

#haydarpasamun'24



STUDY GUIDE

UNEP



HAYDARPAŞAMUN'24
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
COMMITTEE
STUDY GUIDE

Agenda Item 1: Biodiversity Conservation in Urban Environments

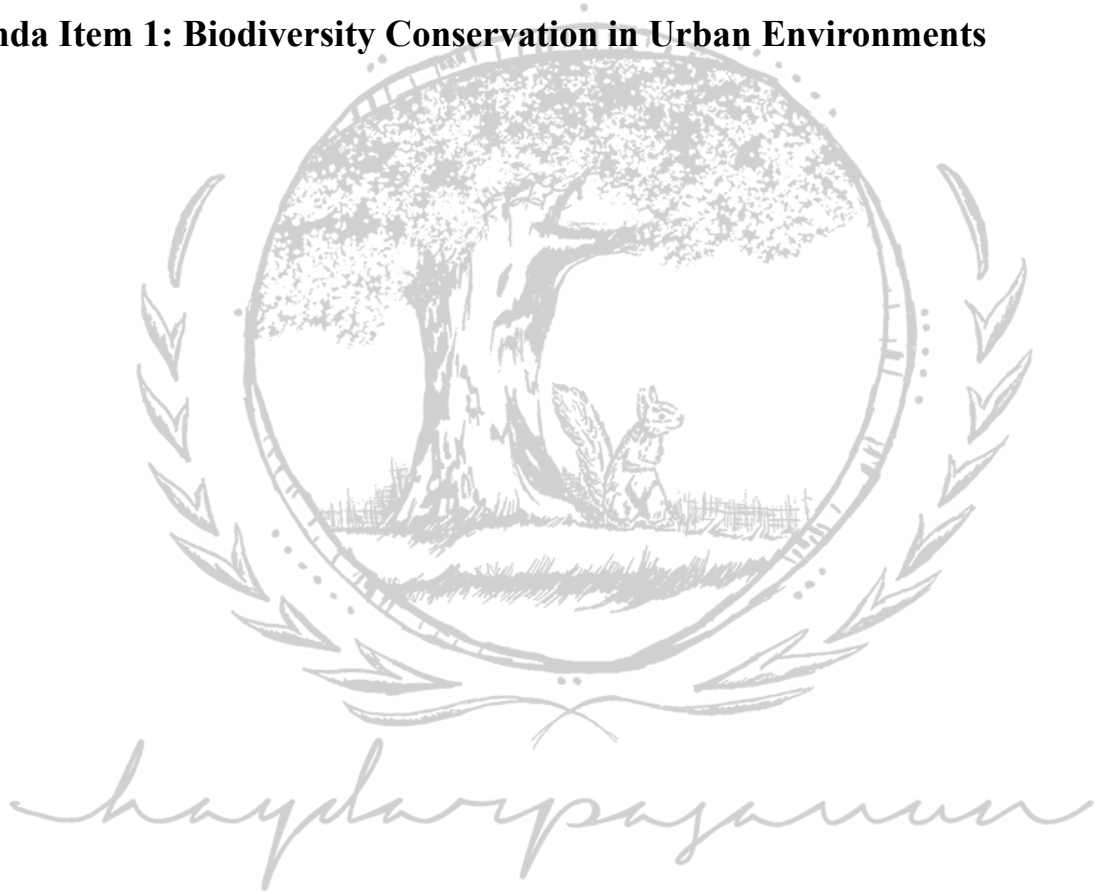


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1. Introduction to the Board

Honourable Delegates,

Welcome to HaydarpaşaMUN'24! I am Furkan Atila and I will be an academic assistant to the UNEP committee. As a chairboard member of UNEP, I have no doubt that we will change each other's perspectives culturally and socially during the 4 days we will spend with you. I am also sure that we will come up with fabulous solutions to the agenda items that we will discuss throughout the committee. Of course, as an organising team, we will do our best to ensure that you have a wonderful experience and have fun. See you all at HaydarpaşaMUN'24!

Best regards,
Furkan Atila

Hello there esteemed delegates,

My name is Ada Beril İřcan. I'll be chairing the UNEP committee during these four wonderful days. I most certainly believe that all of you will debate to solve the world's problems according to your policies as well as you will enjoy the experience at its best. I assure you that it will be one of the most memorable four days of all time.

If you have any kinds of questions, feel free to contact me via adaberiliscan2@gmail.com and my telephone number +90 539 577 88 88.

Best Wishes,
Ada Beril İřcan

Dear distinguished participants,

First and utmost we are more than grateful to have you with us at the Haydarpaşa united nations conference . So, with most heartfelt greetings,

We shall continue moving forward with our letter as fast as possible to bring you one step closer to our study guide which will hopefully, be the leading key to make this year's conference, as well as the committee, succeed in making a marvelous memory for each and one of you.

My name is Zehra Güneř and I have been responsible for the Special committee you all are most likely familiar with, UNEP. Throughout the year, full of sweat and tears, we as the academic team has worked like ants, as one may claim, not to only come up with a twist with our unusual and interesting agenda items regarding immortality, but also to make a useful source of knowledge to keep the debate revolve around each one of our diligent delegates.

Furthermore, I would like for all of you to enjoy your precious time here; learning, meeting new people and making many more unforgettable memories together. We will be there to support you before and during the committee so, please do not be hesitant in communicating with us! Hope to see you all soon...

Best Regards,
Zehra Güneř

yaagmurzehragunes@gmail.com

2. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), an agency within the United Nations, serves as the primary authority in safeguarding the environment from detrimental human factors. UNEP was founded in 1972 after a UN General Assembly resolution and It has been uniting 193 Member States in an endeavor to seek solutions to the triple planetary crisis, encompassing climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste since its foundation.

Through scientific studies, policy support, intergovernmental coordination and public advocacy, UNEP helps humanity to foster climate stabilization, coexistence in harmony with nature and the pursuit of a pollution-free future, in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEP supports the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty and reduce inequality by 2030, while protecting the environment that underpins economic development and a modern civilisation. UNEP supports countries in making their own progress towards these goals through various projects and the necessary technological materials.



3. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Nowadays, physical planning aimed at increasing the quality of human life in urban environments puts pressure on nature and animals. In order to ensure the sustainability of nature, human beings must be compatible with the ecosystems in which they live and develop a balanced relationship. The coexistence of urban ecosystems and biodiversity can be achieved through the harmonious development of the natural, cultural and social environment. Therefore, the focus of scientists is gradually shifting to studies on the sustainability of biodiversity.

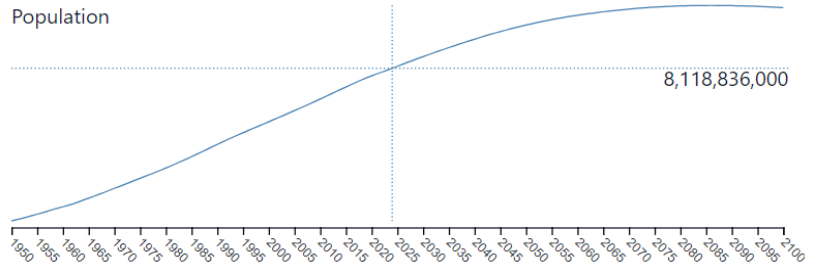
There are many factors that threaten biodiversity in urban environments. These are: rapid population growth, pollution, climate change, over-utilisation and invasive-alien species.

a. Rapid Population Growth

Since the 19th century, people have migrated from villages to urban centres in order to turn to new job sectors due to increasing

World Population Each Year

industrialisation in parallel with the developing technology. Therefore, the population density of city centres has increased and human needs have also increased. Fossil fuels have been used to meet these needs in the cheapest and easiest way. Eventually, it endangered biodiversity by creating air pollution.



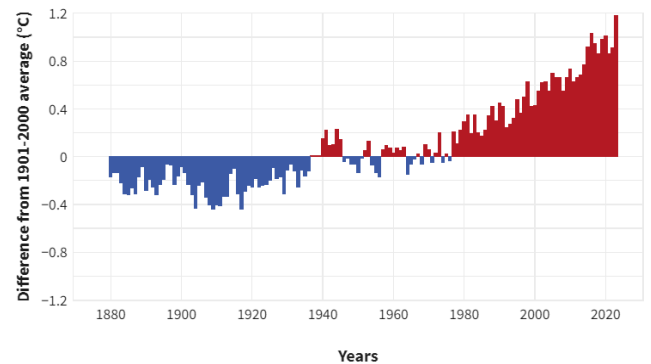
b. Pollution

Pollution poisons life forms in water, on land and in the air. Any chemical in the wrong place and at the wrong dose can be defined as a pollutant. Sectors such as transport, industry, construction, energy production, agroforestry, etc. all involve the use of pollutants that pollute air, water and soil. These pollutants can directly affect biodiversity or they can cause the destruction of individuals, species and habitats by disrupting the balance in nature.

c. Climate Change

The increase in greenhouse gas emissions due to the combustion of fossil fuels causes some species to have warmer and some species to have colder living environments. This situation affects the distribution of species on Earth, causes sea level rises and adversely affects many coastal ecosystems.

GLOBAL AVERAGE SURFACE TEMPERATURE



d. Over-utilisation

Over-utilisation causes severe destruction of natural ecosystems by humans. Over-exploitation is manifested by factors such as the consumption of plant and animal species for food supply, cutting down trees for shelter, utilising animal species to meet the need for clothing. In this way, ecosystem balances are disturbed, and the disappearance of one species results in the damage of other species.

e. Invasive-Alien Species

Introducing non-native species into ecosystems accidentally or intentionally the introduction of the new ecosystem balance and species can cause losses.

4. Key Terms

a. Zoning Regulations for Biodiversity

It analyzes how urban land use plans include provisions for sustainable urban form, design, biodiversity conservation and climate change. In addition, specific regulations and guidelines have been introduced to ensure that biodiversity is not jeopardized by these differences, including geographical location, residential growth patterns, socio-economic structure of local communities, political forces and policy evolution over time.

b. Invasive Species Management

Applying the concept of sustainability to invasive species management (ISM) is challenging but necessary given increasing rates of invasion and the high costs of its impacts and control. To be sustainable, ISM must address the environmental, social and economic factors (or "pillars") that influence the causes, impacts and control of invasive species at multiple spatial and temporal scales. While these elements are generally recognised, their implementation is often limited by insufficient control options and significant economic and political constraints.

c. Urban Wetland Restoration

Mitigation of wetlands for any activity can also be applied to prevent or minimize damage and to restore, enhance or create wetlands. Comparisons and analyses are made on various wetland functions, including biodiversity enhancement and flood risk management, connecting people to nature through urban regeneration, and connecting with the natural environment.

d. Community Gardens

Community gardens examine the nature and construction of the concept of "community" and how they benefit local communities. It shows how community gardens help to build cohesion and vibrancy in a community and how they contribute to the formation of bonding, bridging and connective social capital.



e. Wildlife Corridor Design

Sometimes different species in the same habitat can adapt to their habitat while others cannot. Therefore, corridors should be designed for species that are considered to be in danger of extinction within a protected area. For these species, information on habitat requirements, distribution, seasonal movements, avoidance behaviour and learning behaviour is important for the design of wildlife corridors. The ability of a species to use a corridor successfully depends partly on its width and length.



f. Green Roofs

Green roofs have been proposed for sustainable buildings in many countries with different climatic conditions. Technical and construction aspects of green roofs are used to classify different systems. By reviewing the benefits related to reducing building energy consumption, mitigating the urban heat island effect, improving air pollution, water management, increasing sound insulation and ecological protection, green roofs can contribute to biodiversity. However, for the effective integration of green roofs, both the specific climatic conditions and the



characteristics of buildings need to be taken into account. Economic considerations related to the life cycle cost of green roofs are presented together with policies promoting green roofs worldwide. The findings demonstrate the undeniable environmental benefits and economic feasibility of green roofs.

g. Native Plant Promotion

Many plants have close relationships with soil microbes, and these relationships enhance plant growth and fitness through a variety of mechanisms. Non-native species can alter patterns of species diversity at multiple spatial scales, but the processes underlying multi-scale effects remain unclear. In some experiments we show that non-native species reduce native diversity at multiple scales by simultaneously disrupting two processes of native community formation. Community differentiation refers to the process by which local communities diverge in species composition over time, because the history of species migration and consequently the way species influence each other within communities varies between communities.

5. Historical Background

Although UNEP is a relatively new organisation, having been established in the early 1970s, it has undertaken many projects and innovations. We can list some of them as follows:

a. the Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

Known as MARPOL, the treaty imposes strict rules on the shipping industry, helping to prevent spills and pollution from routine operations. The treaty is administered by the International Maritime Organization, which would become a key partner in UNEP efforts to prevent marine pollution.

b. the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

A cornerstone of international conservation efforts, the accord would come to regulate, and in some cases ban, the trade of more than 38,000 animals and plants, including some of the planet's most endangered species. CITES became a UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreement in 1984.

c. the Mediterranean Action Plan

The first UNEP initiative developed under the Regional Seas Programme, the 22-nation accord comes into force with the Mediterranean suffering from rampant pollution. Its guidelines would help reduce pollution and protect wildlife, including several rare species, that call the sea home.

d. the Barcelona Convention

The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention) was adopted on 16 February 1976 in Barcelona and entered into force in 1978.

The Barcelona Convention was amended in 1995 and renamed as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. The amendments to the Barcelona Convention entered into force in 2004.

e. Convention for Biological Diversity

This international legal instrument governs the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. It entered into force in 1993 and has since been ratified by 196 nations. The convention has spurred governments around the world to expand protected areas, mobilized financial resources in support of biodiversity protection and promoted sustainable fisheries and agriculture. In 2021 and 2022, leaders will meet in China with the goal of developing a new global framework for preserving biodiversity. The work of the Convention has mobilized governments to expand protected areas in the land and oceans, mobilize financial resources in support of biodiversity protection, and carry-out actions to promote sustainable fisheries, agriculture in communities across the world.

f. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The convention is a seminal moment in the battle against climate change. It sets a framework for stemming the flow of greenhouse gas emissions before they can drastically alter the Earth's climate systems. Entering into force in 1994, the convention today has near-universal membership with 197 signatories. It was extended with the Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997.

g. Global Environment Outlook, holds Earth Summit+5

The Global Environment Outlook presents a clear assessment of the state of the environment and outlines the biggest challenges facing the planet. As well, five years after meeting in Rio, Member States reviewed the state of the environment at the Earth Summit+5 in New York.

h. Climate panel wins a Nobel Prize

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was created in 1988 by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize following the release of its Fourth Assessment Report earlier in the year. The

organization is recognized for charting the effects of man-made climate change and laying the foundation for global action to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

i. UN launches Decade on Biodiversity

The UN General Assembly declares 2011-2020 the UN Decade on Biodiversity. Its goal is to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and significantly reduce biodiversity loss.

j. States adopt Sustainable Development Goals

Humanity's blueprint for a better future, the 17 goals are part of a new global agenda on sustainable development. Several focus on environmental issues: Life Below Water, Life on Land, Climate Action, Clean Water and Sanitation, and Affordable and Clean Energy.

6. Possible Solutions

Biodiversity refers to the variety of living organisms on Earth, and it provides ecological, economic, and social benefits. It is declining however at such a rate that it has even been predicted that we are on the path to a sixth mass extinction event. Species of plants and animals that are vulnerable to extinction require our utmost attention. So we need to ensure that significant changes at a policy and a collective individual level are made.

a. Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity conservation covers a wide range of activities that can be done. Protecting habitats is an extremely important biodiversity conservation activity; done by identifying the habitats facing threats and eliminating these threats in order to maintain the natural area. This also comes in the form of leaving wildlife undisturbed, especially nesting and denning areas, and wildlife habitats can be promoted by setting up man-made bird and bat houses.

Limiting and modifying agricultural activities also falls into the category of biodiversity conservation. This can be done by conserving water in wetlands and reducing irrigation,

and by managing livestock grazing through maintaining good quality range conditions and leaving areas ungrazed.

Biodiversity conservation can also come in the form of domestic conservation. This involves an individual taking responsibility for any wildlife they have direct control over. Maintaining your garden by eradicating and controlling weed growth can be particularly beneficial to conserving wildlife. Reducing disturbance to wildlife and monitoring pets and their behaviour with wild animals are also domestic biodiversity conservation solutions.

b. Restructuring Business Plans

There is a fundamental business risk from an ecosystem failure. This is a concept that needs to be acknowledged, along with the realization that there is also a reputational risk of unsustainable supply chains.

Some commodities, such as cocoa and coffee, are integral to an economy, but also depend on its growth from the delicate ecosystem. Growth of such commodities require a stable ecosystem tailored to its needs. Therefore, businesses need to factor these considerations into their risk analysis and allocate capital investment accordingly.

Additionally, businesses have also been said to have a “fundamentally crucial role” in sustainability transformation. Therefore, they also need to set some standards and rules that address biodiversity loss reduction.

c. Pressure on Governments

Pressure needs to be put on governments to draft, pass, and enforce legislation to protect biodiversity. All governments should strive to create an environment that welcomes intergovernmental bodies and international policymakers to collaborate in advocacy in regards to issues of biodiversity.

Unsustainable food production can also be a cause of biodiversity loss. Therefore, governments can ensure that company policies are put in place to encourage more

sustainable methods by ensuring sustainable fishing methods through certification of seafood products, for example.

They can also protect national parks and other areas with flora and fauna through laws, and they can provide incentives and subsidies to farmers to encourage production methods towards sustainable land stewardship.

d. Funding Directed to Innovative Solutions

Technology is advancing at such a rapid pace, so directing funding and research into technological biodiversity loss prevention methods can be extremely beneficial.

Reforestation drones are an excellent example of using technology as an innovative solution. A UK company called Biocarbon Engineering came up with this potential idea. One of the main causes of biodiversity loss is habitat loss and fragmentation caused by deforestation, so a simple solution would be to plant more trees, however, tree planting by hand can be slow and labour intensive. Biocarbon Engineering came up with this solution to tackle this issue by first mapping the area of regeneration via the drone. Next, the drone will fly around two to three metres above the surface, and then shoot biodegradable seed pods into the soil which contain all the nutrients the tree needs to start growing. Biocarbon Engineering estimates this speeds up the planting of trees by 10 times and at 15% of the cost.

e. Substitute Products

Obtaining the resources to create the products we consume is severely damaging to biodiversity. Examples include, meat consumption, baked goods containing palm oil, mass produced-cheap clothing, and the use of plastic straws.

One of the simplest solutions to biodiversity loss is by substituting products with sustainable and environmentally-friendly replacements.

Lab-grown meat is an excellent example. The way in which we currently rely upon to produce meat is by rearing animals until they grow large enough to kill and consume. This practice requires huge amounts of land, particularly for beef production. Land use does not exclusively limit to raising cattle but is often dedicated to producing food for cows and other livestock. The simplest solution to this would be to encourage people to eat less meat. But this may take too long and it can be challenging to encourage people to change their lifestyle. A solution to this issue is therefore, “lab-grown meat” – also known as cultured meat. The meat is not a meat-substitute, but rather meat produced in a different way through a process known as intro-vitro cultivation with methods. Taken from medical research where scientists have figured out how to regenerate organic tissues, the technology is currently being worked on by many companies around the world in a race to get it to market. At the moment, the main barriers are cost and ensuring that the taste matches the original animal product.

Using microalgae as a palm oil alternative is another example of an excellent solution to replacing a harmful product that is heavily consumed globally.

f. Vertical Ocean Farming

Overfishing occurs when fish are caught from the ocean at a faster rate than the populations can replenish. Many other sea creatures, such as oysters, have been severely overfished and the practices to catch them now involve scraping the bottom of the ocean, catching all sorts of unintended fish, and destroying the habitat at the same time.

GreenWave, a charity which promotes the use of restorative vertical ocean farming was created to address this issue. Co-founder, Bren Smith, describes vertical ocean farming as an ‘underwater garden’ where they grow kelp, mussels, scallops and oysters, by mimicking the habitats that would have previously existed in the ocean.

Having these gardens remove the need to trawl the ocean floor with large nets and they can even provide food for other wildlife, such as fish and seals. An additional benefit about vertical ocean farming methods is that the seaweeds and shellfish require no fresh

water, feed or fertiliser, which dramatically reduces the overall environmental impact and keeps costs down.

g. Change Your Individual Choices

Biodiversity loss comes from our direct action, therefore, making conscious decisions to make sustainable and biodiversity-friendly choices is an important solution.

There are a number of solutions to biodiversity loss, but do not overlook small choices, such as bringing your own bag to the supermarket and using a metal straw to drink. If each individual makes a small change to their lifestyle, the collective impact of these changes would be monumental.

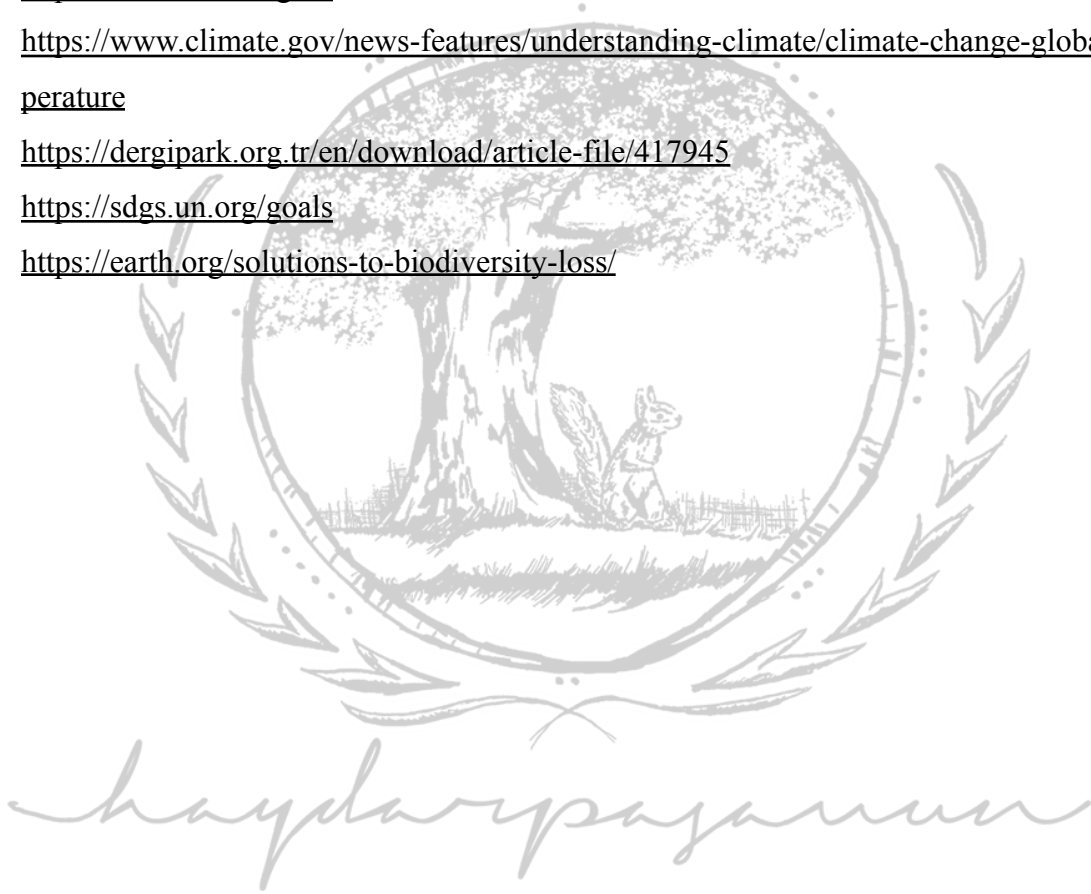
7. Further Reading

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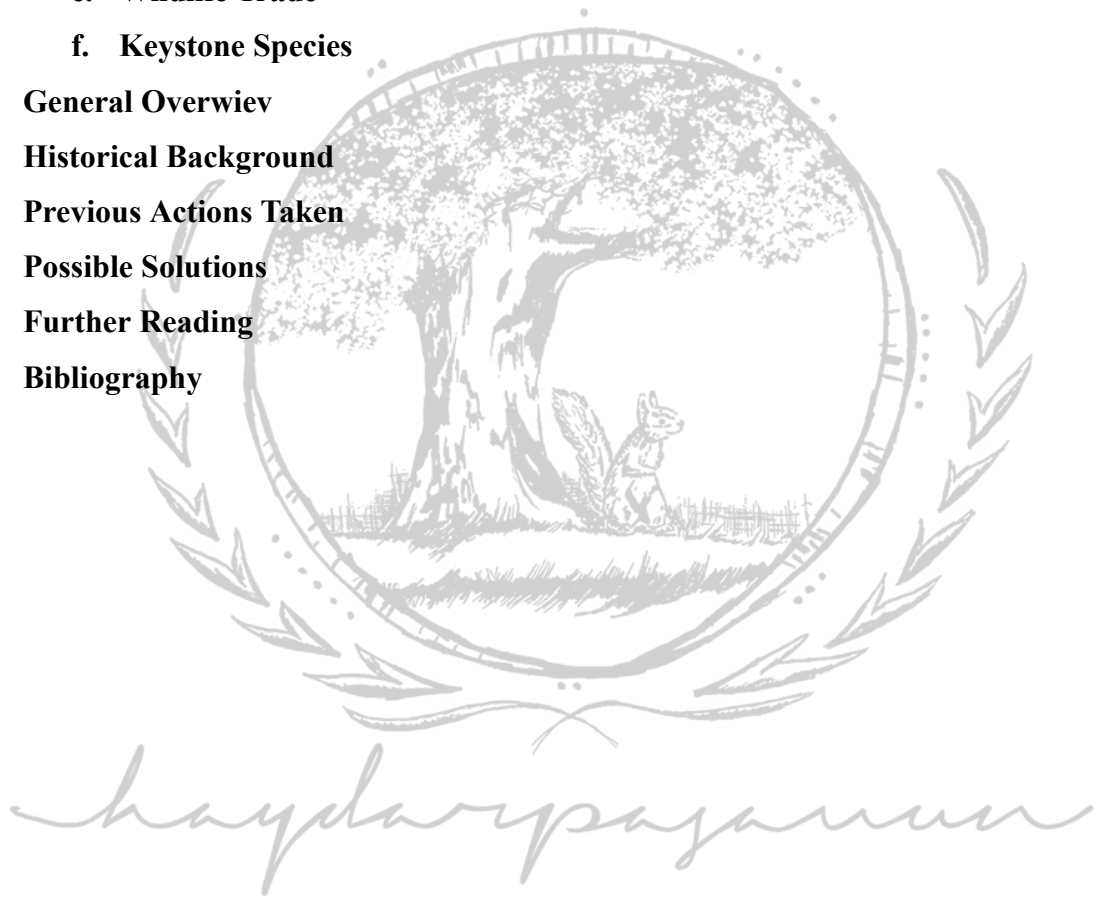
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Agenda Item 2: Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade and Trafficking



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1. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Wildlife trafficking is the illegal trade of protected specimens of wild animals and plants, either threatened with extinction or not threatened, but controlled in order to avoid exploitation incompatible with their survival. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) defines the protected specimens submitting their international trade to certain controls.

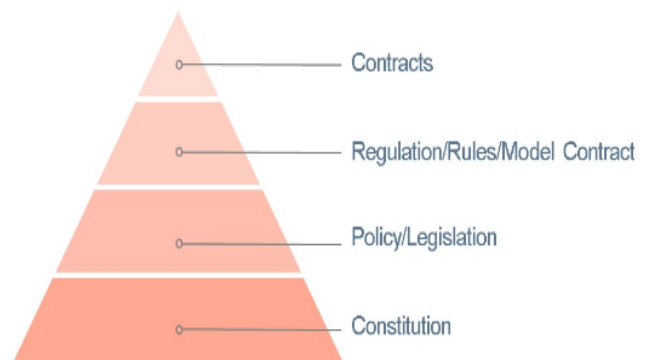
This illegal wildlife trade is diverse, including live animals, plants, and several different wildlife products derived from them (food products, exotic leather goods, wooden musical instruments, timber, tourist curios and medicines). Many wildlife species in trade are not endangered. However, the existence of an agreement to ensure the sustainability of the trade is important, in order to safeguard them for the future.

International organizations, such as UNODC and INTERPOL use the term 'wildlife and forest crime' to 'refer to the taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna and flora, including timber and other forest products, in contravention of national or international law. Broadly speaking, wildlife and forest crime is the illegal exploitation of the world's wild flora and fauna' (UNODC, 2019).

2. Key Terms

a. Legal Frameworks

Legal frameworks comprise a set of documents that include the constitution, legislation, regulations, and contracts. How these documents relate to one another, which has more force than the other, is often referred to as a legal hierarchy, as illustrated in the pyramid below.



b. Demand Reduction Campaigns

Demand reduction campaigns are aimed at educating current and potential consumers of illegal wildlife about the implications of their actions in purchasing these illegal products. If consumers who buy and consume wildlife products are not made aware of the suffering of animals and the negative impact on humans they are paying for, they will not be in a position to consider a changing their purchasing decisions.

c. Wildlife Forensics

Wildlife forensics is concerned with providing scientific evidence to inform investigations into crimes against wildlife, focusing on determining the identity of poached or illegally traded wildlife products, and addressing questions relating to the species, geographic origin, relatedness, individual identity and age of samples.

d. CITES Enforcement

CITES is the international environmental agreement that regulates wildlife trade in endangered species. Essentially, it is a multilateral trade agreement, as it is aimed at ensuring species' survival by prohibiting or regulating international wildlife trade and the commercial use of wildlife and its products.

e. Wildlife Trade

Wildlife Trade is a term which refers to the concern of non-domesticated animals or plants, usually taken away forcefully from their natural habitat or making these species raised under controlled conditions, either as living or dead animals or their body parts. It is an internationally noted crime which has harsh repercussions.

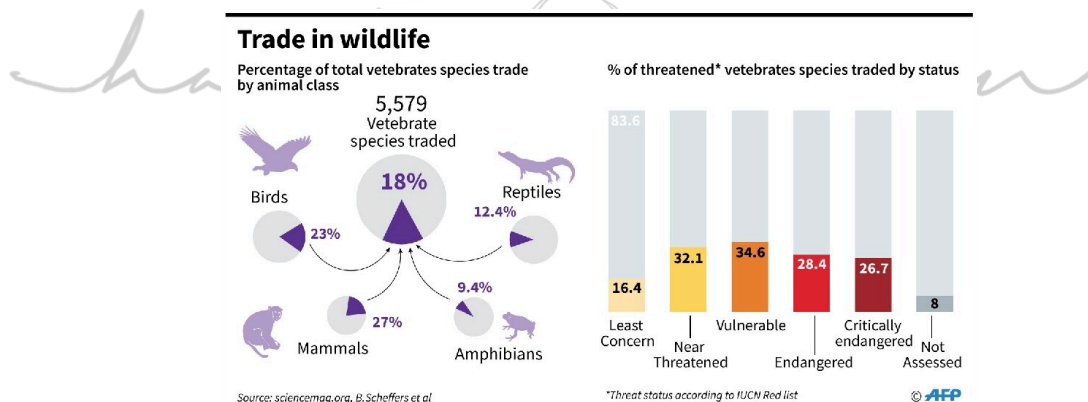


Table 1: Trade in Wildlife

f. Keystone Species

A keystone species is an organism that helps define an entire ecosystem. Without its keystone species, the ecosystem would be dramatically different or cease to exist altogether. Keystone species have low functional redundancy.

3. General Overview

Illegal Wildlife Trade

In order to understand the foundation of the issue, we need to understand what illegal wildlife trade is and how it works. There are various definitions made by WWF or any other environment conservation programmes. It is a significant threat to biodiversity, ecosystems, and the survival of many species which is defined as the unlawful taking, transporting, and selling of live animals and their body parts. The scope of IWT is broad, encompassing a wide range of flora and fauna, from exotic animals and birds to rare plants and their derivatives. This act may be done in different ways as explained. The scope of the crime is an important thing to consider when fighting it, analyzing how crucial the status is. It gives an estimation about the impact and creates a better framework to find more sustainable solutions.

The illegal wildlife trade affects millions of animals and plants annually, and popular species like pangolins, elephants, rhinos, tigers, and some species of turtles are among the most sought-after because of the market for their parts, skins, or live specimens. For furniture rosewood is commonly used. For art, decor, jewelry the most wanted product is ivory which is obtained from elephants. And many well known fashion brands use animal skins like reptiles, big cat skins and crocodiles. Agarwood, pangolin, rhino horn, great apes, caviar and bear bile are also commonly used products in many trade sectors. These mainly animal products are highly valuable which makes them a target for illegal traders. When looking at the data released from the sources, the most incidents happen on these following countries:

Country	Trafficking Instances
China	387
Thailand	150
UAE	117
Vietnam	108
Indonesia	97
Kenya	94
India	90
South Africa	88
Malaysia	80
USA	61

Table 2: Top Ten Countries by the Incidents from USAID

As can be detected from the table, mainly the countries in Asia and Africa are in serious danger. This is because of their diversity of animals and plants. Many targets of traders like reptiles, elephants or rhinos live there. And with the weak governments there, it is harder to reach a legal framework that is effective. Also with the ongoing issue like climate change, habitat loss and other threats, the illegal trade often exploits vulnerable species.

Drivers of Illegal Wildlife Trade

Understanding the various social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is essential for creating effective strategies aimed at addressing the underlying causes of wildlife trafficking. The following are some of the main drivers of IWT. First of all, there is a never-ending demand for exotic pets. For many industries like fashion, furniture, entertainment and food, reptiles, mammals and other animals are in need. These make the traders a huge profit, increasing the number of networks. Even medicinal drugs may require rare plants or animal products such as tiger bones, pangolin scales and rhino horns.

Another motivation behind is the economic status. The countries where most trafficking happens are mostly located in Africa and Southeast Asia, where yearly income are very low. This drives the local community to hunt the amount of diverse animals around them. The areas also have weak legal frameworks, so this high-rewarding but low risk livelihood is shown as a great way to earn their wages.

Environmental Consequences

Beyond its direct effects on individual species, the illegal wildlife trade has far-reaching environmental consequences. These include biodiversity loss, ecosystem disruption, and imbalances in predator-prey relationships.

Biodiversity Loss: Targeting specific species disturbs ecological balances within ecosystems; Keystone species, which are essential to the maintenance of ecosystem structure and function, may experience population declines, which can have a cascade effect on other species and ecological processes; Invasive Species Introduction: Illegally traded species introduced into new environments can become invasive, outcompeting native species and changing local ecosystems. This can have a negative impact on biodiversity overall.

Ecosystem Imbalances: Preying on particular species upsets ecological equilibrium within ecosystems. Keystone species, essential to the structure and functioning of ecosystems, could experience population decreases that have a domino effect on other species and ecological processes.

Introduction of Invasive Species: When illegally traded species are brought into new habitats, they have the potential to outcompete native species and change the ecosystems in the area. This can have disastrous impacts on native flora and fauna and upset delicate ecological connections. Every habitat has its own foodchain and equilibrium, but when these introductions occur, prey and predator relations may change. These may result in the extinction of species in a domino effect.

Public Health Risks: Illegal trafficking and trade affects not only the animals or plants, but the people living in the area. The risk of zoonotic diseases which are defined as diseases transmitted from animals to humans are increased by the illegal wildlife trade. Events such as the emergence of zoonotic diseases serve as evidence that the spread of pathogens from trafficked animals to humans can have serious consequences for public health. Many pandemics have happened throughout the history because of zoonotic diseases which resulting in death of thousand of humans.

Economical Consequences

The illegal trade and trafficking is mainly done because of its high economic profit. The main motivation is selling the products on black markets or other platforms. But these also have negative effects on the countries's economies where many profits are gained from the biodiversity and the agriculture sector.

Impact on Tourism and Ecotourism: Many places depend on wildlife for tourism and ecotourism. The existence of unique and diverse species draws tourists and boosts local economies. Illegal wildlife trade lessens the allure of these places by destroying biodiversity and depleting populations, which results in financial losses for the tourism industry.

Risks to Security and Stability: The illicit wildlife trade can be linked to larger security problems because it frequently involves organized crime networks. The money made from these operations can fuel conflict, instability, and corruption in areas where the illegal trade is common. This also causes diminished ecosystem services. Biodiversity provides essential ecosystem services such as pollination, water purification, and pest control. The degradation of ecosystems due to illegal wildlife trade can result in the loss of these services, impacting agriculture, water resources, and overall environmental health.

Economic Impact on Countries and Local Communities: When important species are depleted through illegal wildlife trading, local communities that rely on wildlife for sustainable livelihoods—such as through eco-friendly tourism or responsible resource management—may experience financial hardships. When it comes to the countries profits, many huge economic losses may happen. As explained before, the loss of tourist attraction may happen. Many countries like Kenya and South Africa are known for their safaris and tourism is one of the main economic sectors there. However the illegal trade depletes the iconoc species and diminishes the appeal of the common destinations; resulting in a decline in tourist numbers. This also makes the local hotels, restaurant, cafes and tour operators to lose their customers and can make significant financial setbacks for them. Illegal trade also means there are security issues in the area, which can also cause the reduction of tourists.

Biodiversity loss affects ecosystem services critical for agriculture, such as pollination and pest control. The decline of these services can result in reduced crop yields and increased reliance on costly alternatives, negatively impacting the agricultural sector. Additionally, water resource management is affected by the IWT. Water resources may be illegally used or polluted which are the most fundamental resource for any agricultural or economical actions. And most importantly, illegal traders in your country means you are invaded by traffickers. There are links between wildlife trafficking and other forms of organized crime. These illegal trades are often carried out by specialized networks rather than individuals. They are often involved in money laundering where the profits generated seek ways to legitimize these funds. Corruption and bribery are also common. Local law enforcement, customs and government agencies especially in low-income countries are involved passively in illegal trading. And last but not least parallel black markets that also have drugs, arms may be formed in these areas.

Overall, the illegal wildlife trade is a multi-dimensional event where both economic and ecological damages are done. The local business as well as the government funding may be severely damaged. Public health, biological diversity, water sources can be harmed in the way. These impacts may be thought on when solutions are formed.

4. Historical Development

Global attempts to address the growing threats to biodiversity and the unlawful exploitation of wild flora and animals have defined the history of the fight against the illegal wildlife trade and trafficking.

a. Initial Attempts:

The demand for exotic animals, furs, and merchandise has led to an awareness of the illegal wildlife trade that goes back centuries. Early conservation initiatives concentrated on using local laws to restrict trade and hunting.

b. The 1973 Establishment of CITES:

1973 saw the creation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The goal of CITES was to control global commerce in

endangered species and make sure that it did not pose a threat to their continued existence.

c. A Rise in International Attention (1980s–1990s):

Because of the poaching situation, there was a greater focus on wildlife trafficking on a global scale in the 1980s and 1990s, with rhinos being targeted for their horns and elephants for their ivory. As a result, international cooperation grew and CITES restrictions were more strictly enforced.

d. Resolutions of the UN General Assembly (2000s):

The UN General Assembly adopted resolutions emphasising how critical it is to confront the illegal wildlife trade. These resolutions stressed the necessity of a worldwide response that is coordinated in order to prevent wildlife trafficking.

e. Initiatives from Interpol and Others:

Upon identifying wildlife crime as a transnational organised crime, Interpol started taking proactive measures to combat it. To improve collaboration amongst law enforcement authorities, other programmes, such as the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCCWC), were established.

f. High-Level Gatherings in the 2010s:

Leaders from around the world gathered in high-level conferences, like the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade (2014), to talk about tactics to stop the illegal wildlife trade. There have been pledges to bolster law enforcement, toughen sanctions, and deal with the illegal wildlife product market.

g. Tech Awareness and Innovation (2010s–Present):

Technology has been used in wildlife conservation and anti-trafficking initiatives, such as satellite tracking and DNA analysis. The global movement against the illegal wildlife trafficking has also benefited from increased public awareness thanks to campaigns and documentaries.

h. Strategies' Evolution in the 2020s:

Community participation, addressing the underlying causes of wildlife crime, and advocating for sustainable alternatives for nearby communities are now all part of the efforts that have emerged. The emphasis is on comprehensive conservation strategies in addition to law enforcement.

Notwithstanding advancements, issues including corruption, shoddy legal systems, and the continuous market for animal items nonetheless exist. To maintain the preservation of Earth's biodiversity, governments, non-governmental organisations, law enforcement, and communities worldwide continue to collaborate in the battle against the illegal wildlife trade.

5. Previous Actions

Many actions have been taken previously by government and legislative bodies throughout the years in order to create sustainable solutions to the ongoing problem of illegal wildlife trade. Some are listed as below:

- CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora defines the protected specimens submitting their international trade to certain controls. It is one of the largest and oldest conservation and sustainable uses in existence. It is also known as the Washington Convention. The main goal of this convention is to create a multilateral treaty to protect the endangered species from international trade.

- ICCWC

International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime is a legislative body founded on the foundation of strengthening criminal justice systems to wildlife trade and trafficking. It also aims to provide coordinated support at national, regional and international level to combat these

crimes. They launch numerous actions such as “Operation Thunder 2023” to find the culprit of seizures and bring them to justice.

- **WTAP: EU Action Plan**

The European Union for decades has been trying to find active solutions to wildlife trafficking. In 2022, a new action plan called Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (WTAP) was issued by the European Commission. It has created a strong framework for European countries to step up their role in this global fight. With this new action plan, four priorities are present: prevention, enforcement, creating international partnerships and area of action. Another importance is this action plan initiates strengthening the legal EU framework for the matter.

- **African Elephant Summit 2015**

The Summit was organized with the leadership of African leaders. They have gathered to address the ongoingly escalating issue of wildlife trafficking, especially elephants. Elephants are valuable due to the ivory that they have. At the end a resolution was published, which resulted in the adoption of the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI). This initiative especially highlights the importance of social media and e-commerce as well as the usage of technology and artificial intelligence as a tool to fight wildlife crimes.

6. Possible Solutions

The illicit trade and trafficking of wildlife necessitates a multidimensional, cooperative strategy. It is imperative that laws be strengthened globally and that violators face harsh punishments. International cooperation is essential for promoting knowledge sharing and teamwork across nations. By including local populations in educational programmes, one can increase awareness and foster a sense of accountability for the preservation of wildlife. Campaigns to reduce demand are essential to influencing consumer preferences to steer clear of illicit animal items. Technological innovations that improve monitoring and help discover trafficking routes include data analytics and satellite tracking. On-the-ground initiatives are aided by funding conservation organisations, interacting with indigenous populations, and enhancing the capabilities of law enforcement organisations. Corporate social responsibility ought to be promoted, particularly in sectors of the economy where commerce is unintentionally facilitated. Investigation and

prosecution of wildlife crimes can be the primary focus of specialised teams within law enforcement organisations. Working together with internet platforms is essential to keeping an eye on and stopping the unlawful online trade in wildlife goods. To effectively tackle the illegal wildlife trade and trafficking, a comprehensive and cross-sectoral strategy involving governments, NGOs, communities, and the commercial sector is ultimately required.

7. Further Reading

- <https://aci.aero/airport-advocacy/environment/combating-wildlife-trafficking/>
- https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/nrgi_Legal-Framework.pdf
- <https://cites.org/eng>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Wildlife_Forensics_Brochure.pdf

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Haydar Pazan