

# Case Study 1: Wild animal trafficking

Pangolins are said to be the most trafficked mammal on earth. Trafficking is the process of illegally taking a living object from one country to another. Pangolins are unusual creatures that look like dragons. Up to 10,000 of them per year are illegally taken from their natural habitat in countries like Indonesia, to be served as an expensive delicacy in restaurants in Vietnam and China. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are concerned that Pangolins may face extinction, unless the illegal trade in them is stopped. They think that laws aren't strong enough.



It is estimated that 10,000 pangolins are trafficked illegally each year  
Source: CNN

Some scientists have argued that the source of the Covid-19 virus may be from a 'wet market' in China, where live Pangolins were sold (although there is disagreement amongst experts on this).

In November, the Vietnamese government issued a decree bumping pangolins up to the highest category of legal protection, banning any use, sale or possession of live or dead pangolin, according to Do Quang Tung, the government's director of CITES, the United Nations treaty that governs trade of endangered species of plants and animals.

The maximum penalty, he said, is \$25,000 or seven years in prison

## **China, US and Hong Kong imported pangolins after international ban EXCLUSIVE: Unearthed, Greenpeace UK's investigative journalism unit, has found that the commercial trade of pangolins continued beyond 2017**

The commercial trade of pangolins continued through 2017 and 2018 despite an international ban on the practice, with the US, Hong Kong and China all legally importing specimens of the highly endangered animal. In January 2017 an international ban on the commercial trade of pangolins entered force, in a global effort to protect the animals from being trafficked to extinction. But Unearthed, Greenpeace UK's investigative journalism unit, has found that commercial trade of pangolins continued beyond 2017.

### **Imports**

Data held by the international Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which regulates the global trade in wild animals including pangolins, reveals China and Hong Kong legally imported almost 13 tonnes of pangolin scales in 2017. The imports originated from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and are equivalent to more than 16,000 pangolins. In 2017 and 2018 the US legally imported 106 specimens for commercial purposes according to the CITES database, although the weight and number of animals is not recorded.

Pangolins are thought to be one of the most trafficked animals in the world, and their scales are highly prized as an ingredient in traditional medicine. The trade in wild animals, including pangolins, has been linked to the emergence of new diseases, including Covid-19.

### **Confusion**

The imports recorded for China and Hong Kong probably date back to pangolins captured and stockpiled before the 2017 ban, although data governing the trades is incomplete. Pre-2017 stockpiles could be legally sold for commercial purposes until last year, when the rules changed. Chinese authorities did not respond to a request for comment. There is less clarity on why the US imports occurred. Speaking to Unearthed, experts suggested they could refer to illegal imports seized by the US authorities and wrongly reported as legal imports on the CITES database. The database detailing seizures of illegal imports is not publicly available.

CITES said the US imports were not "on a commercial scale". US authorities did not respond to comment requests. Commenting on the findings, Greenpeace UK's chief scientists Doug Parr said: "It's depressing to think that cracks in the very treaty meant to stop the trade of endangered pangolins has allowed it to 'legally' carry on. This should be a wake-up call for the agencies and governments involved to curb demand for wildlife products altogether, leading to trade bans as soon as possible."

### **CITES Response**

In response to the findings, CITES insisted the Convention has "solid compliance mechanisms that can address inconsistencies that are deemed significant or worrisome".

It added it "takes time" for national regimes to transition from regulated trade of a product to a ban. "The CITES Secretariat is working hard with the range States, transit and destination countries every day to improve the legislation and strengthen controls to enforce the ban effectively," it said.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/china-us-hong-kong-imported-pangolins-after-international-ban-greenpeace-uk-561147>  
23 July 2020

# Case Study 2: Dumping in the sea

Southern Water was fined £90 million pounds for deliberately pouring sewage into the sea over a period of nearly six years. The judge said the water company had discharged between 16 and 21 billion litres of raw sewage into some of the most precious, delicate environments in the country. Southern Water had committed 168 previous offences and cautions but had ignored these and not altered its behaviour. The judge said the fine he imposed should be a deterrent to other companies.

Source: the Guardian July 2021



- Treatment works are only allowed to put sewage into waterways after wet weather and when they are close to capacity.
- The water industry says it will invest more than a billion pounds over five years to reduce discharges into rivers.
- Treatment works are allowed to release sewage into rivers and streams after extreme weather, such as torrential rain, and when they are operating close to full capacity.
- This protects properties from flooding and prevents sewage from backing up into streets and homes.
- The untreated sewage is normally screened and passed through storage tanks before it is dumped.
- Discharge permits issued by the Environment Agency specify the level of sewage each works has to treat before it can dump untreated sewage.

Source: BBC 12th April 2021

Kent has seen more sewage released into the sea off its coastline following heavy rain over the weekend just passed (October 2 and 3).

Southern Water, the company which serves much of the south east, has confirmed that a number of Combined Sewage Overflows (CSOs) have taken place along the Kent coast as a result of recent downpours

These releases are legal under environmental law, and are aimed at preventing sewage from backing up into homes by releasing a combination of recent rainwater and sewage into the sea.

A spokesperson for Southern Water said: "People know that this is happening because we are telling them - but it has always taken place.

"It's not something we choose to do, it's something we have to do to protect homes.

"If we didn't, it would back up through the network, manhole covers [would] blow off, and it would eventually start coming out through sinks, toilets and showers and so forth."

Source: Kent Live 5th October 2021

# Case Study 3: Electronic waste mismanagement

Ghana has the largest e-waste (electronic) waste dumpsite in the world and it is known as being one of the most toxic environments in the world. Each year 50 million tons of e-waste is thrown away, with much of it sent to Africa and Asia. 250,000 tons of electronic waste is sent from countries like the UK to Agbogbloshie, which is an area in Ghana's capital city Accra. At present, few countries have laws against this trade. 80,000 people live in a slum that is located around the e-waste dump. People work burning the old electronics in open fires to extract the metals. Many of the workers and those who live nearby experience significant health problems and 80% of children have dangerously high levels of lead in their blood.



The Burning of sheathed cables to recover copper at the Agbogbloshie e-waste landfill near the center of Accra, Ghana's capital city.

Source: Tempest December 2, 2020

Puckett condemned lobbying by the electronics manufacturing industry, which is attempting to create a loophole in the Basel convention to allow broken, low value electronic scrap to flow from Europe on the grounds that it will be "repaired" in developing countries. He urged the EU not to agree to the loophole.

"The answer to criminal activity is not legalising that activity but improving the enforcement to ensure the future health of Europe is not dependant on poisoning the rest of the world."

Jim Puckett, director of BAN, said the illegal shipments perpetuated an EU waste management regime "on the backs of the poor and vulnerable".

## How to recycle electronics

It is vital that you never throw old electronic gadgets away. Of course you can get rid of your old electronic devices, but never place them directly into your bin to be sent to landfill. By doing this, your old electronics may leak hazardous and toxic chemicals into the soil, thus contaminating the land. As a result, it is vital to dispose of electronics properly to ensure this doesn't happen.

For individuals, the law states "If you fail to comply with the waste electrical and electronic equipment ( WEEE ) regulations, you can be prosecuted and fined up to £5,000 at a magistrates' court, or get an unlimited fine from a Crown Court. You may sometimes get warning letters and formal cautions before a prosecution."

According to Gov.uk, televisions, laptops, tablets and mobile phones with screens must be disposed of carefully and safely. This is because some components inside the electronic items are hazardous – lead, mercury and other substances can leach from old monitors and circuit boards – which means you are putting potentially toxic materials into the ground which can negatively affect people's health as well as wildlife too.

Name:

## Sustainable Citizenship; What laws exist to protect the environment?

Case study:	Summarise the key points of the case study	To what extent was the existing laws effective to prevent this green crime?	What impact did this green crime have?
<b>Case Study 1: Wild Animal Trafficking</b>			
<b>Case Study 2: Dumping in the Sea</b>			
<b>Case Study 3: Electronic waste mismanagement</b>			



Name:

## Sustainable Citizenship; What laws exist to protect the environment?

Task: now you have looked at three case studies about Green Crime and discussed their impact as a class, it's time to gather together all of the arguments and look at whether laws and punishments for Green Crimes are adequate (good) enough.

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
Laws and punishments against Green Crime are good enough	Laws and punishments against Green Crime aren't sufficient