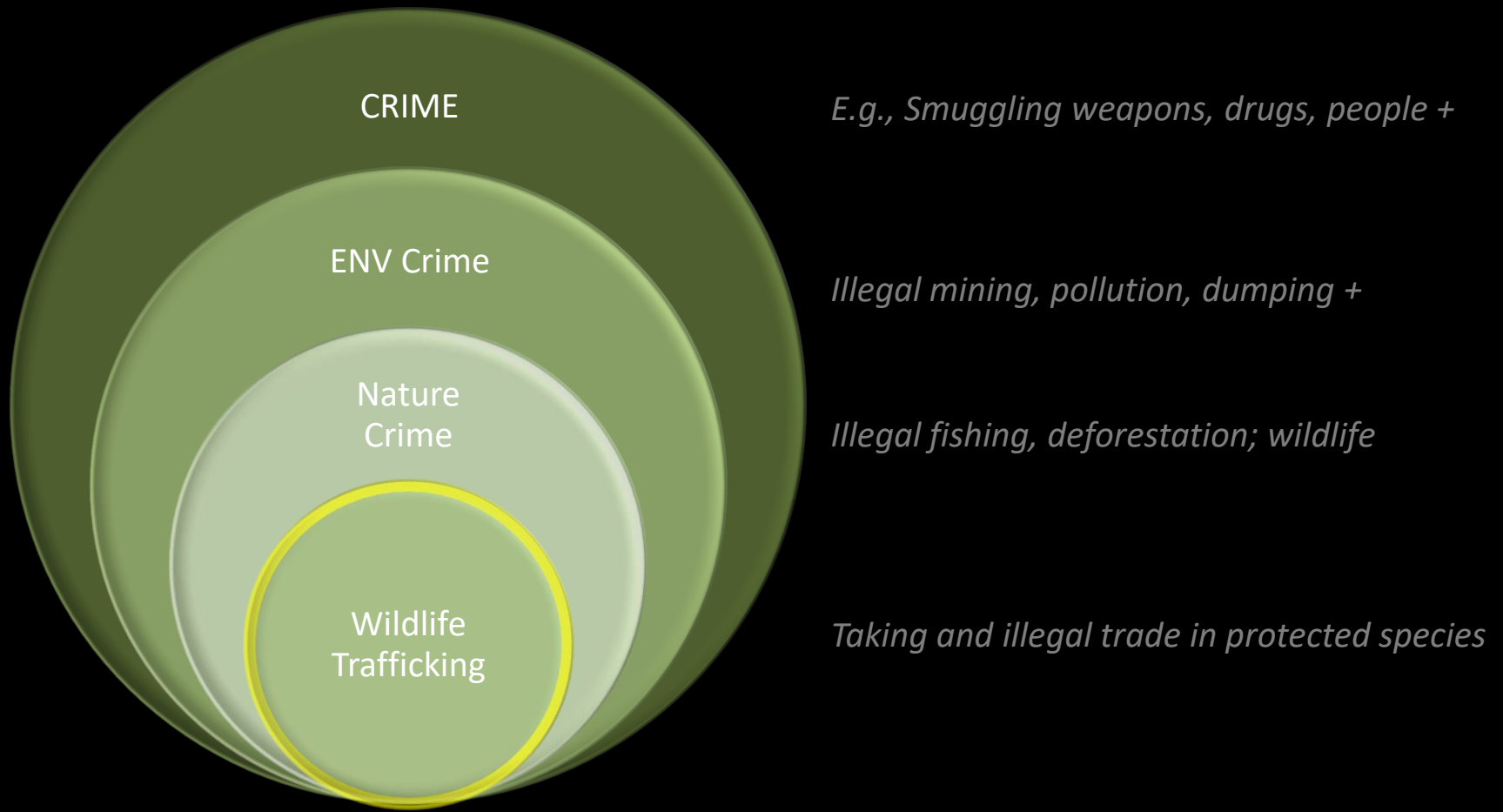
A FOCUS ON WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

14 February 2022



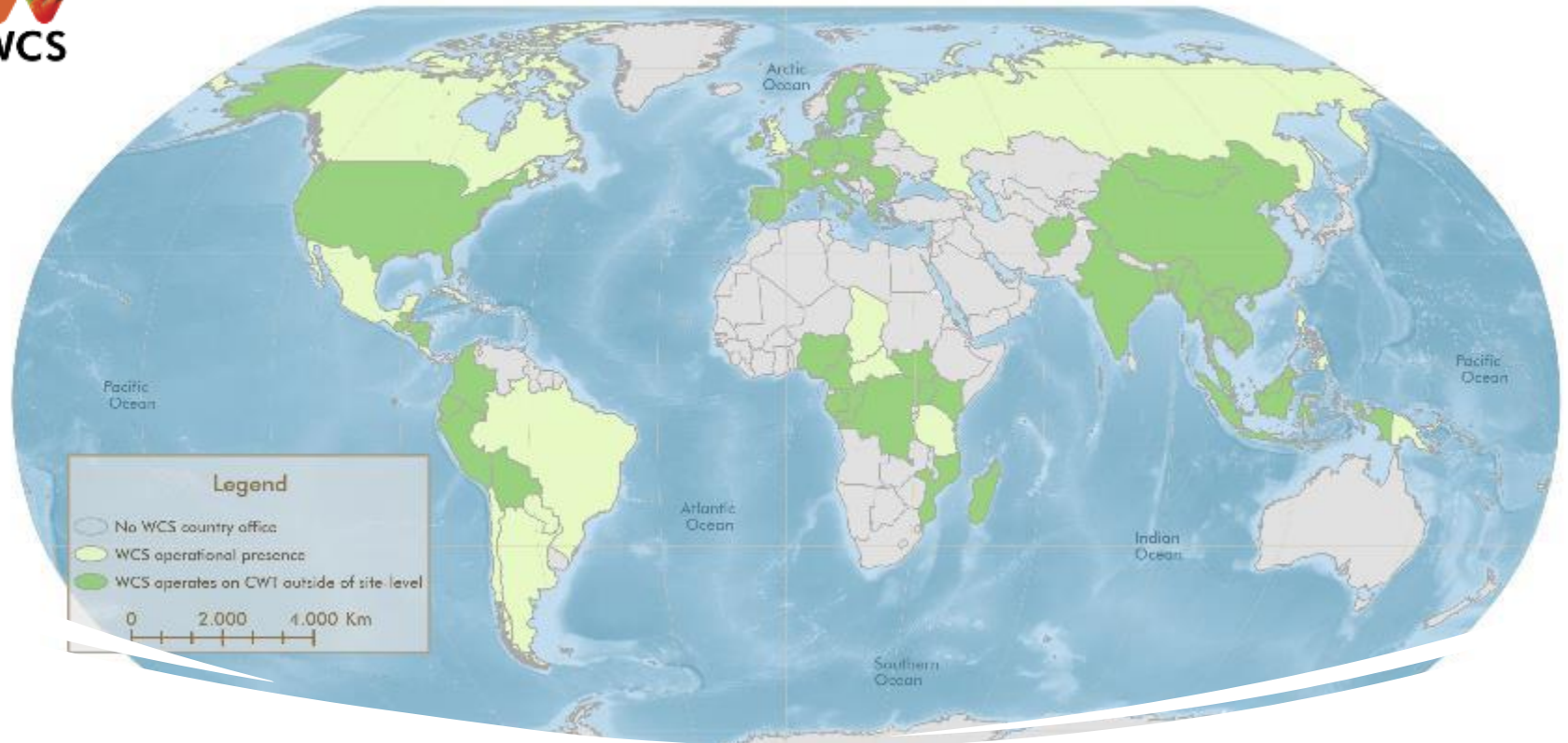
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Where We Work: Counter-Wildlife Trafficking



Wildlife Conservation Society Counter-Wildlife Trafficking Program

- Locally-led programs with close Government partnership
- Vast field experience, presence in 62+ countries
- Operate at source sites, along major trafficking routes, and in all major consumer markets
- In-house Criminal Justice & Law enforcement expertise
- Regional Coordinators to facilitate transboundary responses
- Global secure cloud-based intelligence & case tracking system

Main WCS approaches to Combating Wildlife Trafficking

Reducing poaching pressure on populations of priority species through more effective enforcement and criminal justice response

Gathering, managing, analyzing information and intelligence

Long-term capacity building strategies for enforcement agencies and personnel


Strengthening international enforcement cooperation

Using advocacy tools to influence policy reform and action on wildlife crime laws

International policy engagement

Applying behavioral science to change wildlife consumption/purchases



A piglet is shown in a metal cage, looking out through the bars. The piglet has pink skin and small, dark eyes. The cage is made of green-painted metal bars. The background is dark and out of focus.

Efforts to motivate momentum and tangible action in many countries are still hampered by:

- weak national capacity
- weak governance
- low political will
- persistent corruption
- insufficient funding
- inadequate legislation
- limited coordination and cooperation between agencies at domestic and international levels.

This is further compounded for some species and products by increasing demand in consumer markets.



Paradigm shift needed from punishing wildlife criminals or exclusive focus on seizures, to **REDUCING/PREVENTING WILDLIFE CRIMES**

Many efforts are predominantly reactive and overly focussed on detecting and punishing criminals, and on seizures, without analysing **if those actions are reducing wildlife crime.**

- **An increase or decrease in seizures does not correlate with crime levels**
- **An increase in arrests & convictions does not necessarily mean less poaching of wildlife**
- **Do we know what kind of penalties actually deter wildlife crime offenders?**



REDUCING/PREVENTING WILDLIFE CRIMES

A preventative approach broadly focuses on:

- 1) Increasing the effort required by offenders to traffic wildlife;
- 2) Increasing the risk of detection, apprehension and punishment as perceived by target people/groups; and
- 3) Reducing rewards for offenders

This approach means we keep wildlife alive, *in situ* - and prevent wildlife crimes from even taking place, not for wildlife traffickers to face punishment after the fact, when the species in question has already been killed or otherwise removed from the wild.

We support our government partners to develop and implement highly focused, evidence-based strategies informed by an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of wildlife trafficking and the people involved to reduce the profits of crime, whilst simultaneously increasing the risks of being caught.



Reducing rewards: Applying science to change wildlife consumption behaviors

Enhancing and expanding efforts to reduce the consumption of protected species is a fundamental component of any prevention strategy.

- Currently greater investment in social marketing and awareness campaign approaches, with little monitoring of impact.
- Critical need to apply behavioral economics, psychology and related sciences to ensure interventions are well designed and robustly monitored.
- Many Governments already carry out such interventions on other policy matters – need to apply to wildlife crimes
 - WCS is working with Sun Yat Sen University (SYSU), and UK's Behavioral Insights Team in a Partnership to establish a Behavioral Insights Unit with SYSU across two faculties focused on reducing demand for wildlife products
 - WCS supports the government of DRC on a campaign to reduce consumption of bushmeat with rigorous behavioral research to design their campaign





THANK YOU



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