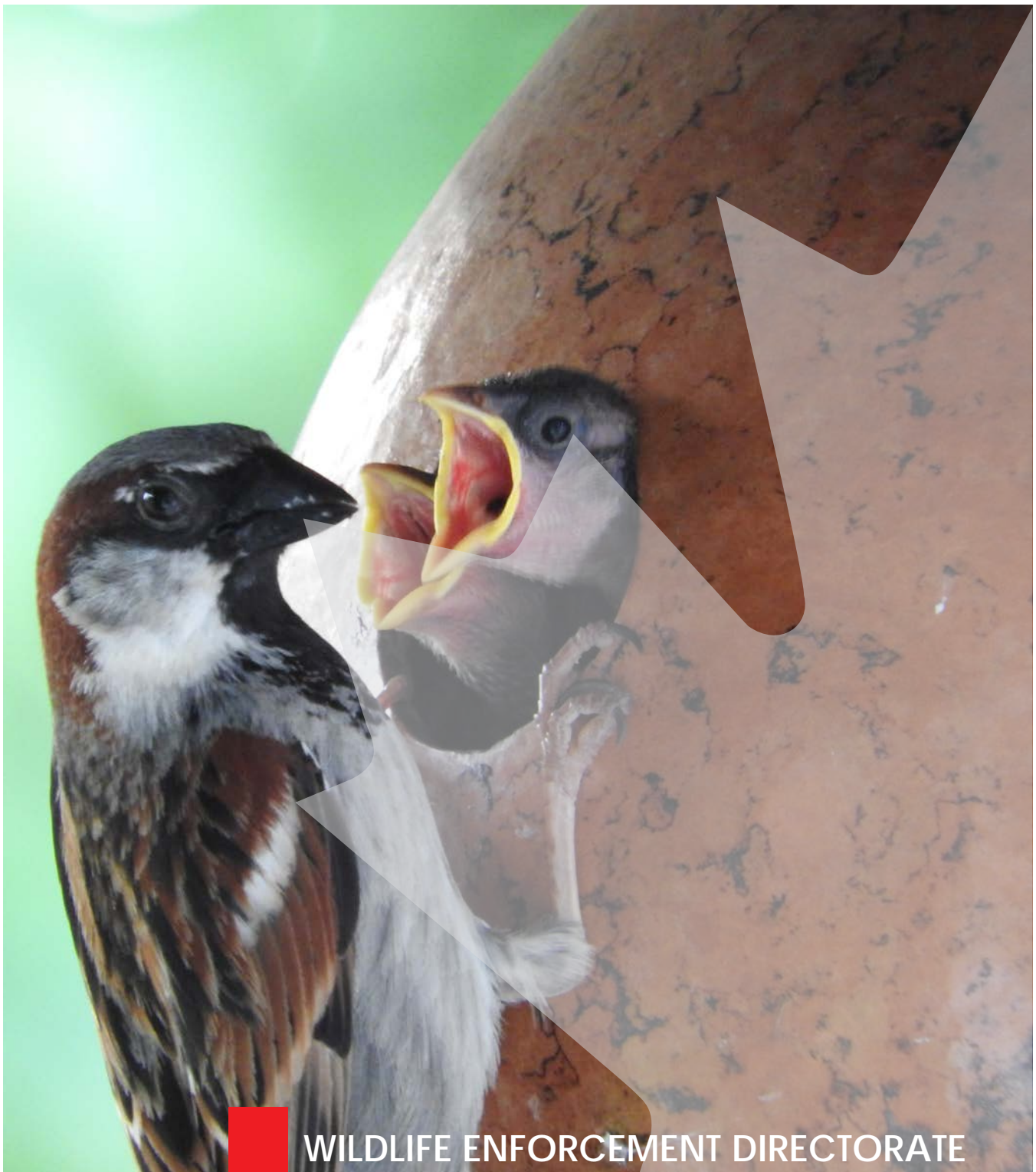




Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Canada



**WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE
ANNUAL SUMMARY 2017-2018**

Cat. No.: En5-1E-PDF

ISSN: 2368-5859

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Environment and Climate Change Canada's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
12th Floor, Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 1-819-997-2800
Toll Free: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only)
Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca

Cover photo: Sparrow babies
Photo: Lindsay Hinchcliffe © Environment and Climate Change Canada

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2018

Aussi disponible en français

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Enforcement Highlights
3. Our People
4. Our Partners
5. Our Resources
6. Moving Forward

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

It takes a special kind of person to fight wildlife crime.

When you are responsible for ensuring the protection of over 400 species of migratory birds, located across 10 million square kilometres of land and sea, including 144 protected areas, there is by necessity a lot of territory to cover.

When you are charged with watching over nearly 550 species at risk, there is a lot of proactive crime prevention that needs to be done.

When you are mandated with enforcing the law that protects and regulates tens of thousands of endangered and vulnerable species in interprovincial and international trade, there are lots of partnerships to develop.

When the protection of nature is a Canadian priority and when wildlife and forest crime is a worldwide concern (valued at more than US \$140 billion), there is complex, strategic analysis to be done for departmental, diplomatic, and elected decision-makers.

When you are up against organized crime, businesses that side-step regulations, and individuals who poach, smuggle, and destroy or pollute habitats, you better have good criminal intelligence to help guide you and be quick on your feet.

Did I mention that mornings are early and temperatures outside can range from -40C to +40C?

This Annual Summary is our way of saying *thank you* to all the people who take on environmental crime in Canada and around the world.

Sheldon Jordan

**Director General
Wildlife Enforcement Directorate**



Sheldon Jordan, Director General.

Photo: © Anne-Brigitte Quirion



“Unicorn” caribou in the Yukon.

Photo: Sheldon Jordan © Environment and Climate Change Canada

We protect and conserve Canada’s wildlife and wild spaces, while at the same time ensuring that our natural resources are used sustainably.

- Sheldon Jordan, Director General



1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2017-2018 Wildlife Enforcement Directorate Annual Summary

The Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) is a part of Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) Enforcement Branch (EB).

WED is responsible for enforcing federal wildlife legislation that protects:

- plant and animal species and their habitat in Canada; and
- many foreign species, such as endangered and threatened species in trade, migratory birds, and some invasive species.

This Annual Summary covers the period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. It reports on WED's priorities, actions, and achievements. It also includes information about our enforcement highlights, our people, our partners, and our resources.

Although the report covers a wide variety of work, it is impossible to include all of our annual activities. To learn more, we invite you to visit us online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-enforcement/wildlife-legislation.html>.

Almost all of the images in this report were taken by members of our staff during the course of their work. The photograph on the front page was selected through WED's annual photography competition. It is a photograph of baby sparrows and it was taken by Lindsay Hinchcliffe.

Pathway in the Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area.

Photo: Josée Michaud © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Bull moose in a canola field.

Photo: Amy Biensch © Environment and Climate
Change Canada



**We work across Canada, from coast to coast to coast,
enforcing the laws and regulations that protect and conserve
wildlife and its habitat.**

Who We Are

We are a team of nearly 75 field enforcement officers, 15 intelligence staff, and 37 support professionals.

We have a national headquarters office, which is located in Gatineau, Québec. We also have five regions, each with a regional headquarters and local offices. The five regions are:

- Atlantic Region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Québec Region
- Ontario Region
- Prairie and Northern Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut)
- Pacific and Yukon Region (British Columbia, Yukon)

What We Do

We work across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, enforcing the laws and regulations that protect and conserve wildlife and its habitat. Our work aims to reduce threats and damages to biodiversity for the benefit of all Canadians and the global community.

We enforce the following acts:

- *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*
- *Canada Wildlife Act (CWA)*
- *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 (MBCA)*
- *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPRIITA)*
- Provisions of the *Antarctic Environmental Protection Act (AEPA)* concerning wildlife

Wildlife enforcement officers make considerable efforts to ensure that companies and individuals comply with laws that protect wild species and their habitats. Tips about suspected illegal activities can be reported to ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca. They can also be reported anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8472 (TIPS) and may be eligible for a reward from Crime Stoppers of up to \$2,000.

How We Operate

Our enforcement officers conduct inspections to verify compliance with legal requirements. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that non-compliance has occurred, officers may initiate an investigation to gather evidence and take appropriate enforcement measures against the offender. This is sometimes done in collaboration with other provincial, territorial, and federal government departments, or international agencies.

Enforcement officers can take various measures against offenders. These measures include issuing tickets, administrative penalties, warnings, and compliance orders. Prosecutions can also be pursued in serious cases of non-compliance. To ensure fair, predictable, and consistent enforcement of legislation, officers act in accordance with EB's Compliance and Enforcement Policy for Wildlife Legislation. You can learn more about this policy online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-enforcement/publications/compliance-policy-wildlife-legislation.html>.

Intelligence makes up an important part of our work. As an intelligence-driven enforcement organization, our operations are informed heavily by information provided by our intelligence professionals. These professionals use industry-standard products and processes to understand and forecast patterns of non-compliance. Predicting non-compliance allows us to better prioritize our enforcement operations to intercept the worst offenders.

We also have an important team of support professionals across the country that performs critical work to keep our organization running. This work includes planning and reporting, regulatory analysis, training facilitation, policy and procedure development, program support and implementation, operations management, finance, administration, and more.

The Environmental Enforcement Directorate (EED) is one of our important partners. Also located within EB, EED is responsible for enforcing the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) and the pollution prevention provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. We collaborate with EED regularly and we conduct joint investigations. To learn more about EED, please visit them online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-enforcement.html>.

To carry out our mandate, we also rely on ongoing support from the Enforcement Services Directorate (ESD). ESD is composed of learning specialists and project officers, as well as recently added training officers, who continuously review and update training requirements for both new and veteran wildlife enforcement officers. ESD also develops and reviews officer safety procedures, directives, and policies so that officers can have the best possible guidance when making decisions. This year, ESD undertook a review and standardization of all self-defense and duty firearm training requirements, implemented a national radio dispatch and communications network, and began work to complete a full review of all recruit training related to designation, health and safety, and progressive operational field techniques and skills.

Finally, we also work closely with our colleagues at ECCC's Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), who provide wildlife and conservation expertise, and at the Science and Technology Branch, who provide forensic analysis services.

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision:

To be a highly regarded law enforcement agency, respected for our effectiveness in the protection of wildlife and their habitat in Canada and for our contribution on the world stage.

Our Mission:

To protect, respect and conserve wildlife and their habitat through the effective enforcement of federal wildlife legislation.

Our Values:

Teamwork, respect, communication, professionalism, accountability, leadership, trust, integrity, and consistency.

Our Guiding Principles:

1. Achieve maximum deterrence by preventing and stopping crime and prosecuting offenders.
2. Demonstrate leadership and vigilance locally, nationally, and globally.
3. Engage our partners to ensure our common goals are realized.
4. Engage our staff at all levels to develop a national program and recognize the importance of individual contributions to this effort.

Our enforcement priorities focus on protecting species and habitats that are at most risk from conservation threats and/or illegal human activity.



Our Priorities

Our enforcement priorities focus on protecting species and habitats that are most at risk from conservation threats and/or illegal human activity.

We take a risk-based and intelligence-driven approach to developing our annual priorities for planned and targeted inspections. This allows us to identify potential offenders who could cause the worst damage, and to protect the species most at risk from non-compliant human activities. In addition, routine and complaints-based inspections continue to remain an important part of our enforcement program.

We also use a Project Planning and Tracking Tool to better allocate resources to priority activities, and to produce reports. This tool enhances our ability to make risk-based decisions and link priorities to outcomes.

Our priorities:

- Canadian species that are at high risk for conservation and/or high risk for non-compliance
- Protected areas or habitats that are at high risk for conservation and/or high risk for non-compliance
- Foreign species that are at high risk for conservation and/or high risk for non-compliance

Our 2017-2018 Accomplishments

- This year, we conducted 4,956 inspections and initiated 114 new investigations under the legislation we enforce.
- Our work resulted in 414 enforcement measures, including prosecutions, compliance orders, tickets, and warnings.
- Our investigations led to 92 convictions and initiated 95 new prosecutions.
- Our efforts resulted in a total of \$342,576 in penalties, as well as the confiscation of polar bear pelts, coral, hunting equipment such as boats and motors, protected animal species such as Cuban iguanas and eider duck, and protected plant species like dried tree fern roots.
- The largest penalty we saw this year was \$235,000. You can learn more about the penalty on page 9 of this report.

Little bittern in the Léon-Provancher wetland in Québec.

Photo: Pascal Gagnon © Environment and Climate Change Canada



2. ENFORCEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Duck blind with illegal bait in the water.

Photo: Frederic Arsenault © Environment and
Climate Change Canada

We work in every province and territory across the country to enforce Canada's federal wildlife legislation. Here you can read about some of our most important enforcement activities from the year.

Offences under the MBCA results in \$235,000 fine for petroleum company

May 2017

Enforcement officers conducted an investigation of a British Columbia natural gas producing company and found that 14 dead migratory birds had been observed in an above-ground containment tank between March and April 2013. The tank was used during the hydraulic fracturing (fracking) process.

Enforcement officers charged the company for violations under the MBCA, which prohibits the deposit of substances harmful to migratory birds in areas frequented by migratory birds.

In May 2017, the company entered a guilty plea in court and was ordered to pay \$235,000 in fines, dispersed to four parties:

- \$5,000 to the Environmental Damages Fund (EDF), a fund administered by ECCC that uses court-awarded penalties to support projects that have positive environmental impacts
- \$115,000 to Ducks Unlimited Canada
- \$57,500 to the Mackenzie Nature Observatory
- \$57,500 to the Oiled Wildlife Society of British Columbia

Illegal importation of endangered reptiles results in jail time

June 2016

In September 2016, an individual from Ontario was intercepted by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers when he attempted to enter the country on a return flight from Cuba with two undeclared iguanas.

A flight attendant saw the iguanas in the man's lap on the plane and alerted CBSA officers before the flight landed in Canada. WED enforcement officers were called to the airport, where they identified the animals as two Cuban rock iguanas.

Cuban rock iguanas are endangered and are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES is an international agreement signed by over 180 countries, which aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Cuban rock iguanas are one of the world's largest iguanas, growing up to lengths of nearly 1.25 to 1.5 metres and weights of nearly 7 kilograms. They are vulnerable due, in part, to human disturbance and habitat transformation.

After the man failed to present required CITES import and export permits for the iguanas, he was charged by officers for contravening WAPPRIITA. WAPPRIITA is Canada's legislation that implements obligations under CITES. The man pleaded guilty in court to the charges and was sentenced to serve two three-month jail terms for one count of importing an animal, without the necessary permits, and one count of exporting an animal from a foreign state, without proper authorization from that country.



Top: Technique used to smuggle the iguanas.
Photo: John Miller © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Bottom: Seized Cuban rock iguana.
Photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Alternative measure taken to protect nesting terns

June 2017

In June 2017, enforcement officers in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, were informed by an officer at Fisheries and Oceans Canada that a common tern egg had been deliberately damaged by a student in the Bay St. Georges area during a school activity on the beach.

After speaking with the school about the incident, the enforcement officer and school principal agreed that the student would create a poster to display in the area, cautioning people to exercise care in the tern nesting grounds. This is an example of an alternative enforcement measure, which can help educate others about the importance of protecting species and their habitat.



Remaining tern egg in nest.

Photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Patrol of protected area results in trespassing warning

July 2017

The Vaseux-Bighorn National Wildlife Area (NWA) is located in the south Okanagan-Similkameen region of British Columbia. The NWA was established in 1979 under the CWA to protect habitats for species deemed to be special and important, including the California bighorn sheep. The Vaseux-Bighorn NWA provides significant habitats to rare, vulnerable, threatened, or endangered species, as well as many species of migratory birds and other local and migrating wildlife. Public access is permitted on a designated foot trail only, which includes a boardwalk and a wildlife viewing tower.

During a patrol of the Vaseux-Bighorn NWA, enforcement officers received a complaint that an individual was operating a utility task vehicle in the upper parcel of the NWA. Officers investigated the incident and issued a verbal warning to the individual for violating the CWA. Enforcement officers have also observed evidence of illegal hunting in the NWA, and will continue to patrol the area to ensure compliance.

Smuggling of coral results in \$25,000 penalty

August 2017

In November 2015, enforcement officers conducted an inspection of a live tropical fish shipment imported by a company in Ontario after receiving information from intelligence analysts that the shipment was likely to contain live corals. The inspection revealed that the shipment, which had originated from the Philippines, did in fact contain eight live corals, none of which were accompanied by the required CITES permits.

Coral listed in Appendix II of CITES is threatened by various factors such as polluted runoff, destructive fishing practices, development, and harvesting for both the aquarium and jewelry trade. The ecosystems that form around coral reefs are some of the most biologically diverse systems in the world, hosting more than 25 percent of the world's fish.

Enforcement officers laid charges against the company for violating WAPPRITA. The company pleaded guilty in court and was ordered to pay a combined total penalty of \$25,000, with \$15,000 for violations of WAPPRITA and \$10,000 for violations of the *Customs Act*. The total penalty was directed to the EDF.



Live corals smuggled from the Philippines.

Photo: Andrew Bruce © Environment and Climate Change Canada



Poster created by a student.

Photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Spotlight on Piping Plovers

The piping plover is a small shorebird that is found in North America, living in Canada in the Great Lakes region and on the Atlantic coast in the spring and summer seasons. Nesting piping plovers are highly vulnerable to human activity. Currently, there are only approximately 200 breeding pairs of the species in Canada. Their population is suffering due to habitat loss and threats from human activities, like motorized traffic on beaches.

The piping plover is protected under the MBCA. In 1986, the piping plover was designated as an endangered species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and the species became protected under SARA in 2004. Wildlife enforcement officers enforce this legislation by conducting patrols, mitigating

human disturbances of piping plover nests, and assisting CWS and the provinces with the recovery of the population.

Enforcement activities in the Great Lakes region of Ontario

Enforcement officers conducted preventative patrols at Wasaga Beach and Sauble Beach, both located on the shores of Georgian Bay, Ontario. The patrols were conducted during long weekend celebrations in May and July 2017, a time that piping plover fledglings are most at risk. No violations were noted during these patrols.

Enforcement activities on the Atlantic coast of Canada

On the Atlantic coast of Canada, enforcement officers conducted an inspection blitz during peak nesting season. Officers patrolled beaches located along the Acadian Peninsula in New Brunswick, where there are many

nesting areas sensitive to disturbance by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other vehicles.

Officers also conducted inspections on Québec's Magdalen Islands, located in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. There has been an increase in the use of ATVs and trucks along the islands' beaches, especially in the Pointe de l'Est National Wildlife Area, making these inspections important during nesting season. The inspections uncovered several infractions.



Piping plover habitat on Prince Edward Island.

Photo: Kim MacVicar © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Company owner handed conditional sentence of imprisonment for smuggling

August 2017

In May 2016, enforcement officers inspected a sea container that arrived at the Port of Vancouver after becoming aware that the importing company had been previously convicted under WAPPRITA.

While inspecting the sea container, officers found and seized over 800 kilograms of dried tree fern roots (*Cibotium barometz*), a species used in traditional Asian medicine. DNA testing was used to confirm the species of the roots. Officers also seized a 13.6 kilogram box of Asian medicine containing *Moschus*, or musk deer. The estimated retail value of the seized products was \$4,000 and \$28,000, respectively.

Both species are regulated under CITES and require import permits when coming into Canada. The company and its owner failed to produce the necessary permits, and were charged by officers for violations under WAPPRITA. After pleading guilty in court, the company and its owner were handed a hefty sentence.



Seized tree fern root.

Photo: Todd Kish © Environment and Climate Change Canada

The owner and the company were ordered to, amongst other things:

- Serve a four-month conditional sentence of imprisonment under supervision to be served in the community and 14 months of probation
- Serve 18 months of probation during which a representative of the company would report to a probation officer as required
- Perform 32 hours of community service
- Notify ECCC of plant or animal parts being imported for a period of 18 months
- Write an article outlining the underlying facts of the offences and publish it in a traditional Chinese medicine practitioners newsletter within 18 months
- Forfeit the seized *Cibotium barometz* roots and *Moschus* medicines to the Crown



Seized Asian medicine containing musk deer.

Photo: Todd Kish © Environment and Climate Change Canada

U.S. company fined \$35,000 for violations under the MBCA

October 2017

On August 25, 2017, a vessel owned by a U.S. fishing company ran aground on Green Island. The island is part of the Witless Bay Seabird Ecological Reserve, which is an extremely important breeding ground for birds located in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Enforcement officers conducted an investigation of the incident and found that the vessel had deposited diesel fuel in an area frequented by migratory birds. The incident took place during a time of year when puffins and murre chicks fledged from their colonies, making both chicks and adults particularly vulnerable to oil pollution. This is especially true for murre chicks, which are still flightless and leave the colony by swimming to sea accompanied by an adult.

As part of the investigation, the carcasses of 16 murre chicks were recovered from the oil sheen on the water. The company pleaded guilty in court to offences under the MBCA in October 2017, and was fined \$35,000, with the total penalty being directed to the EDF.



Capturing diesel on the water in the Witless Bay Seabird Ecological Reserve.

Photo: Andrea Wall © Canadian Coast Guard – Environmental Response



Twenty-four eider ducks and a processed long-tailed duck seized during Operation Longfeather.

Photo: John Pretty © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Québec company convicted of illegally exporting polar bear skin rugs

October 2017

Polar bears are an important part of the Arctic and sub-Arctic marine ecosystems. In Canada, the species is found in ice-covered regions from the Yukon and the Beaufort Sea in the west, to Newfoundland and Labrador in the east, and from northern Ellesmere Island, south to James Bay. Polar Bears are listed as a species of special concern under SARA and in Appendix II of CITES. Ensuring that Canadian trade requirements are respected is essential to safeguarding the conservation of this species and the sustainable use by Indigenous people, who rely on the lawful trade of this species.

In 2015, enforcement officers launched an investigation into a Québec company after it was discovered that there were discrepancies on the documents the company had submitted to the CITES permit office. The investigation found that on three occasions the company had illegally exported polar bear pelts to China.

After laying charges, the company pleaded guilty in court to three counts of violating WAPPRIITA. In October 2017, the company was fined \$22,500, the total of which was directed to the EDF.

During the investigation, two other companies forfeited an additional four polar bear pelts in the form of rugs and skins. Two of these skins were listed for retail sale for a total of \$30,000.

The success of this case was, in part, due to WED's ongoing efforts to ensure compliant trade and transport of harvested polar bear specimens. This work was organized through a national priority project, called Project Aurora, which aims to protect polar bears and ensure they are used only in a sustainable manner.

Hunters handed \$8,500 in fines and a one-year hunting ban for illegal baiting

October 2017

Tintamarre NWA is located at the head of the Bay of Fundy in southeastern New Brunswick. Established in 1978, it protects 1,941 hectares of freshwater wetlands, peatlands, and upland habitats. The area is particularly important for waterfowl and marsh bird production, providing migration and breeding habitat, as well as providing valuable habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife. As an NWA, it is protected under the CWA.

In October 2017, enforcement officers conducted a surveillance operation in the Tintamarre NWA in an area where bait had previously been found. During their operation, they intercepted several individuals in violation of the MBCA for hunting migratory birds over bait at Grassy Hole in the Tintamarre NWA. Five firearms, several boxes of shells, duck decoys, and a canoe were seized. After entering a guilty plea in court, the individuals were handed fines totaling \$8,500, which was directed to the EDF. The individuals were also each sentenced to a one-year ban on hunting migratory game birds.



Polar bear pelt seized during investigation.

Photo: R. Marinier © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Two Newfoundland and Labrador men convicted of violations under the MBCA

November 2017

Canada is home to more than 300 species of migratory birds that are protected, along with their nests and eggs, by the MBCA. Amongst other things, the MBCA regulates the hunting of migratory birds by identifying how and when certain species may be legally harvested. Enforcement is a key activity in ensuring that migratory bird populations remain healthy for future generations.

In 2013, enforcement officers initiated Operation Longfeather, an investigation into illegal commercialization and harvesting of migratory birds.

In November 2017, as part of this operation (which is still ongoing), two individuals from Newfoundland and Labrador were charged and pleaded guilty to offences under the MBCA. The first individual was ordered to pay \$7,000 and forfeit a boat, motor, and other items used while carrying out the offences. He was also prohibited from hunting for eight years. The second individual was similarly ordered to pay a total penalty of \$7,000 and forfeit items. He was additionally prohibited from hunting for 10 years and prohibited from leaving Canada for the purpose of hunting.

The total penalties from these convictions were directed to the EDF. Combined, they set a new record for a penalty amount related to the unlawful commercialization and illegal harvest of migratory birds in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Spotlight on Border Inspections

Fort Erie border inspections

This year, WED enforcement officers partnered with conservation officers from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to conduct a series of inspections on the export of fish and wildlife from Canada to the United States. Over the course of the weekend, more than 50 individuals returning to the U.S. from bear hunting activities, and more than 100 individuals returning from fishing activities, were inspected at the Fort Erie Peace Bridge in Ontario. Tickets were issued for violations of WAPPRIITA.

East Kootenay border inspections

In September and October 2017, enforcement officers conducted a blitz of border inspections in partnership with Canadian and U.S. border authorities at the port of East Kootenay, British Columbia. The inspections were targeted at individuals exporting fish and wildlife from Canada to the United States. During these inspections, 10 offenders and 20 offences were noted, 16 tickets were issued, and 5 warnings were given for violations under WAPPRIITA.

Beaver Creek border inspections

In September 2017, WED officers participated in a blitz operation in collaboration with CBSA and the RCMP at the Beaver Creek Port of Entry, located in Beaver Creek, Yukon. The purpose of this blitz was to ensure that individuals who had hunted and harvested wildlife in Alaska were in compliance with WAPPRIITA as they crossed the border into Canada. In addition, seasonally itinerant Alaskan residents transporting wildlife products as part of their household goods were also inspected under WAPPRIITA. Overall, the blitz revealed a high rate of compliance with the legislation.



Antlers inspected at the border crossing in Beaver Creek, Yukon.

Photo © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Update on Operation Longtooth: Former RCMP officer sentenced to 62 months in U.S. prison

In 2013, a retired RCMP officer was convicted in Canada for violating WAPRIITA after he illegally exported 250 narwhal ivory tusks to the United States over a seven-year period. He was sentenced to pay a penalty of \$385,000 and serve an eight-month conditional sentence in the community, including four months of house arrest. He was also prohibited from possessing or purchasing marine mammal products for a period of 10 years, and was required to forfeit items used to smuggle the tusks across the Canada-United States border. Then, in March 2016, he was extradited to the United States.

In September 2017 in the U.S., the individual was tried and convicted of 10 money laundering offences. A U.S. district court judge sentenced him to 62 months in prison. During the proceeding, it was revealed that the market value of the narwhal tusks in question was between U.S. \$1.5 million and \$3 million. It also came to light that the retired officer had attempted to increase the sales price of the tusks by occasionally providing fraudulent documentation claiming that the tusks had originally belonged to a private collector in Maine who had acquired them legally.

In a media interview about the court ruling, Glen Ehler, Regional Director of WED's Atlantic Region, stated, "This case is the result of a successful joint investigation involving partners across Canada and the United States working to stop the illegal commercialization and exploitation of Canadian wildlife, in this case the smuggling of narwhal tusks. Today's sentence and the previous conviction in Canada send a strong message that this type of offence will not be tolerated." The original investigation was conducted jointly between WED and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In Canada, only the Inuit may harvest narwhal, which provide an important source of food and income in northern communities. The harvest and transport of tusks is regulated in Canada to ensure that legal trade continues to remain viable and sustainable.



Narwhal tusks seized during the investigation.

Photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada



3. OUR PEOPLE

With 127 wildlife enforcement officers, intelligence staff, and support professionals working in offices across Canada, we are committed to protecting and conserving wildlife and its habitat.

Intelligence analyst attends workshop about the sustainable trade of tarantulas

In winter 2018, an intelligence analyst from the Prairies and Northern Region attended a workshop about the sustainable trade of tarantulas. The workshop was organized in Mexico by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, an intergovernmental organization established by Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. The workshop provided a global forum for law enforcement officials, non-governmental organizations, academics, and breeders to discuss issues related to the trade of CITES-listed tarantulas in North America.

WED employees receive award for their role in protecting the western chorus frog

In June 2017, a group of WED employees were recognized with an ECCC Citation of Excellence for their work on implementing the Emergency Order to Protect the Western Chorus Frog, in Québec.

The western chorus frog is a small species that breeds in seasonal wetlands, often located near open habitats or discontinuous forests. It is listed as a threatened species under SARA. In the summer of 2016, the Government of Canada, issued an emergency protection order for the western chorus frog and its habitat in the Montérégie region of Québec to protect the species from conditions that are putting it in danger of extirpation. In particular, the order protects against habitat loss and encroachment, which has occurred at a rapid pace over the past 15 years, resulting in the loss of almost 90% of the species' suitable habitat in the region.

Over the past year, enforcement officers have continued their work to enforce the emergency protection order. This has included patrols, investigations, and the installation of signs in collaboration with CWS.



Learning to safely handle a CITES-protected tarantula.

Photo: Daniel Dillon © Environment and Climate Change Canada

Enforcement officer conducting patrol in the SARA emergency order area.

Photo © Environment and Climate Change Canada



4. OUR PARTNERS

Stanley Bridge, Prince Edward Island.

Photo: Sheldon Jordan © Environment and Climate
Change Canada

Wildlife crime affects us all. That's why we work closely with our partners at home and abroad to prevent wildlife crime and stop offenders.

INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group meeting

In October 2017, representatives of WED attended the 28th meeting of the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Work Group (WCWG) in Singapore. The meeting brought together over 35 member countries to review activities from the past year, such as Operation THUNDERBIRD, a global effort that resulted in the identification of nearly 900 suspects and the seizure of 1,400 illicit products worth approximately U.S. \$5.1 million. It also included sessions on topics such as online investigations and cybercrime, forest crimes, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering, and new technologies to mark ivory and combat wildlife crime.

The meeting also ended Canada's 4-year mandate as WCWG Chair, a position held by Sheldon Jordan, WED's Director General.

WED officer helps deliver training in Kyrgyzstan

In spring 2017, a WED officer and a former WED operations manager travelled to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to deliver training to two dozen national protected area officers in the country. Using a "train the trainer" format, the sessions included information about enforcement techniques, human rights, interviewing techniques, and crime scene management. Afterwards, newly trained officers completed their first delivery of training to other officers in the country.

Participants gained new skills to help them prevent and intercept the illegal poaching of wildlife, particularly snow leopards, which are listed on Appendix I of CITES, as well as argali and ibex, both of which are targeted by poachers. This initiative was sponsored by INTERPOL.

WED participates in NAWEOA conference

The annual conference of the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association (NAWEOA) was held this year in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. WED was represented by an Operations Manager from Ontario region, who provided an opening address, as well as an officer from each region. The conference provided an important opportunity to engage with wildlife officers from across North America, participate in training activities, and gain insight on achievements in wildlife enforcement. NAWEOA also recognizes the commitment of wildlife officers with awards and certificates of appreciation.

WED participates in Canada 150 events

During the Canada Day long weekend, WED and EED shared a booth on the grounds of the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Québec as part of Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations. Enforcement officers greeted visitors and spoke about Canada's wildlife and environmental laws. Many people visited the booth to see a large display of seized items and equipment.

WED provides training to CBSA officers

This year, WED continued its work to provide CBSA's border services officers with specialized training on WAPPRIITA. These sessions for border officers provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen collaboration with CBSA and educate their front-line officers on CITES identification techniques.

Also this year, in summer 2017, ECCC filmed a video with CBSA that will be shared with the

agency's staff to emphasize the importance of partnerships and working together. The video highlighted the story of the interdiction and subsequent investigation of an individual smuggling lizards into British Columbia, which resulted in a successful prosecution largely due to the partnership between CBSA and WED.



Vancouver Operations Manager during filming.

Photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada



5. OUR RESOURCES

Tree of light.

Photo: Josée Michaud © Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Our resources provide the foundation for our operations. They include our offices, equipment, technology, policies, and legislation. They keep our employees safe and enable us to deliver on our mandate.

Photographs of objects seized by enforcement officers to be featured in TRAFFICKED

In February 2018, internationally-recognized photographer Christine Fitzgerald spent several days in one of WED's evidence rooms, photographing objects seized by wildlife enforcement officers. Ms. Fitzgerald, who grew up in a small town in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada, is best known for her work exploring human impacts on the environment. Her new series, called TRAFFICKED, explores the illegal trade of wildlife.



'Rhino Horn' from Christine Fitzgerald's TRAFFICKED series

Photo: © Christine Fitzgerald

Amendments to WAPTR to prevent the introduction of deadly fungal disease

On May 31, 2017, the Regulations Amending the Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations for species of the order *Caudata* were published in the Canada Gazette, Part II. The purpose of the amendment is to prevent the introduction of a deadly fungal disease known as *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) into Canadian ecosystems.

Originating in south east Asia, Bsal has been found in Europe, likely as a result of trade, where it is devastating local populations of salamanders.

The amendments prohibit the import of all species of the order *Caudata* (such as salamanders, newts and mudpuppies) unless accompanied by a permit. The goal is to protect wild Canadian salamander species from the harmful fungus.

This import restriction includes living or dead specimens, as well as any of their:

- eggs
- sperm
- tissue culture
- embryos

It also includes any other parts or derivatives of species of the order *Caudata*.



Posters created to increase awareness about Bsal.

Images: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

6. MOVING FORWARD



Conclusion

This year we conducted thousands of inspections, initiated over one hundred new investigations, and saw many prosecutions come to a successful close.

From coast to coast to coast, we worked together to send a strong message that wildlife crime does not go unnoticed in Canada.

We look forward to continuing this important work in the year to come. In particular, in 2018-2019 we are committed to:

- Completing a review of training required for enforcement officers to be designated under our legislation
- Supporting the implementation of new field radio communication devices
- Developing indicators and performance measures for our enforcement program
- Further aligning our planning process with our key internal partners
- Deepening our strategy for building and maintaining provincial/territorial partnerships

Together, we are committed safeguarding wildlife and habitat in Canada for generations to come.

Île aux Hérons Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Photo: Josée Michaud © Environment and Climate Change Canada

