



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT NETWORKS: THE ROLE OF LAO PDR PROTECTED AREA PERSONNEL

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The roles of protected area law enforcement personnel are largely confined to protected areas and their buffer zones, with strong emphasis on core responsibilities for wildlife protection. Little attention is given to a potential role in strengthening wildlife crime enforcement within subnational or provincial landscapes, particularly through cooperation with provincial law enforcement bodies. This paper examines wildlife crime cases encountered in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, northern Lao PDR, then considers the roles of law enforcement agencies in wildlife crime suppression at a provincial level. Three pilot Provincial-Wildlife Enforcement Networks (P-WENs) are showing the way forward in this regard. The establishment and function of these P-WENs are discussed, with particular emphasis given to their strengthening through involvement of protected area enforcement officials and the prosecutors' office. Dedicated task forces at the national level are also identified as an important component of tackling wildlife and forest crime. Evidence from Thailand and Nepal supports the potential effectiveness of wildlife crime enforcement if the Lao protected area agency plays a prominent role in the functioning of both subnational P-WENs and national level task forces. These examples provide useful embryonic models for developing effective multi-level arrangements within and between ASEAN member states and beyond.

Keywords: Forest Crime, Illegal Wildlife Trade, Interagency Law Enforcement, Task Forces

INTRODUCTION

The protected area literature on wildlife crime has largely concentrated on enforcement by relevant protected area personnel (Critchlow et al., 2017; Moreto & Charlton, 2021; Moreto et al., 2022; Rizzolo et al., 2021). Little attention has been given to their potential roles in strengthening wildlife crime enforcement across wider landscapes, particularly through cooperation with provincial law enforcement bodies. This paper offers a case study of illegal wildlife trade in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). We briefly introduce wildlife crime within the country, then summarise the recent history of compliance issues, government responses and shortcomings of current governance arrangements. We examine wildlife crime cases encountered in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, northern Lao PDR, and the wider role of park enforcement staff at the provincial level. Potential governance innovations to improve suppression and prosecution of wildlife crime are discussed, with

prominence given to roles for protected area personnel. Organisational reform is proposed involving an interrelated network of task forces and working groups at national and sub-national/provincial levels. We conclude with recommendations for addressing wildlife crime in Lao PDR and other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

Data supporting our analyses were compiled using published and unpublished sources as well as the authors' observations and collective experiences over several decades of working on wildlife crime issues in Lao PDR. Cases encountered in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area during the period 2017 to 2021 were collated from the SMART database which is maintained by law enforcement staff with technical support provided by the Wildlife Conservation Society. Cases focused on CITES listed species and nationally protected wildlife. Data relating to Lao wildlife crimes encountered by the national law enforcement agencies outside protected areas were provided by the Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI).



Nam Et-Phou Louey rangers on patrol © Khamphui Invixay, WCS Lao PDR



Asian Golden Cat (*Catopuma temminckii*) confiscated in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park © Jay White, WCS Lao PDR



The results of an ivory seizure from a trader in Luang Prabang © Mike Brocklehurst

Wildlife crime in Lao PDR: CITES compliance issues and governance responses

Wildlife crime in Lao PDR occurs within the country’s protected areas as well as other forest/habitat management types, including watersheds, community forests, plantation forests and wetlands. Crimes occurring outside protected areas involve wildlife species that have been removed from their natural habitat within the country or have been imported into the country either as live animals or animal parts. The number of serious wildlife crime cases that result in prosecutions appears to be comparatively small. Constraints to effective prosecutions include social perceptions on the consumption of wildlife (Saysamone et al., 2022; Schweikhard et al., 2019), cronyism (Global Organized Crime Index, 2021), limited human resources and capacities in natural resource management (Environmental Investigation Agency, 2017), lack of incentives for law enforcement personnel and limited transparency in processing cases (WWF & WJC, 2022).

Lao PDR has been in the spotlight as a transit country for illegal wildlife trade, reflecting its strategic position in regional trafficking routes. Over the last decade, the landlocked nation has been the focus of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) compliance concerns by the CITES Standing Committee, pursuant to Article XIII of the Convention that addresses compliance and enforcement. Compliance matters raised by the Committee in relation to Lao PDR’s responsibilities include (i) the management of exports of Thailand Rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*); (ii) national



Multi-agency training in wildlife crime investigations © Mike Brocklehurst

legislation; (iii) its CITES authorities; (iv) compliance and law enforcement; (v) monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade; and (vi) public awareness and outreach campaigns (CITES, 2018). On 21 November 2023, the CITES Secretariat issued a Notification to the Parties No. 2023/127 regarding Article XIII which called for Lao to suppress transnational wildlife trade for commercial purposes in all CITES-listed species (CITES, 2023).

The CITES Standing Committee requested Lao PDR to overhaul its national laws for implementation of the Convention. In response, Lao PDR prepared a comprehensive Wildlife Legality Compendium to serve as the legal reference on wildlife-related laws and policy documents (Smith & Soukhaseum, 2018). In 2017, Decree No. 118/PO on the revised Penal Code was promulgated (President's Office, 2017). A year later, the government demonstrated strong political commitment to tackle illegal wildlife crime by issuing the Prime Minister's Order on strengthening strictness of the management and inspection of prohibited wild fauna and flora (Prime Minister's Office, 2018). In 2022, the Lao Government passed Decree 299 which enforces CITES protocols for regulating international trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna, effective from 5 June 2024. Lao also committed to enhanced collaboration between the Police Department for Combating Natural Resource and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) and DOFI, whereby the DCNEC supports wildlife and forest crime cases. Despite these initiatives, it remains unclear whether CITES compliance has been strengthened in practice.

Internationally, Lao PDR has been guided by regional governance approaches to address wildlife crime. In 2005, Southeast Asia was the first region to establish a regional wildlife enforcement network, namely the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations - Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN). Despite this milestone achievement on transnational cooperation, holistic institutional arrangements for effective wildlife and forest crime enforcement within each member of the ASEAN region are generally poor. The problem has been exacerbated by many intergovernmental organisations and international NGOs focusing on transnational wildlife crime at the expense of national and subnational wildlife crime-fighting efforts.

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) prepared Guidelines for Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) (ICWC, 2020). These guidelines, officially endorsed by the CITES Secretariat (CITES, 2020), defined WENs as:

- regional or subregional networks;
- involving multiple national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement;
- focusing on supporting and strengthening regional enforcement; and
- providing a platform enabling collaboration and communication between member states, regional, subregional and global enforcement and support bodies and other networks.

The ICWC guidelines state that the WENs' mandate encompasses both wildlife and forest crime. Much of the focus of the Consortium is on regional and international cooperation. The dominant international discourse on wildlife crime suppression has been directed towards high-profile transnational crime activities conducted by international law enforcement agencies, international NGOs and international finance institutions. There has been little attention given to understanding how international institutional mechanics might better



Lao Customs officers with a seizure of ivory at Wattay airport © Mike Brocklehurst

contribute to effectively functioning WENs within a country such as Lao PDR, and how dedicated task forces and working groups, as well as subnational WENs, may contribute to strengthening the transparent functioning of national-level WENs. In this context, Parr (2011) argued that it was imperative to conduct institutional mapping of human resource needs; organisational structures and reporting systems among relevant agencies; strategic locations for stationing enforcement resources; understanding the role of individuals within protected areas in supporting subnational enforcement networks; and projected training requirements and time frames.

The second Lao Environment and Social Project

Under the World Bank-funded Second Lao Environment and Social Project (LENS 2), government departments and agencies in Lao PDR implemented environmental ‘subprojects’ during January 2016 – December 2022. Subprojects were undertaken by DOFI, Lao Customs Department (LCD), DCNEC and the Provincial Offices of Forest Inspection (POFI) in Bolikhamxay, Houaphan and Khammouane Provinces. Subprojects were also implemented in selected protected areas, notably Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park. Both protected areas ran substantial law enforcement programmes during the LENS 2 Project period.

In Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, border security areas were monitored by army border patrols. In the total protection zone (core zone), joint patrols were undertaken by the eight national park enforcement teams. Rapid response teams were established to tackle the most serious wildlife and forest crime events in the

national park landscape. During the LENS 2 Project, the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park Management Office generated a list of 20 wildlife crime cases that occurred within the national park between June 2017 and February 2021. Seventeen cases involved species listed as Category I (fully protected) under the Lao Wildlife and Aquatic Law, while 16 cases involved CITES Appendix I species (the most endangered among listed animals and plants). Four of the cases are summarised in Table 1 of the Supplementary Online Materials. All cases were referred to the POFI for investigation (19 in Houaphan Province and one in Luang Prabang Province). Houaphan POFI investigated three of the cases, and declined to investigate the remaining 16 cases. The single case submitted to Luang Prabang POFI was not investigated.

From 13 to 19 July 2021, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry mobilised a DOFI investigation team under Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Decision No. 0161/MAF dated 9 July 2021, conducting a follow-up assessment in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park to understand breakdowns in interagency cooperation. The assessment team evaluated the wildlife crime cases reported by the National Park Office, and the collaboration between the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park Office, the Hiem District Agriculture and Forestry Office, the Wildlife Conservation Society and related sectoral organisations. The findings demonstrated clear weaknesses in processing wildlife crime cases between the involved parties.

The LENS 2 project demonstrated the effectiveness of national park personnel’s efforts to detect wildlife crime, including parks enforcement personnel as members of

provincial WENs to provide technical assistance to train personnel from other law enforcement agencies, especially as they have a vested interest in meaningful prosecutions.

Outside protected areas, the location of wildlife crimes are a key factor in determining which law enforcement agencies are empowered to act, which agencies lead the wildlife crime suppression and which agencies play supporting technical and enforcement roles. Brocklehurst (2022a) conducted an analysis of key wildlife investigation and prosecution cases in Lao PDR, showed that wildlife crimes encountered in transboundary security border areas fell under the jurisdiction of the Lao Army, through the Decree on National Defence Strategic Zone 2011. Examples of crime cases reported by the army are given in Table 2 of the Supplementary Online Materials. The Law on Customs (National Assembly, 2020) mandates the Lao Customs Department (LCD) to play a role in suppressing illegal wildlife crime at international entry points. Several major wildlife seizures were conducted by the LCD at Wattay International Airport in Vientiane, Luang Prabang International Airport and the international border land and bridge crossings. The LCD protocol was to conduct the initial investigation then hand over the cases to the relevant agencies. The cases at the international airports and international borders during June 2017 until June 2021 are summarised in Table 3 of the Supplementary Online Materials. Seizures concerning national significant wildlife crime during the period 2017–2021 are summarised in Table 4 of the Supplementary Online Materials. Wildlife seizures targeting the ivory trade during the period 2017–2021 are summarised in Table 5 of the Supplementary Online Materials.

The analysis highlights persistent systemic weaknesses in law enforcement responses to wildlife crime. Misidentification of species demonstrates gaps in technical capacity, while the prosecution of serious cases at district rather than provincial or national level reflects an under-prioritisation of these offences. Weak evidence collection, inconsistent penalties and unresolved cases all point to deficiencies in investigative and judicial processes. Historically, wildlife crime has been regarded as a low-level offence, typically addressed through education or the imposition of a modest fine. Such approaches tend to focus on lower-level actors such as couriers or traders, rather than pursuing higher-level entities or organised networks that drive the trade. Failure to escalate cases and apply proportionate penalties undermines deterrence, allows key actors to remain untouched, and perpetuates the perception that wildlife crime is not a serious organised crime issue.

Embedding national parks enforcement staff in provincial wildlife enforcement networks

In September 2019, an analysis of the Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Network agreements from Bokeo, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Luang Namtha and Savannakhet Provinces revealed that these provincial agreements provided little guidance on how relevant law enforcement agencies might cooperate within their respective provincial landscapes. Consequently, in March 2020 an outline of an Operational Guideline was prepared for the Khammouane Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Network (P-WEN) to develop more detailed operational guidelines. This draft Regulation was modified and adopted. The Regulation comprised: (i) general provisions; (ii) the P-WEN chair and membership; (iii) the P-WEN Co-ordination Committee; (iv) ad-hoc P-WEN teams; (v) the working relations between the Khammouane P-WEN and the national, provincial and district levels; (vi) the operational areas within the province; (vii) P-WEN planning; (viii) joint agency activities and investigations including inspections and patrols; (ix) informant networks; (x) communication; and (xi) co-ordination meetings and reporting.

The Khammouane P-WEN Guideline states that the P-WEN had operational jurisdiction within all areas of the province. These operational areas comprised the following localities:

- protected areas including Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, Hin Nam No National Park, Phou Hin Poun National Protected Area and their buffer zone communities; and Khoun Xe Nongma Provincial Protected Area;
- production forests including Dong Phousoi and Nakathing Production Forest Areas;
- Nam-In Phouhinleckfai Provincial Protection Forest;
- village forests within the component 10 districts;
- international border checkpoints including Thakhek Third Friendship Bridge, Cha Lo international border, and traditional border checkpoints;
- major transport routes such as Route 13 (132 km) and Route 12 (89 km);
- international borders with Thailand along the Mekong River and with Vietnam in Nakai and Boualapha Districts;
- wildlife restaurants in Thakhek and other locations;
- wildlife farms; and
- wildlife traders in Thakhek and other locations.

On 15 September 2020, Khammouane Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) prepared a

provincial regulation prescribing the activities of the P-WEN Co-ordination Committee (Khammouane Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office, 2020). In December 2020, Bolikhamxay prepared a similar regulation on interagency law enforcement cooperation (Bolikhamxay Province, 2020). Based on these pilot regulations, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry issued Notice No. 2252/MAF to all Provincial Forest Inspection Units to improve and/or establish an Advisory Committee and Coordination Committee for their respective P-WENs. For example, Houaphan POFI consequently prepared enabling Regulation No. 1426/PAFO.HP specifying the activities of their P-WEN Co-ordination Committee (Provincial Office of Forest Inspection, Houaphan Province, 2021). On 15–16 March 2022, a workshop was convened to review the implementation of P-WEN regulations within the three pilot provinces and identify further revisions. The workshop concluded that the responsibilities of each stakeholder should be more clearly defined, with the Deputy Governor acting as P-WEN chair to supervise the interagency cooperation, and that National Park Management Offices should also be members of the P-WEN Committees.

Development of dedicated wildlife and forest crime task forces

Wildlife and forest crime cases can be classified according to (i) the category of wildlife crime; (ii) the location of the wildlife crime; and (iii) the responsible law enforcement agencies. Examples of the types and locations of wildlife crime, as well as the responsible agencies, are given in the Supplementary Online Materials tables. In 2022, the concept of establishing distinct task forces to respond to each of the major wildlife crimes was developed. However, to maintain control over the wildlife crime agenda, DOFI rejected the concept of promoting interagency task forces within the country. Nonetheless, as it is inevitable that task force investigations will intersect, communication and collaboration between task forces is essential. The following proposed national-level task forces and working groups were described in a draft Lao-WEN Cooperation Framework (Brocklehurst, 2022b).

National Wildlife Crime Task Force. This task force should provide an immediate response to high profile wildlife crimes involving the killing or capture of Category I listed species (fully protected under the Lao Wildlife and Aquatic Law). High profile crimes include killing Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*), and targeting of species such as bears for the bile trade and Asian Golden Cats (*Catopuma temminckii*) for the bone trade. Three examples of nationally significant wildlife crime in

Lao PDR are given in Supplementary Online Materials Table 4. If investigations identify a transnational component, the task force should collaborate with the transnational task force. As wildlife crime cases involving live animals are time-sensitive, the task force should work closely with the Online and Captive Wildlife Working Groups (see below) by providing logistical support.

National Forest Crime Task Force. A National Forest Crime Task Force should be established with support from the Operational Logging and Degradation Monitoring Initiative. This initiative uses cloud-based satellite image analysis, Geographic Information Systems software and smartphone apps to enable rapid detection and response to illegal logging and other forest degradation events, thereby enabling staff to respond within days of their occurrence. The task force would coordinate enforcement personnel who could then confiscate logs as well as arrest and prosecute offenders.

Transnational Wildlife Crime Working Groups. These working groups would operate informally at each of the international airports, and the international border crossings. These site-specific working groups could be guided by a national-level transnational working group.

Ivory Trade Task Force. The ivory trade in Lao PDR is closely linked to Chinese traders and Vietnamese suppliers (examples are given in Supplementary Online Materials Table 5). The trade includes retail and wholesale trade, transnational and organised crime, tourism, logistic and transport companies and the use of e-commerce sites such as WeChat. A specialist task force with Chinese language capability and international cooperation capacity is needed. A high level of political support would be required as many traders are situated in Special Economic Zones and areas of sensitivity such as San Jiang Market. Other non-ivory wildlife products are also traded by the same networks.

Online Wildlife Crime Working Group. The trade of wildlife, wildlife products and forest products on social media, especially Facebook, occurs in all provinces and would require the establishment of a specialist task force to address the issue. The task force would be responsible for monitoring trading groups, identifying offenders, conducting initial investigations and providing support to provincial authorities in conducting operations. Many of the offences involve live wildlife and thus require close collaboration with NGOs and rescue centres.

Captive Wildlife Working Group. Wildlife collections, farms, zoos, and the exotic pet industry are present in most provinces and are often closely interconnected. These entities are known to acquire

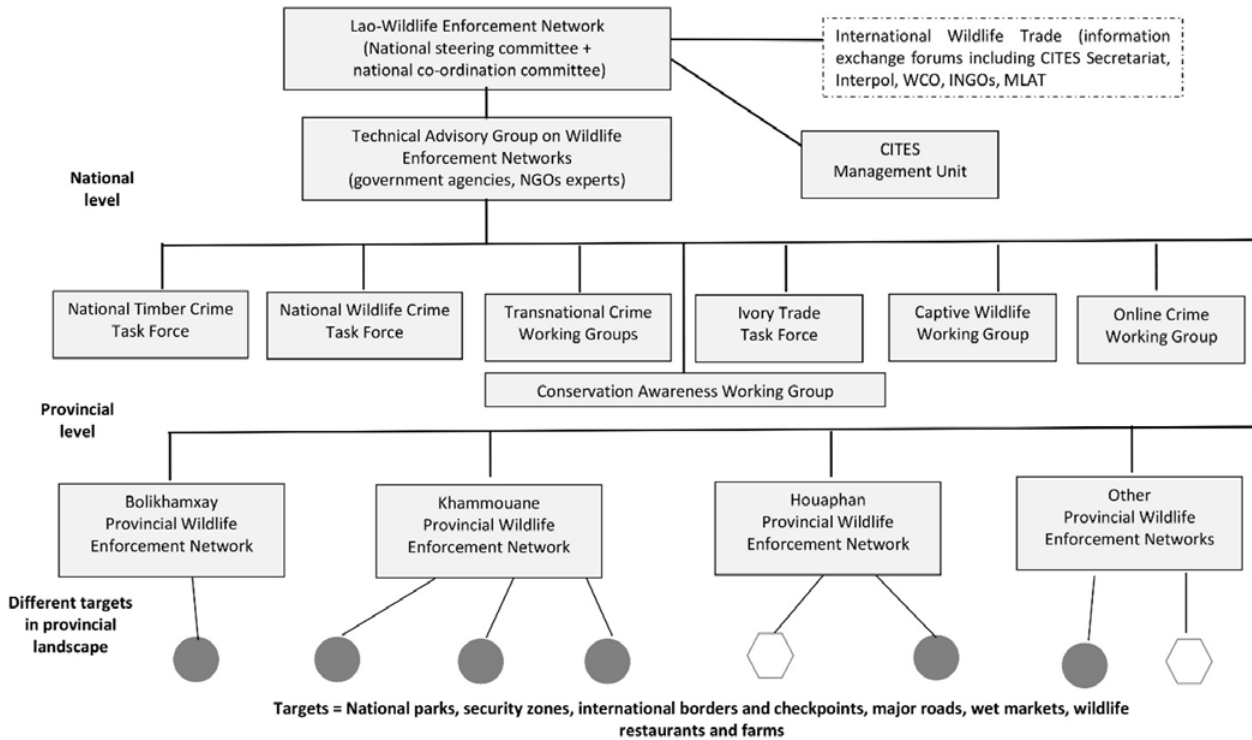


Figure 1. Proposed multi-level arrangements to strengthen functioning of the Lao Wildlife Enforcement Network

These task forces are supported by a national wildlife intelligence data centre.

The establishment of dedicated task forces and working groups is not confined to the illegal wildlife crime and the Wildlife Enforcement Network agenda. Dedicated working groups have been established within the national parks in Lao PDR to tackle major emerging threats to natural resources. In Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, the Governor of Houaphanh Province established a dedicated task force to resolve land speculation linked to cattle and livestock raising along the Phati Road inside the Total Protection Zone of Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park (Governor of Houaphanh Province, 2020). In Nakai-Nam Theun National Park a dedicated committee was established to monitor gold-mining activities in four villages in Khamkeut District, Bolikhamxay Province.

The establishment and functioning of such task forces is a promising approach for the Lao-WEN to delegate enforcement responses to the respective law enforcement agencies. Senior representatives from these different task forces should then be members of the national Lao-WEN forum. These task force representatives should provide succinct summary reports of their activities and major crime cases to the Lao-WEN during regular quarterly meetings. These task force reports would provide a basis for convening regular meetings of the Lao-WEN itself.

Each of the interagency task forces and the P-WENs should prepare regular reports of their interagency law enforcements efforts. They should introduce compartmentalised, holistic, transparent reporting, and deliver effective prosecutions. These reports – which constitute important verification and tracking documents – can assist in monitoring trends in wildlife crimes targeting endangered fauna and flora from the nation’s forest habitats. These reports can also assist in monitoring trends in wildlife crimes targeting transnational endangered fauna and flora.

The adoption of formal institutional arrangements will require some sizable human resource commitments by the Environmental Police Department and the DOFI. In November 2020, the results of the ICCWC Analytic Toolkit assessment were endorsed by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry through Decision 0752/MAF (MAF, 2020). The assessment recommended an evaluation of the current structure of Lao-WEN and consideration of establishing specialised investigative teams. These teams would focus on domestic offences, led by DOFI, and on transnational crimes, led by the General Police Department, with the aim of enhancing effectiveness. For many of the national task forces, it makes sense for the Environmental Police Department to play a leading role, with its strong legal mandate and respected legal position in Lao society.

Benefits of involving protected area enforcement personnel in provincial wildlife enforcement networks

Wildlife Conservation Society data show that from 2015 to 2022 the crime detection effort in Nam-Et Phou Loey National Park included over 70,000 km of foot patrols. The park generated a total of 20 serious wildlife crime cases during the period June 2017 and February 2021. Seventeen of these wildlife crime cases involved species which were listed as Category I under Lao Law and 16 cases involved CITES Appendix I species. These serious wildlife crime cases constituted over 50 per cent of the wildlife crime cases found in the respective provinces. In 2022, Nakai-Nam Theun National Park had 42 operating patrol teams comprising four combined army and national park staff patrolling the international border areas, 20 village patrol teams, three reservoir teams and eight mobile patrol teams involving police (Parr & Sylavong, 2022).

These examples indicate that protected area personnel have the expertise and motivation to effectively identify instances of wildlife crime. Law enforcement personnel from protected areas have greater opportunity for dedicated careers in wildlife protection than their counterparts in other agencies. Some have received more stable funding over the years due to the commitment and fundraising of supporting NGOs. Generally, protected area agencies can command larger enforcement budgets than their forest agency counterparts. Protected area personnel have superior knowledge about target taxonomic groups, their levels of abundance or rareness and the laws pertaining to their protection. For example, in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park annual training courses on wildlife identification and legal matters have been provided by the Wildlife Conservation Society. They have capacity building skills and ongoing working relationships with other law enforcement agencies, notably the police and army. Law enforcement personnel at Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park have expressed their keen interest in being appointed members of the P-WEN during a gap analysis assessment conducted in December 2022 by the Protected Area Management Division, Department of Forestry (Parr et al., 2022). These attributes make them a potentially significant contributor among the concerned law enforcement agencies operating within provincial landscapes.

The expertise and motivation of national park law enforcement staff provide a strong basis for senior law enforcement personnel from protected areas to become active members of Provincial WENs. Such involvement is likely to strengthen multi-agency commitment to

investigative and judicial processes and elevate the priority given to prosecuting wildlife crime at the provincial and national levels.

With the supervision of wildlife and forest crime suppression clarified, it becomes easier for NGOs and funding bodies to deliver targeted tailor-made training modules to the working groups and task forces. This permits a strengthening of working relationships among representatives from relevant agencies, thereby enhancing cooperative law enforcement. It also makes sense that national park enforcement personnel become active trainers for the P-WENs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous section, we outlined the professional capacity and expertise of the protected area personnel and their potential to become significant partners in the P-WEN forums. This finding was based upon their comparatively higher levels of financial support; their history of dedicated training in wildlife species identification and law enforcement involving technical support; their intensive law enforcement patrolling regimes; their in-the-field training of law enforcement counterparts (particularly the police and army); the volume of serious wildlife crimes encountered annually; and their conservation commitment to see their wildlife cases being effectively processed and prosecuted. However, their mandate is often taken to be restricted to protection within the protected areas themselves. This perception means that insufficient attention has been given to the roles protected area personnel can play in the identification and prosecution of wildlife crime in Lao provinces, as well as in transferring skills and motivation to the other law enforcement agencies operating at a landscape level. We suggest that the following four measures would help redress this oversight.

Institutional arrangements. The Lao-WEN should formally establish the highest priority, national task forces through regulations. The Lao-WEN should monitor the effective functioning of these crucial law enforcement bodies on a regular basis. The Lao-WEN, bilateral donors as well as conservation non-government organisations working in protected areas should ensure the involvement of enforcement staff from protected areas in the effective functioning of the Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Networks. The Lao-WEN Coordination Committee should be revised to include senior representatives from the national wildlife and forest crime task forces as well as the departmental representatives supervising the 17 Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Networks.

Training. Tailor-made, targeted training should be provided to the respective national task forces as well as the Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Networks. The training should include modules on facilitation skills for senior members of the P-WEN committees; conservation legislation; conducting joint investigations; and in-country study tours to protected areas to promote conservation ethics.

Reporting. The Lao-WEN should approve standardised, succinct reporting formats (as verification documents) for the wildlife and forest crime task forces, with emphasis on the CITES Appendix I listed species and the Category I listed species under the Lao Wildlife and Aquatic Law.

Information sharing. The Lao-WEN should establish a centralised shared database to improve information sharing across all task forces and P-WENs.

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RÉSUMÉ

Les rôles du personnel chargé de l'application de la loi dans les zones protégées se limitent en grande partie aux zones protégées et à leurs zones tampons, l'accent étant mis sur les responsabilités fondamentales en matière de protection de la faune sauvage. Peu d'attention est accordée au rôle potentiel dans le renforcement de la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages au niveau provincial, en particulier par le biais de la coopération avec les organismes provinciaux chargés de l'application de la loi. Le présent document examine les cas de criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages rencontrés dans le parc national de Nam Et-Phou Louey, dans le nord de la République démocratique populaire lao, puis examine le rôle des organismes chargés de l'application de la loi dans la répression de la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages au niveau provincial. Trois réseaux pilotes provinciaux chargés de l'application de la loi relative aux espèces sauvages (P-WEN) montrent la voie à suivre à cet égard. La création et le fonctionnement de ces P-WEN sont examinés, l'accent étant mis en particulier sur leur renforcement grâce à la participation des agents chargés de l'application de la loi dans les zones protégées et du parquet. Des groupes de travail spécialisés au niveau national sont également identifiés comme un élément important de la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages et aux forêts. Les données provenant de Thaïlande et du Népal confirment l'efficacité potentielle de la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages si l'agence laotienne chargée des zones protégées joue un rôle de premier plan dans le fonctionnement des P-WEN au niveau infranational et des groupes de travail au niveau national. Ces exemples constituent des modèles utiles pour l'élaboration de dispositifs efficaces à plusieurs niveaux au sein et entre les États membres de l'ASEAN et au-delà.

RESUMEN

Las funciones del personal encargado de hacer cumplir la ley en las áreas protegidas se limitan en gran medida a las áreas protegidas y sus zonas de amortiguación, con un fuerte énfasis en las responsabilidades fundamentales de protección de la vida silvestre. Se presta poca atención a su posible papel en el fortalecimiento de la lucha contra los delitos contra la vida silvestre en los territorios provinciales, en particular mediante la cooperación con los organismos provinciales encargados de hacer cumplir la ley. En este documento se examinan los casos de delitos contra la fauna silvestre registrados en el Parque Nacional Nam Et-Phou Louey, en el norte de la República Democrática Popular Lao, y se analiza la función de los organismos encargados de hacer cumplir la ley en la represión de los delitos contra la fauna silvestre a nivel provincial. Tres redes piloto provinciales de aplicación de la ley en materia de fauna silvestre (P-WEN) están mostrando el camino a seguir en este sentido. Se examina el establecimiento y el funcionamiento de estas P-WEN, haciendo especial hincapié en su fortalecimiento mediante la participación de los funcionarios encargados de hacer cumplir la ley en las áreas protegidas y la fiscalía. Los grupos de trabajo especializados a nivel nacional también se identifican como un componente importante para hacer frente a los delitos contra la fauna y los bosques. Las pruebas procedentes de Tailandia y Nepal respaldan la eficacia potencial de la aplicación de la ley contra los delitos contra la fauna silvestre si el organismo de áreas protegidas de Laos desempeña un papel destacado en el funcionamiento tanto de las P-WEN subnacionales como de los grupos de trabajo a nivel nacional. Estos ejemplos proporcionan modelos útiles para desarrollar acuerdos eficaces a varios niveles dentro y entre los Estados miembros de la ASEAN y más allá.

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