

Organized Crime Indicators

“It appears that organized crime, while not involved in all forms of trafficking in endangered species, is strongly present in various sectors.”

Report by the Secretary General of the United Nations to the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (2003)

- **Organized structure to poaching; use of gangs, supply of vehicles, weapons and ammunition.**
- **Exploitation of local communities.**
- **Provision of high-quality lawyers.**
- **Corruption of judicial process.**
- **Violence towards law enforcement personnel.**
- **Corruption of law enforcement personnel.**
- **Exploitation of civil unrest.**
- **Financial investment in ‘start-up’ and technology needed for processing and marketing.**
- **‘Inviolability’ displayed by those involved.**
- **Sophistication of smuggling techniques and routes.**
- **Use of ‘mules’ and couriers.**
- **Payments to organized crime groups.**
- **Use of persons of high political or social status.**
- **Sophisticated forgery and counterfeiting of documents.**
- **Use of sexual bribes or blackmail and other corruption of officials.**
- **Use of fake or ‘front’ companies.**
- **Fraudulent advertising of wildlife and widespread use of the Internet.**
- **Previous convictions for other types of crime.**
- **Organized crime group members use or ownership of wildlife.**
- **Huge profits.**

List compiled by John Sellers, CITES Secretariat



Lessons Learned Smuggling Offenses

- Importance of treating wildlife smuggling as real crime.
- Importance of prosecuting couriers: catching little fish in order to catch the big fish.
 - Controlled deliveries
 - Undercover
 - Determining entire smuggling chain through interviews
- Importance of inspection, DNA testing and seizure of caviar at the time of import.
- Importance of reviewing overall import data.
- Importance of determining foreign law and working with country of origin.
- Importance of scrutinizing declared imports including labels and documents:
 - Focus on re-export certificates
- Importance of searching importer's records.
- Importance of analyzing telephone toll and bank records.
- Importance of working with defrauded customers (mass gourmet retailers: airlines, cruise lines, gourmet retailers, etc.

