

Routledge Studies in Conservation and the Environment

WOMEN AND WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

PARTICIPANTS, PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS

Edited by

Helen U. Agu and Meredith L. Gore

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Women and Wildlife Trafficking

This volume examines women and wildlife trafficking via a collection of narratives, case studies and theoretical syntheses from diverse voices and disciplines. Wildlife trafficking has been documented in over 120 countries around the world. While species extinction and animal abuse are major problems, wildlife trafficking is also associated with corruption, national insecurity, spread of zoonotic disease, undercutting sustainable development investments and erosion of cultural resources, among others. The role of women in wildlife trafficking has remained woefully under-addressed, with scientists and policymakers failing to consider the important causes and consequences of the gendered dimensions of wildlife trafficking. Although the roles of women in wildlife trafficking are mostly unknown, they are not unknowable. This volume helps fill a lacuna by examining the roles and experiences of women with case studies drawn from across the world, including Mexico, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, South Africa and Norway. Women can be wildlife trafficking preventors, perpetrators and pawns; their roles in facilitating wildlife trafficking are considered from both a supply and a demand viewpoint. The first half of the book assesses the range of science, offering four different perspectives on how women and wildlife trafficking can be studied or evaluated. The second half of the book profiles diverse case studies from around the world, offering context-specific insight about on-the-ground activities associated with women and wildlife trafficking.

This book will be of great interest to students and scholars of wildlife crime, environmental law, human geography, conservation, gender studies and green criminology. It will also be of interest to NGOs and policymakers working to improve efficacy of efforts targeting wildlife crime, the illegal wildlife trade and conservation more broadly.

Helen U. Agu is a Lecturer in the Department of International & Comparative Law at the University of Nigeria.

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**Edited by
Helen U. Agu and Meredith L. Gore**

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1 The Roles of Women in Wildlife Trafficking Are Mostly Unknown, But Not Unknowable

Meredith L. Gore and Helen U. Agu

Our Journey

We started working on this project around February 2020 when we were both in residence at Michigan State University in the United States. This was before the global coronavirus pandemic changed the world. Our science was different then; we both realized the massive hole in scientific understanding about the roles of women in wildlife trafficking around the same time that we were asked to lend our voice to a conversation and to help advance the knowledge base. What are the roles that women hold, why do they assume them, and who are the women that participate? Why do women choose to participate in wildlife trafficking or efforts to combat it? What situations surround women's inclusion or exclusion from efforts to combat wildlife trafficking? Under what conditions are women differentially impacted by the act of wildlife trafficking and programs designed to mitigate it? It was, and is clear, that scientists and others have mostly failed to consider the important causes and consequences of the gendered dimensions of wildlife trafficking. Many research questions are of interest, and some of them are addressed in this volume: What are the costs and benefits to women of intervening in wildlife trafficking along each link of the supply chain (e.g., source, transit, destination)? Is thinking about women's participation in interventions necessary or sufficient for successful programs designed to combat wildlife trafficking? Do differences between men and women signal different priorities or incentives to participate in efforts to reduce wildlife trafficking-related risks to humans and wildlife? What are the key nuances of women's participation in poaching, trafficking, and selling illegal wildlife products, either directly, in supporting roles, or as managers?

The winds for our scholarship shifted in 2020 (and most of 2021). As a team, the pandemic has been very difficult; individually, it has been devastating. Many of us cared for family members who recovered from COVID-19, and others mourned painful losses. We have shared so many emails, SMS, WhatsApp, encouraging words, and no words at all. This volume is truly a testament to the drive and passion of all the authors to use their expertise and experience for social good and to advance the conversation about women's