

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6477

To require the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and proceeds, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 25, 2022

Ms. DEAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and proceeds, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Combating Wildlife  
5 Trafficking Financing and Proceeds Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) The 2017 report by the think tank, Global  
2       Financial Integrity, entitled “Transnational Crime  
3       and the Developing World”, determined that the an-  
4       nual global retail value of illegal wildlife trade is be-  
5       tween \$5 billion to \$23 billion, and when losses to  
6       ecosystem services are considered, the World Bank  
7       estimates the cost of environmental crime is between  
8       \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion, annually.

9           (2) Wildlife traffickers do not prefer particular  
10      species or commodities, but instead, according to the  
11      non-governmental organization, United for Wildlife,  
12      wildlife traffickers focus on the demand, availability,  
13      profit potential, and relatively low risk associated  
14      with acquiring, trading, and distributing wildlife  
15      globally.

16          (3) The trafficking of wildlife affects human  
17      health because of undetected spread of zoonotic dis-  
18      eases, scarcity in food resources, and the environ-  
19      mental results of degraded ecosystems.

20          (4) Also, the trafficking of illicit wildlife such as  
21      pangolins from Africa, macaws from Peru, turtles  
22      from the United States, and rosewood species smug-  
23      gled globally threatens our national security at home  
24      and American interests abroad because rogue orga-  
25      nizations, including transnational criminal organiza-

1 tions, use the proceeds to fund illegal and violent  
2 acts throughout the world, fueling corruption and  
3 benefiting from corrupt government officials, weak-  
4 ening the rule of law, and distorting commercial  
5 markets.

6 (5) Many of these supply chains are affected by  
7 Chinese activity, from the criminal organizations in-  
8 volved in the initial poaching of targeted commod-  
9 ities to the demand for goods produced from endan-  
10 gered plants and animals.

11 (6) The Organized Crime Drug Enforcement  
12 Task Forces conducted an investigation known as  
13 “Operation Apex” which identified extensive overlaps  
14 among drug trafficking organizations, professional  
15 money launderers, and wildlife trafficking syn-  
16 dicates.

17 (7) A study conducted by Federal entities that  
18 examined wildlife trafficking networks determined  
19 that—

20 (A) more than two-thirds of persons traf-  
21 ficking wildlife also trafficked narcotics;

22 (B) 10 percent of persons trafficking wild-  
23 life were doing so to finance terrorism; and

1 (C) a small percentage of persons traf-  
2 ficking wildlife were doing so to finance the pro-  
3 liferation of nuclear materials.

4 (8) Because wildlife trafficking is executed as  
5 part of a commodity-agnostic global enterprise, the  
6 United States and allies of the United States should  
7 focus efforts to reduce wildlife trafficking on cur-  
8 tailing the expansive networks that traffic wildlife  
9 and other goods and on bringing enforcement ac-  
10 tions against persons who launder the proceeds of  
11 those persons who traffic wildlife rather than pursue  
12 specific nations, groups, or commodities.

13 (9) In the past decade, the illicit wildlife trade  
14 has moved online, mainly to social media platforms,  
15 creating jurisdictional and technical challenges for  
16 law enforcement.

17 **SEC. 3. STUDY.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury  
19 and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the U.S.  
20 Fish and Wildlife Service, shall jointly, not later than 2  
21 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, conduct  
22 a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and  
23 proceeds and submit a report on such study to—

1           (1) the Committees on Financial Services and  
2       Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;  
3       and

4           (2) the Committees on Banking, Housing, and  
5       Urban Affairs and Energy and Natural Resources of  
6       the Senate.

7       (b) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study re-  
8       quired under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury  
9       and the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with such  
10      other Federal officials as the Secretaries determine appro-  
11      priate, including the Secretary of State, the Director of  
12      National Intelligence, the Director of Homeland Security  
13      Investigations, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of  
14      Defense.

15      (c) INPUT.—In conducting the study required under  
16      subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury and the Sec-  
17      retary of the Interior shall solicit and incorporate, where  
18      possible and as determined appropriate by the Secretaries,  
19      input from—

20           (1) domestic, foreign, and multilateral law en-  
21      forcement organizations,

22           (2) the intelligence community;

23           (3) wildlife advocates;

24           (4) experts in transnational organized crime,  
25      cyber-crime, and illicit finance; and

1           (5) nongovernmental organizations, academia,  
2           foundations, and other public and private entities.

3           (d) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report required  
4           under subsection (a) shall include—

5           (1) an overview of the criminal and complicit  
6           actors, including individuals, organizations, corrupt  
7           networks, and nations, that participate in wildlife  
8           trafficking from source to market, both proactively  
9           and permissively.

10          (2) an overview of the types of wildlife traf-  
11          ficked, for what purposes, and from where;

12          (3) an overview of the roles of professional  
13          money launderers, corporate and trust formation  
14          agents, kleptocrats, and other supply chain and fi-  
15          nancial facilitators with respect to wildlife traf-  
16          ficking;

17          (4) a discussion, based on a consideration of  
18          relevant prior studies and investigations, of the con-  
19          vergence of wildlife trafficking with other types of  
20          trafficking, including trafficking in persons, timber  
21          trafficking, and narcotics trafficking, including  
22          shared supply chains and financial facilitators;

23          (5) an overview of the national security implica-  
24          tions associated with wildlife trafficking and the fi-

1       nancing and proceeds of wildlife trafficking, includ-  
2       ing—

3               (A) potential threats to security, including  
4               corruption and State instability resulting from  
5               wildlife trafficking; and

6               (B) potential threats to public health, in-  
7               cluding global pandemic and ecosystem collapse;

8               (6) an examination of how anti-corruption ac-  
9               tivities might be leveraged with respect to mitigating  
10              the ways in which corrupt officials and politically ex-  
11              posed persons enable and engage in wildlife traf-  
12              ficking financing and proceeds;

13              (7) an examination of payments methods used  
14              to facilitate the trafficking of wildlife, including its  
15              financing and proceeds;

16              (8) an examination of how online platforms are  
17              used to facilitate trafficking and trafficking-related  
18              payments that—

19                      (A) describes the extent to which illicit  
20                      wildlife trade occurs online, including through  
21                      social media platforms, ecommerce sites, and  
22                      encrypted messaging and other surface web  
23                      platforms;

24                      (B) identifies payments- and proceeds-re-  
25                      lated reasons that different online platforms

1           may be chosen by persons trafficking in wildlife;  
2           and

3           (C) identifies online platforms that are  
4           used most for transactions and payments in-  
5           volving trafficking in wildlife;

6           (9) an examination of private-sector best prac-  
7           tices for combating wildlife trafficking financing and  
8           proceeds (including those found in the financial serv-  
9           ices industry), as well as any practices that have not  
10          had success combating wildlife trafficking financing  
11          and proceeds;

12          (10) a discussion of ways in which existing  
13          laws, multilateral agreements, and forums could be  
14          expanded or modified to combat wildlife trafficking  
15          financing and disrupt its proceeds;

16          (11) an identification of tools of international  
17          and national engagement, including partnerships  
18          with private sector and international financial insti-  
19          tutions, that could be coordinated to combat wildlife  
20          trafficking financing and disrupt its proceeds;

21          (12) recommendations about ways in which  
22          interdisciplinary collaboration across Federal agen-  
23          cies could be incentivized to maximize information  
24          and analysis from investigations into other types of  
25          trafficking and which may benefit from the informa-

1       tion and analysis gleaned from wildlife trafficking  
2       investigations;

3           (13) an examination of how data collection, col-  
4       laboration, analysis, and technology tools, including  
5       artificial intelligence and machine learning might be  
6       leveraged to combat wildlife trafficking and its pro-  
7       ceeds;

8           (14) a recommendation of whether Congress  
9       should renew the wildlife trafficking task force au-  
10      thorized in the END Act and sunseting in Decem-  
11      ber 2021; and

12          (15) an examination of how anti-corruption ac-  
13      tivities and practices could be included in existing  
14      Federal and international wildlife trafficking preven-  
15      tion and enforcement efforts.

16      (e) CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT.—The report re-  
17      quired under subsection (a) may be submitted in classified  
18      form but shall have an unclassified annex or executive  
19      summary.

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