

MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

MISSION

The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) protects wildlife and plant resources through the effective enforcement of federal laws. By working with local, tribal, state, federal, and international enforcement officers, and other conservation partners, we combat wildlife trafficking, help recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitats, safeguard fisheries, prevent the introduction and spread of injurious and invasive species, and promote international wildlife conservation. Through enforcing conservation laws and treaties, we focus on the following to:

- Disrupt and dismantle international and domestic criminal organizations that traffic and unlawfully exploit protected animals and plants in the United States and around the world.
- Combat the illegal commercial exploitation and unlawful take of our nation's wildlife resources by working with local, tribal, state, federal, and international partners.
- Provide training, resources, and improve capabilities with partners to combat wildlife trafficking at its source, through its transit, and at its consumer destination.
- Detect and seize trafficked wildlife and plants through targeted interdiction at our ports of entry.
- Prevent the introduction and spread of injurious and invasive species.
- Protect wildlife from environmental contaminants and industrial hazards by working with industry and other organizations.
- Safeguard habitats for threatened and endangered species.
- Enforce federal migratory game bird hunting regulations, work with state conservation officers to protect other game species and preserve legitimate hunting opportunities.
- Conduct outreach to industry, trade groups, and the general public to facilitate the legal international trade and movement of wildlife; ensure compliance with laws and treaties; and promote wildlife conservation.
- Use forensic science and technological advances to analyze evidence to solve wildlife crimes.

VISION

We are committed to conserving wildlife and plant resources for future generations by investigating wildlife crimes; regulating wildlife trade; working with local, tribal, state, federal, and international partners; and protecting our nation's borders and natural resources by interdicting illegal wildlife products and injurious species before it enters our country.

HISTORY

In 2000, federal wildlife law enforcement celebrated its centennial with the 100th anniversary of the Lacey Act. This act is the nation's first federal wildlife protection law that sets prohibitions on the importation of injurious wildlife and the interstate commerce of illegally taken game species. It was followed by a series of measures aimed specifically at protecting migratory birds and with these laws and treaties came the age of the "duck cop." Policing waterfowl hunters and protecting waterfowl populations from commercial exploitation would long be a major focus for federal wildlife law enforcement.

However, during the middle decades of the century, increasing human pressures on populations and habitats of many different animals - from whooping cranes to American alligators - began to take its toll. Special protections for bald eagles (in 1940) and then golden eagles (in 1962) were enacted. The 1960s saw the first steps to protect a broader range of endangered species - steps that would culminate in the comprehensive 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) and negotiation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Laws to protect specific types of wildlife, from marine mammals and African elephants to wild birds and tigers, further targeted special conservation concerns.

With these developments came new roles and responsibilities for Service law enforcement. From 1918 until the early 1970s, the word "game" consistently appeared in the job titles used for federal wildlife law enforcement officers. However in 1973, the Service began calling its investigators "special agents," a name better suited to the expanding challenges of the job. In 1975, the OLE hired a biological technician to inspect wildlife shipments in New York - the beginning of a trade inspection force that would expand the following year to cover eight ports of entry. The opening of the world's first wildlife forensics laboratory in 1988 made science and technology an integral part of the Service's enforcement team, and remains as the world's leading full-service crime laboratory devoted exclusively to supporting wildlife law enforcement. The Service continued to advance, as demonstrated by the establishment of our Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit, which provides special technological expertise and computer forensics to help facilitate investigations of wildlife crimes. Continuing to expand our programs, the OLE created a Wildlife Inspection Interdiction Team, Wildlife Intelligence Unit, and our International Operations Unit. All of the OLE's programs enhancements significantly improve our capabilities of combating wildlife trafficking within our borders and around the world.

Today, the OLE continues to focus its efforts on the most devastating threats to wildlife and plant resources. This includes working to stop the illegal wildlife trade, which is estimated to be a multibillion-dollar business involving the unlawful harvest of and trade in live animals and plants, or parts and products derived from them. The United States is a destination and a transit point for trafficked wildlife and wildlife products such as exotic pets, reptile skin products, traditional medicinal ingredients, elephant ivory, and rhino horn. Much of the world's trade - both legal and illegal - in animal and plant species is driven by U.S. consumers; originates in our country; or, passes through our ports on the way to other nations. The United States is also a supplier of native species that are in demand in other countries, including American ginseng, turtles, eels, bear parts, cacti and succulents, and other species, some of which are illegally removed from the wild and exported. Stamping out wildlife trafficking is a priority because it is one of the largest direct threats to the future of many of the world's most imperiled species, second only to habitat destruction in overall threats against species survival. We recognize that we are part of the problem, and we are determined to be part of the solution.

CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVES

In this strategic framework, three cross-cutting objectives will be essential to accomplishing our mission. These cross-cutting objectives are enforcement partnerships; public outreach and education; and effective and accountable leadership.

Enforcement Partnerships: Our efforts to protect U.S. wildlife resources and combat global wildlife trafficking receive significant support from law enforcement partnerships. We foster and maintain cooperative working relationships with a range of other enforcement agencies in the United States and around the world. Examples include federal entities, such as the State Department (DOS), Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC); tribal and state fish and game agencies; international alliances, such as Interpol's Wildlife Crime Working Group and the CITES community; and various police, customs, and wildlife protection units throughout the world.

<u>Public Outreach and Education</u>: Our staff works with brokers, importers, exporters, hunters, landowners, industry groups, and others to understand and obey federal laws that protect wildlife and plant resources. Proactive outreach and education are vital to facilitating and expediting the legal wildlife trade, securing voluntary compliance, and promoting cooperative conservation efforts by those whose activities affect wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Our staff also supports awareness-raising efforts and demand reduction campaigns for illegally traded wildlife by working with the private sector and enlisting new partners from local communities and non-governmental organizations.

Accountable Leadership: A critical role for OLE senior executives and managers is providing the necessary leadership to guide efforts of the OLE's field offices in effectively achieving presidential and secretarial goals through various measures, such as facilitating cooperation and collaboration across organizations within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and its federal and nonfederal partners; ensuring our workplace environments are safe, fair, diverse, and conducive to employee productivity; and strengthening our culture of integrity and accountability.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The OLE has four strategic goals:

- 1. Prevent the unlawful import, export, and interstate and foreign commerce of fish, wildlife and plants.
- 2. Protect the nation's fish, wildlife, and plants from unlawful commercial exploitation and illegal take and threats from invasive and injurious species.
- 3. Facilitate and expedite the legal international trade in fish, wildlife, and plants.
- 4. Manage OLE resources to ensure program performance, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Each of these goals is explained separately in this section along with the relevant objectives, strategies, and performance indicators.

Combating Global Wildlife Trafficking

Through transnational organized criminal networks, wildlife trafficking has become an international crisis that threatens our national security, hinders sustainable economic development, undermines our laws, and can spread diseases harmful to humans, wildlife, and livestock. Despite efforts by numerous countries to fight it, the illicit worldwide trade in wildlife involves transactions each year worth billions of dollars. It also destroys many species worldwide and threatens iconic species such as the rhinoceros, elephant, and tiger with extinction. In the United States, consumers buy both legal and illegal wildlife and wildlife items

and our nation is also becoming a source country for the legal and illegal wildlife trade. The connections between trafficking in illegal wildlife and natural resources with the financing of groups involved in transnational organized crime pose additional threats to the United States. The DOI is one of the leading agencies addressing this crisis.

In July 2013, Executive Order 13648, "Combating Wildlife Trafficking," was issued and it established the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior. In February 2014, the Task Force released the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, which identified strengthening enforcement as a key strategic priority. Specifically, the National Strategy tasked agencies to strengthen interdiction and collaborative efforts with foreign governments in an effort to build enforcement capacity and support the development and use of effective technologies and analytical tools.

In October 2016, the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act became law. The END Act codifies the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, National Strategy, and Implementation Plan. It facilitates U.S. government efforts to fight terrorist organizations and international crime syndicates that profit from wildlife trafficking. The law also authorizes prosecutors to treat smuggling or selling endangered species as a predicate offense under money laundering statutes; improves transparency and accountability by directing the DOS to explicitly identify countries that are major sources, transit points, or consumers of trafficked wildlife products; and supports law enforcement networks, community-based conservation, collaboration among U.S. agencies, the sharing of intelligence, and the provision of equipment and training to fight poachers.

In February 2017, Executive Order 13773, "Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking," was issued and it addressed the substantial threat to the safety of the United States and its citizens posed by transnational criminal organizations. Moreover, the order seeks to strengthen enforcement of federal law in order to combat transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations engaged in illicit activities, such as "the illegal smuggling and trafficking of humans, drugs or other substances, wildlife and weapons," which threaten public safety and national security.

The Service's wildlife trafficking investigations and assistance to international counterparts, disrupts highly organized smuggling networks that traffic wildlife around the world. Our trade monitoring activities at U.S. ports of entry provide a front-line defense against the illegal wildlife trade. Service wildlife inspectors process declared shipments; utilize intelligence to intercept wildlife contraband; conduct proactive enforcement operations to catch smugglers, close trafficking pathways, and prevent the introduction of injurious and invasive species; and work with special agents to investigate businesses and individuals engaged in wildlife trafficking.

The Service also operates an International Operation Unit (IOU), through which it stations senior special agents as attachés at U.S. embassies in countries where wildlife trafficking is high. Their focus is to disrupt and dismantle international and domestic criminal organizations. This is accomplished through building host nation capabilities, source development, expanded coalitions, and the removal of wildlife traffickers through the U.S. judicial process. Building host nation capabilities in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense and the DOS's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs involves the creation of vetted units,

wildlife crime units, and international training programs. The IOU continues to expand its source network globally to augment its intelligence collection resources. Expanded coalitions and partnerships with the intelligence community (IC), OFAC and other U.S. government resources is a force multiplier for the IOU. The IOU continues to successfully partner with our host nation counterparts around the world. U.S. prosecutions are instrumental to major enforcement gains in parts of the world where the judicial system is lacking. Successful extraditions and expulsions are utilized both as a legal tool to remove wildlife traffickers for U.S. prosecution and as a powerful deterrent.

The IOU's Attaché Program also assists foreign governments to better investigate and apprehend violators who unlawfully exploit their wildlife and timber resources. The program helps build capacity in countries that drive or enable the market for illegal wildlife by supporting direct partnerships with foreign governments to share and coordinate intelligence, expand training programs, and provide technical assistance in customs monitoring. We continue to engage bilaterally and multilaterally with our international partners, and work with source, transit, and consumer countries to practice sustainable wildlife management, halt the illegal movement of wildlife parts and products, and reduce demand for these commodities.

Attachés have been established in Bangkok, Thailand; Beijing, China; Brasilia, Brazil; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Libreville, Gabon; Lima, Peru; Mexico City, Mexico; Pretoria, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Hanoi, Vietnam; and Stuttgart, Germany – AFRICOM, and the OLE plans to station additional attachés in the future.

Additionally, the Service provides investigative and inspection expertise and related support to U.S. Department of Agriculture's (DOA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to implement the 2008 amendments to the Lacey Act for regulating the importation of timber and wood products protected under the conservation laws of other countries. These amendments are designed to stop illegal logging and timber trafficking, which is a major threat to forests and sustainable livelihoods throughout the developing world and to protect the U.S. wood and wood products industry from being undercut by black market trafficking. Our plant-related investigations not only focus on CITES species, or species protected under the ESA or U.S. state laws but extend beyond our borders to plants and plant products harvested and exported in violation of the conservation laws of any country.

The OLE must respond to this global trafficking threat by working to shut down the illegal U.S. markets of wildlife and plants. With our wildlife inspectors and wildlife forensics scientists, the United States is the only nation in the world with a port inspection force focused on interdicting smuggled wildlife and with the full range of forensic analyses to support our cases. Wildlife and timber populations worldwide benefit from our investigations, intelligence sharing, and expertise in detecting and disrupting wildlife trafficking networks.

Strategic Goal #1: Prevent the unlawful import, export, interstate and foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants

To achieve our strategic goal of preventing the illegal trafficking in fish, wildlife, and plants, we must accomplish the objectives presented below. We will use the performance indicators shown to measure and monitor our progress in meeting these objectives.

Objective: Improve effectiveness in intercepting shipments that contain illegal species

Performance Indicators: Number of interdicted undeclared shipments

Number of seizures from undeclared shipments

Percentage of declared high-risk shipments found to contain illegal

wildlife

Objective: Disrupt or dismantle international and domestic criminal enterprises

Performance Indicators: Number of enterprises involved in illegal activities that are

penalized (e.g., convicted, fined)

Value of illegal commercial activity by disrupted enterprises

Number of joint wildlife or plant trafficking investigations with

foreign partners

Objective: Apprehend individuals who violate wildlife and plant trade laws

Performance Indicators: Number of individuals involved in illegal activities who are

penalized (e.g., convicted, fine)

Value of illegal commercial activity by individuals

Number of illegal timber trafficking investigations

Objective: Provide information, technical assistance, and training to international

governments to support wildlife and habitat conservation

Performance Indicators: Number of training sessions conducted for international partner

organizations

Number of international partner organizations receiving training

Number of Wildlife Enforcement Networks in which the OLE is a

participant

We have identified four key strategies to accomplish these objectives and meet this strategic goal

Key Strategies: Increase focus on high-risk shipments

Increase focus on investigations of illegal activities that pose

the greatest conservation risks

Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations and

inspections by using support positions, technological advances, and the wildlife inspection interdiction and canine teams

Enhance evidence collection and forensic analysis

Protecting the Nation's Fish, Wildlife, and Plants

Unlawful wildlife trafficking does not just affect foreign species, but is also exploits and takes a toll on many U.S. native animals and plants. Our officers investigate crimes that involve the unlawful exploitation of federally protected resources, including migratory birds, marine mammals, and endangered and threatened animals and plants native to the United States. Some of the U.S. species we see exploited include black bears for their gall bladders, paws, claws and teeth; paddlefish for their roe; eagles and hawks for their feathers and talons; walrus for their ivory tusks; reptiles and amphibians for the pet trade; and endemic cactus and succulents for the horticultural and landscape trade.

Illegal commercialization of domestic wildlife is a major concern for many of our conservation partners including tribes, states, and other federal agencies. With the help of the Lacey Act, we work closely with these partners to investigate the illegal commercialization of wildlife and the commercialization of illegally taken wildlife under local and interstate jurisdiction. Commercial big game guiding, and other illegal commercialization of domestic game species, are a major focus of these joint investigations. The Service receives numerous requests for assistance from our conservation partners because of our experience investigating violations of federal wildlife laws and the mutual benefits of our investigative resources. Helping our partners protect their local game species from illegal interstate and international commercialization is a priority for the OLE.

The illicit wildlife trade not only undermines the viability of animal and plant populations, it also threatens to jeopardize the health of ecosystems and industries. Enforcement resources are increasingly needed to keep U.S. borders closed to invasive species – species that could wreak havoc with U.S. livelihoods. With a multitude of environmental stressors fueling the distribution, abundance, and impact of invasive species, increased enforcement efforts by both state and federal wildlife agencies will be needed to stem both the deliberate and unintentional introduction of harmful exotics into the United States and their subsequent movement from state to state. Such vigilance will help prevent unwanted species introductions and help limit one key stressor on U.S. wildlife, plants, and their habitats. It may also prove critical to the health of populations, individuals, and species – including our own.

The illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many plant and animal species and also poses a risk to humans through the potential spread of zoonotic disease. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the DOA, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to safeguard people throughout the United States and the world by funding innovative projects to stop wildlife trafficking, securing our ports of entry from smuggling, and reducing demand for illegal wildlife products in the United States. Through creating these robust safeguards with partners, we can reduce the risk of disease transmission while further protecting our wildlife.

Many of our nation's fish and wildlife species are in decline. In fact, over 1,600 fish, wildlife, and plant species are already protected under the authority of the ESA, while approximately 500 more species are "at risk" of needing that protection. At risk species are those that are either already proposed, but not yet listed; candidates for listing; or petitioned for listing under the ESA. We recognize that for many at risk species we still have a chance to act to prevent them from future listing under the ESA. The OLE will work with our Service partners; other tribal, state, and federal partners; industry partners; and private landowners to assist in the conservation of both listed and at risk species that are in jeopardy from unlawful take including habitat destruction, environmental contaminants, and industrial hazards, as well as commercialization and trafficking.

Strategic Goal #2: Protect the nation's fish, wildlife and plants from unlawful commercial exploitation, illegal take, and threats from invasive and injurious species

To achieve our strategic goal of protecting the nation's fish, wildlife, and plants, we must accomplish the objectives identified below. We will use the performance indicators shown to measure and monitor our progress in meeting these objectives.

Objective: Disrupt or dismantle criminal enterprises involved in illegal commercialization of domestic wildlife and plants

Performance Indicators: Number of joint commercial native species investigations

with tribal, state, and federal enforcement partners

Number of enterprises involved in illegal activities that are

penalized (e.g., convicted, fine)

Value of illegal commercial activity by disrupted enterprises

Objective: Improve effectiveness in intercepting shipments containing unlawful exports

of U.S. fish, wildlife, and plants

Performance Indicators: Number of seizures of native species from undeclared export

shipments

Number of declared export shipments containing undeclared

native species

Percentage of declared high-risk export shipments of native species

found to contain illegal wildlife

Objective: Apprehend individuals who violate federal conservation laws

Performance Indicators: Number of individuals involved in illegal activities who are

penalized (e.g., convicted, fined)

Value of illegal commercial activity by individuals

Objective: Improve effectiveness in intercepting shipments containing injurious species

Performance Indicator: Number of injurious shipments interdicted

Number of interdiction operations conducted to detect and

intercept injurious species

Objective: Reduce the impact of industrial hazards and address unlawful habitat

destruction

Performance Indicator: Number of cases involving companies or other entities whose

activities unlawfully impact U.S. species and their habitats

We have identified four key strategies to accomplish these objectives and meet this strategic

goal:

Key Strategies: Increase focus on investigations of illegal activities that pose

the greatest conservation risk to our native species

Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations and inspections by partnering with local, tribes, states, and other

federal entities

Expand and increase support for wildlife inspection

interdiction and canine teams

Work with industry and other organizations to prevent and protect wildlife from environmental contaminants, industrial

hazards, and habitat destruction

Facilitating the Legal Wildlife Trade

Our mandate to enforce wildlife trade laws encompasses a concomitant responsibility to deal fairly and efficiently with businesses, organizations, and individuals that import and export wildlife. By law, virtually all wildlife imports and exports must be declared to the Service, and cleared by our wildlife officers. Our wildlife inspectors currently process more than 190,000 declared shipments of wildlife and wildlife products worth more than \$4 billion annually, and we expect that volume and value to grow. The speed and efficiency of wildlife inspection operations affect the ability of businesses to engage profitably in the legal wildlife trade, as well as advance the international movement of wildlife for purposes that range from scientific research to educational outreach and public entertainment. The Service's trade monitoring efforts also determine the ease with which individual Americans can travel internationally with wildlife and

personal pets, move hunting trophies across U.S. borders, or ship household goods made from wildlife overseas and back again.

In 2014, Executive Order 13659, "Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses," was signed to create the International Trade Data System (ITDS). This order simplifies the processes for importing and exporting cargo by providing a "single window," through which importers and exporters submit shipping information directly to all applicable government inspection agencies. This window, the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), will considerably enhance the ability of U.S. companies, specifically small and medium businesses, to better compete in the global economy. ACE/ITDS directly supports the accomplishment of three goals within our program: 1) providing the technological platform necessary for the success of our efforts to prevent the unlawful import/export of foreign fish, wildlife, and plants; 2) protecting U.S. resources from global exploitation; and 3) allowing the expeditious movement of legal wildlife through U.S. ports of entry.

The OLE's participation in the ITDS promises to give the Service new tools to detect illegal wildlife shipments and provide greater visibility into, and control of, what is being imported. The streamlined process will allow Service inspectors to focus more on the illegal trade. Service enforcement efforts will also benefit from improved communications and intelligence sharing with CBP officers and other federal agencies that regulate trade and police our nation's borders. The system will allow law enforcement to utilize more comprehensive risk management strategies to identify cargo that poses the greatest risk of containing illegal wildlife. Service wildlife inspectors will also be able to proactively target any shipment imported or exported, not just those declared as containing wildlife.

Strategic Goal #3: Facilitate and expedite the legal international trade in fish, wildlife, and plants

To achieve our strategic goal of facilitating the expeditious movement of legal wildlife, we must accomplish the objectives identified below. We will use the performance indicators shown to measure and monitor our progress.

Objective: Increase the efficiency of clearing legal wildlife imports and exports

Performance Indicators: Percentage of declarations filed electronically

Percentage of low-risk declarations granted electronic

automated release

Number of import/export licenses issued via eLicensing

system

Number of shipments with inspection fees paid

electronically

Objective: Participate in outreach and education to increase compliance with federal

conservation laws

Performance Indicators: Number of trade informational sessions conducted

Number of trade organizations receiving outreach/training

We have identified four key strategies to accomplish our objectives and meet this strategic goal:

Key Strategies: Create a screening methodology to distinguish risk levels of

wildlife shipments

Improve processes for managing wildlife declarations and targeting high-risk shipments for physical inspections

Enhance development and implementation of Service interface

with the ITDS/ACE data systems

Increase coordination with brokers, importers, exporters, and other organizations involved in the legal wildlife trade

Enhancing Management Accountability

Our success in protecting the nation's wildlife and plants, stemming global wildlife trafficking, and facilitating legal wildlife trade (the strategic goals presented previously) will depend on how well we support and manage our staff.

Our employees are our greatest asset and through them we achieve all of our successes. We will ensure that they receive guidance, quality training, operational support, and professional development to function as effectively as possible. We will use workforce planning, and other similar tools, to put people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. For example, the Service commissioned an independent review of our Wildlife Inspection Program (WIP) with the objective of improving operational effectiveness and optimizing the allocation of resources. Based on many of the findings and recommendations of this study, the OLE promptly began to expand the WIP to include a greater number of inspectors and staffed wildlife ports, which not only provides a more formidable front-line defense to combat wildlife trafficking while increasing efficiency for processing of the lawful wildlife trade and improving customer service, but also provides new and strategically important career opportunities for employees.

We will recruit and deploy appropriate personnel to support our primary investigative and inspection functions. These support positions (administrative, technical, and logistical) are critical in enabling our special agents and wildlife inspectors to focus on our strategic goals. We will leverage information technology (IT) to support our investigative and inspection efforts and manage our program, including improving our Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS), and participating in new interagency initiatives like the Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center and the National Targeting Center leveraging the collective resources of participating government agencies to prevent, deter, interdict, and investigate violations of U.S. import and export laws.

We will continue a strong culture of leading by example, not only in OLE but also within the Service and the broader national and international conservation communities. We are committed

to providing our employees with a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will continue to implement the Service's Diversity and Inclusion Plan to recruit and retain a workforce that resembles America because diversity produces more innovative, durable, and comprehensive ideas and solutions. This will make us stronger and better able to address the ever-developing challenges threatening our wildlife and plant resources.

Strategic Goal #4: Manage the Office of Law Enforcement resources to ensure program performance, efficiency, and effectiveness

To achieve this strategic goal, we must accomplish the objectives identified below. We will use the performance indicators shown to measure and monitor our progress.

Objective: Utilize workforce planning to meet OLE strategic goals

Performance Indicators: Number of standard position descriptions developed

Number of standard position descriptions in use

Development of standard organizational staffing structure

Objective: Use information technology to improve program efficiency

Performance Indicator: Develop and implement improved capabilities for the Law

Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS)

Objective: Provide opportunities for career development and ensure professional

integrity of the OLE workforce

Performance Indicators: Number of hours of documented training

Number of OLE employees attending structured professional development courses (e.g. ALDP, SUTL, Harvard Kennedy

School)

We have identified three key strategies to accomplish these objectives and meet this strategic goal:

Key Strategy: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations and

inspections by using support positions, technological advances, and leveraging the collective resources of other

government agencies and programs

Encourage and support career development opportunities

Participate in the Service's Diversity and Inclusiveness

Implementation Plan

SPECIALIZED UNITS and CRITICAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

As noted in our strategic framework, access to advanced evidence collection, forensic analysis, and intelligence is critical to our ability to meet our goals and objectives. We are committed to enhancing the intelligence support available to our special agents and wildlife inspectors in the field. We also recognize the need to expand our evidence collection and analysis capabilities – an expansion that will in many areas involve our National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit, Wildlife Intelligence Unit, and International Operations Unit.

This section briefly describes the current baseline roles of several of our critical support functions and specialized operational units. It also provides information on the National Wildlife Property Repository and the National Eagle Repository – facilities under our management that make unique contributions to conservation education and Native American communities.

Wildlife Forensics Laboratory

The National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, located in Ashland, Oregon, is the world's leading full-service crime laboratory devoted exclusively to supporting wildlife law enforcement; and, by treaty, is the official crime lab of CITES. Scientists at the laboratory identify the species-source of wildlife parts and products seized as evidence. They link suspect, "victim," and crime scene through the examination and comparison of physical evidence, determine the cause of death of wildlife crime victims, and help analyze crime scenes. Laboratory scientists also conduct research to develop new analytical techniques needed in wildlife forensics. They provide training on species identification and evidence handling to Service law enforcement officers and their global counterparts. The laboratory holds accreditation from the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), the largest multi-disciplinary accreditation body in North America, in which any crime laboratory may participate to demonstrate that its management, technical operations, and overall quality management system meet ISO 17025 requirements and ANSI National Accreditation Board ISO/IEC 17025:2017 - Forensic Science Testing and Calibration Laboratories Accreditation requirements.

Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit

The Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Support Unit (DERTSU) provides special technological expertise to facilitate Service investigations of wildlife crime. Staffed by special agents and specialists with computer forensic and investigative skills, DERTSU helps our officers identify, retrieve, analyze, and utilize "e-evidence" of wildlife crimes. DERTSU functions also include providing the latest highly sophisticated electronic surveillance technology and other technologically advanced tools in support of Service investigations. DERTSU's efforts range from supporting search and seizure activities involving computers and portable electronic devices to creating and deploying special surveillance equipment to track vehicles, vessels, packages, or people.

Wildlife Intelligence Unit

OLE's Wildlife Intelligence Unit (WIU) collects and analyzes information on all aspects of wildlife crime to support Service investigations and inspections. The WIU also analyzes this information to perform a strategic function in identifying and predicting trends, new threat areas, plan and prioritize investigative efforts and smuggling interdiction operations, and to provide management a tool for strategically deploying personnel and resources. The WIU coordinates

intelligence sharing with other law enforcement agencies and maintains liaison with domestic and international enforcement networks, the United States' IC, and conservation groups and trade associations involved in, or concerned with, the wildlife trade. Intelligence analysts provide a variety of investigative support services to agents and inspectors in the field. These services range from criminal history checks to in-depth research that tracks the movement of illegal wildlife shipments across the world. This function has become increasingly important and complex given the global scope, growing sophistication, and organization of wildlife crime. Intelligence support is vital to our efforts to identify, penetrate, and break up transnational wildlife trafficking networks.

International Operations Unit

Special agent attachés are stationed at U.S. embassies in strategic locations around the world working in key source, transit, and destination countries of illegally traded wildlife. The primary goal of the Attaché Program is strengthening international partnerships in order to disrupt and dismantle the criminal organizations that are unlawfully exploiting the world's natural resources. The agent attachés work with agents stationed domestically to proactively target transnational criminal organizations, gather intelligence, and coordinate international investigations focusing on crimes that have a U.S. nexus. Furthermore, the IOU cooperatively trains, equips, and supports specialized units within select host nation law enforcement authorities building on a proven model that has been successfully employed by other U.S. law enforcement agencies operating internationally.

Special Investigations Unit

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is a small covert unit comprised of senior special agents. These agents prioritize their investigative efforts to identify, interdict, disrupt, and dismantle transnational criminal organizations that are involved in wildlife trafficking and other related crimes. By working closely with the Service attachés, international counterparts, and other officials of federal agencies, the SIU agents collect and share investigative information in order to investigate and extradite members of these criminal organizations to the U.S. for prosecution, to include wildlife trafficking.

Professional Responsibility Unit

The Professional Responsibility Unit (PRU) is a criminal investigative unit whose primary function is to investigate allegations of misconduct by Service law enforcement staff from both the OLE and the National Wildlife Refuge System. The PRU conducts both criminal and administrative investigations for the Service of other non-law enforcement Service employees when asked based on the seriousness of the alleged offense. It also handles matters that do not fit elsewhere and other special or sensitive assignments.

Branch of Training and Inspections

The Branch of Training and Inspection (BTI) is comprised of senior special agents, wildlife inspectors, and training staff located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) with 90 other federal enforcement partners. By working closely with FLETC and foreign counterparts, BTI provides basic, advanced, and international wildlife law enforcement training to help prepare agents, wildlife inspectors, and peers from around the world to conduct investigations, border enforcement, and to counter wildlife trafficking.

National Wildlife Property Repository

This Repository, located on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge outside of Denver, Colorado, provides secure, environmentally controlled storage for wildlife parts and products that have been abandoned or forfeited to the government as a result of Service inspections and investigations. The Repository helps connect people with nature and educate the public about the impact of illegal wildlife trade by supplying wildlife parts and products for use in conservation outreach programs that range from "hands-on" learning experiences to museum displays.

National Eagle Repository

The National Eagle Repository serves as a national center for receiving and distributing bald and golden eagle carcasses and parts to Native Americans for religious use. This facility, which is colocated with the National Wildlife Property Repository, helps meet legitimate religious needs of enrolled members of federally recognized tribes by providing a centralized salvage and distribution of eagle parts to tribal members.