

USFWS and ASEAN-WEN: A Trans-Pacific Wildlife Law Enforcement Partnership

About ASEAN-WEN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) draws on the collaboration and cooperation of the 10 ASEAN member nations to fight cross-border wildlife trafficking in Southeast Asia.
- ASEAN-WEN participants include environmental, law enforcement, and customs agencies in Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand.
- ASEAN-WEN receives assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help build wildlife law enforcement capacity in Southeast Asia, strengthen the network, and build public awareness on wildlife conservation.
- Specifically, USAID has established and funded an ASEAN-WEN Support Program that is jointly implemented in the region by the FREELAND Foundation for Human Rights and Wildlife (a non-profit working in Asia on wildlife conservation and human rights issues) and TRAFFIC (the wildlife trade- focused affiliate of the World Wildlife Fund).
- USAID support has included funding for law enforcement training programs in the region (some conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) as well as providing funds to station a Service special agent in Bangkok, Thailand, as a liaison officer. This agent works directly with law enforcement agencies on the ground in member countries throughout Southeast Asia.

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- The Service's wildlife law enforcement partnership with Thailand and the other member nations of ASEAN-WEN dates to that organization's creation in 2005.
- That year a Service Special Agent in Charge and a Department of Justice senior official participated in the group's first formal meeting. The two U.S. representatives presented overview briefings on legislative, investigative, and prosecutorial strategies for combating wildlife trafficking and provided counsel as country delegates drafted a formal agreement creating ASEAN-WEN.
- Service special agents presented a two-week wildlife crime investigations course in Thailand and the Philippines in 2006.
- In 2007, Service training teams returned to the region to provide a similar course in Indonesia and conduct validation studies for the training programs presented the previous year.

- In 2008, staff at the Service's National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory provided two weeks of technical training on forensics issues to personnel from ASEAN-WEN member nations.
- A Service special agent was stationed in Bangkok as a liaison officer to ASEAN WEN in both 2008 and 2009. These officers have been involved in training development, investigative consultation and assistance, intelligence liaison, and the presentation of both on-the-job and formal training programs.
- In 2008, the latter included teaching a two-week "Nature Crime Investigation Course" in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand; 106 enforcement officers completed this training.
- This Service liaison officer also presented training on combating international wildlife crime to 64 enforcement managers and supervisors from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam at the State Department-run International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok.
- In 2009, the Service liaison officer's accomplishments included:
 - Working with the Thai Royal Police and Service special agents in Los Angeles to further a cooperative U.S.-Thai investigation of transcontinental smuggling of African elephant ivory
 - Providing formal and on-the-job training to Cambodia's Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team
 - Helping to present an intensive two-week enforcement ranger training course for Laotian forest rangers, police and military personnel to increase capacity to protect forest reserves from poaching and illegal logging
 - Teaming with the Australian Federal Police to teach advanced intelligence analysis techniques at the Transnational Crime Coordination Center in Bangkok, Thailand, to improve support available to officers targeting illegal wildlife trade in Southeast Asia
 - Working with ASEAN-WEN's first Special Investigation Group Meeting and Workshop on Trafficking in Big Cats and Pangolins to map out a broad strategy to address organized crime syndicates dealing in these species
 - Conducting on-the-job training for Thai and Cambodia investigators in connection with a cooperative probe of Thai-Cambodia wildlife trafficking
 - Providing on-the-job training at six locations along the Thai-Malay border in support of wildlife trafficking assessments and interdiction efforts
 - Participating in two-week training course for 20 Thai and 20 Laotian rangers to enhance skills needed to protect forest reserves from poaching, illegal logging, and other threats
 - Conducting on-the-job training with Thai police along that nation's southern border, enhancing efforts to target organized criminal rings
 - Supporting a workshop on wildlife crime investigative and prosecutorial strategies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia