

# UN report praises UK efforts on wildlife and forest crime

The United Nations this week published a report praising the UK's approach to wildlife and forest crime. The report also provides key recommendations about how the UK can improve or build on policy-making in this area.

The comprehensive analysis, the [Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit Report: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), puts forward a series of recommendations as to how the UK can better address key aspects of wildlife crime which the government will consider carefully.

As President of the G7, the UK led other countries in recognising wildlife trafficking as a serious crime and secured commitments from members to use the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime's (ICWC) Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit to assess their response to wildlife crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recommended the UK exports its world-leading expertise to support international efforts to tackle wildlife crime such as from Border Force and the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

The report highlighted the UK's strength in "overarching policing structures and strategies to address wildlife crime" and that these structures could be described as "international best practice". It also recognises the UK as being the first G7 country to request the [ICWC Toolkit assessment](#) as "a commendable demonstration of leadership shown by the UK in the wildlife crime arena".

The report also recommends that the UK undertakes a review of regulations governing the [implementation of CITES](#), particularly the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (COTES) Regulations 2018, and evaluates the scale and value of the legal and illegal wildlife trade in the UK to help support the detection of, and collection of data on, the illegal wildlife trade.

Today's assessment forms part of our ongoing work to tackle wildlife crime, using the framework of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) toolkit which was originally developed in 2012.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I welcome this report and the fact that it recognises the UK's global leadership in fighting wildlife and forestry crime. We invited the UN to undertake this analysis and we are proud to be the first G7 country to request this assessment.

There is always more we can do to tackle this abhorrent trade and we will carefully consider all of the UN's recommendations to help us build on the positive progress we have already made to tackle this issue.

Candice Welsh, Deputy Director, Division for Operations, UNODC, said:

The UK is not only one of the principal donors to UNODC in important areas ranging from wildlife and forest crime, to anti-corruption, cybercrime and anti-money laundering, but is also a leader in ensuring that the subject continues to be a priority on the international political agenda. Furthermore, the UK is the first donor country to undertake a national criminal justice and preventive response assessment using the ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit. This is yet another demonstration of its leadership in addressing wildlife and forest crime.

Jorge Rios, Chief of the UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, said:

The Toolkit analysis outlines the strengths and weaknesses in the UK's current response to wildlife and forest crime and makes clear recommendations for future action. This knowledge can be used to strengthen inter-institutional coordination, deepen the understanding of the challenges, and to more effectively prevent and address these crimes. I am hopeful that this undertaking will not only benefit the UK in its fight against wildlife and forest crime but will also serve as an example for other G20 countries to follow.

The Government recognises the importance of tackling wildlife crime and we are committed to doing all we can to protect wildlife, not just here in the UK but across the world. We are investing over £46m between 2014 and 2022 to counter illegal trade internationally by reducing demand, strengthening enforcement, ensuring effective legal frameworks and developing sustainable livelihoods.

Since 2016, Defra and the Home Office have jointly committed £300,000 funding the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit. The unit plays a valuable role in detecting and preventing wildlife crime by monitoring and gathering intelligence on illegal activities, undertaking analysis and directly assisting law enforcers with their investigations.

The National Wildlife Crime Unit is one part of the UK's network fighting wildlife crime. Police, customs officers and other enforcers also carry out vital work on the ground. In addition, the UK Border Force continues to make successful seizures and work with international partners to ensure illegal wildlife trade products do not enter the market.

The Government will now consider the recommendations to ensure our legislation and enforcement of wildlife crime is as strong as it can be.