



Law Enforcement

Program Overview

The Service's Office of Law Enforcement's efforts focus on potentially devastating threats to wildlife resources – illegal trade, unlawful commercial exploitation, habitat destruction, and environmental hazards.

Its overall mission is to enforce laws that help protect wildlife here and around the world. It contributes to Service efforts to recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and promote global wildlife conservation.

Service officers investigate wildlife crimes; regulate wildlife trade; help Americans understand and comply with wildlife protection laws; and coordinate activities with international, Federal, State, and tribal counterparts to protect wildlife resources. The following are just a few of the many activities conducted by Service officers:

- Breaking up smuggling rings that target imperiled species;
- Preventing the unlawful commercial exploitation of U.S. resources;
- Protecting wildlife from environmental hazards;
- Safeguarding wildlife habitat;
- Enforcing Federal migratory game bird hunting regulations and working with States to protect other game species;
- Inspecting wildlife shipments to ensure compliance and detect illegal trade;

- Training other Federal, State, tribal, and foreign law enforcement officers; and
- Conducting outreach to increase compliance with wildlife laws.



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The Office of Law Enforcement fields a force of special agents (criminal investigators with the authority to enforce wildlife laws anywhere in the United States) and wildlife inspectors (uniformed import/export control officers stationed at ports of entry and border crossings). A headquarters office deals with national operational oversight, policy, training, intelligence, professional integrity, budget management, and technical and administrative support.

The Service also has a state-of-the-art Forensics Laboratory located in Ashland, Oregon which conducts scientific analyses to help solve wildlife crimes. It also operates the National Wildlife Property Repository, which supplies confiscated wildlife items to qualified outside groups for educational use, and the National Eagle Repository, which provides Native Americans with eagle parts for religious purposes under a permit process.

Facts and Figures

FY 2008 budget of \$59.6 million

As of October 1, 2008, had a network of 201 special agents nationwide and 114 wildlife inspectors located at 38 key ports of entry

More than 14,000 investigations worked in FY 2008

More than 188,000 wildlife shipments processed in FY 2007

Wildlife Laws Enforced

Endangered Species Act

Lacey Act

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

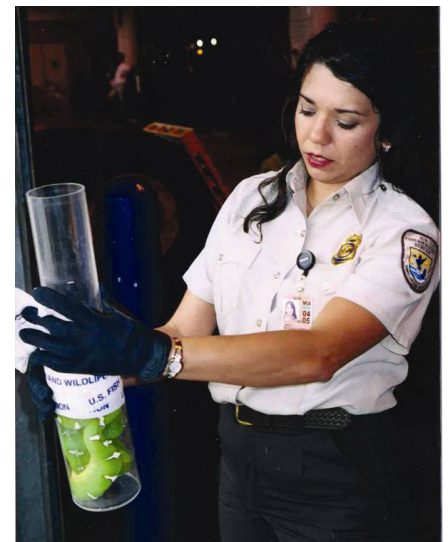
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

Marine Mammal Protection Act

African Elephant Conservation Act

Wild Bird Conservation Act

Rhino Tiger Conservation Act



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Conservation Successes

- Investigations that broke up large-scale trafficking rings involving elephant ivory, sea turtle skin and shell, queen conch meat, protected reptiles, rare butterflies, and sperm whale teeth
- Casework that exposed the illegal harvest and sale of leopard sharks, paddlefish caviar, spiny lobster, blue crabs, freshwater mussels, ginseng, and other U.S. species
- Cases that secured millions in penalties from companies responsible for oil and chemical spills that resulted in the death of protected wildlife species
- Outreach to electric utilities and oil companies that has helped protect migratory birds from powerline electrocutions and other industrial hazards



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Emerging Issue

- Need to restore enforcement capacity by addressing critical agent staffing shortfalls



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