

Attitude, Assistance and Awareness

- in controlling trafficking in wildlife
and cultural objects

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Main argument and conclusion

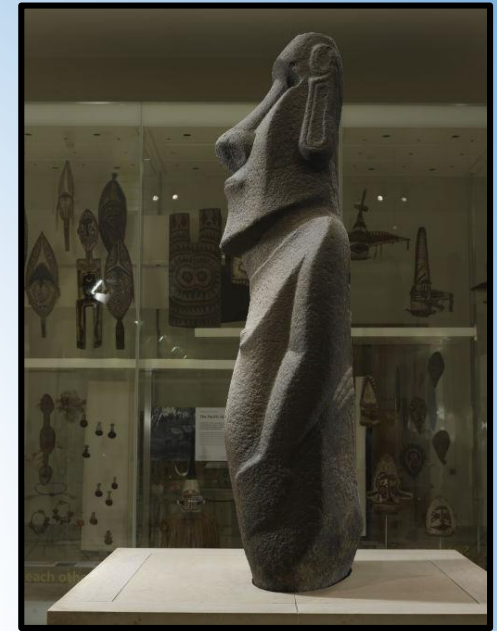
The countering of wildlife trafficking benefits from at least two conditions:

- 1) officers have become more **aware** of the characteristics and harmful consequences of the trade, and
- 2) Efficient collaboration and systems for handling suspected contraband ensure **tangible outcomes** in the form of seizures and punishment of offenders.

These factors serve to **motivate** officers and have strengthened the control of wildlife trafficking. The countering of illicit trade in cultural objects, does **not yet benefit** from such circumstances.

Criminalisation of trade 1/2

- Many antiquities were removed during periods of colonial rule or the '**grand tours**' that characterised much of the 19th century. Collecting was synonymous with wealth and sophistication.
- **Gradually**, the cultural pillaging of nations became **criminalized** (Kersel 2006).
- Today, most countries have placed their archaeological heritage under state control, making the **unlicensed excavation** or **export** of cultural heritage illegal (Brodie, 2003).



Credit: British Museum



François Sablet, En la tienda de antigüedades, 1788

Criminalisation of trade 2/2

The global **wildlife trade flourished** with the start of European colonialism and escalated in the early modern period.

As the negative impacts of hunting and trade in wildlife became apparent, trade in specific species was **gradually criminalised** during the 20th century.

CITES came into force in 1976 after international concern that many animal and plant species would become **extinct** through unregulated trade.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Distinct, yet comparable markets

- Both trades have **long cultural and historical roots**
- Cross-border in nature, the illicit trades are considered forms of '**transnational crime**' (Albrecht, 2011, p. 59).
- The criminalisation of the trade were **gradual processes** that ultimately led to the formation of national laws, and international and bilateral treaties.
- The illicitness is not a function of the wildlife or the object itself but of its **origins**.

Two grey markets

Materials and services that are inherently legal, but due to trade circumstances are illegal for parts of the trading system, can be described as parts of '**grey markets**' (Bichler et al., 2015).

Trade in cultural goods is one grey market where flows of licit and illicit objects are **intermixed**. The supposedly clean public trade is tainted 'grey' by the flow therein of illicit objects (Bowman, 2008; Brodie, 2011; Mackenzie, 2011).

The wildlife trade shares many of the same features.



Credit: Sydney Rae, Unsplash

Customs officers struggle to assess:

- The **authenticity** of cultural goods (Rasmussen, 2007; Runhovde, 2021)
- **Identify species** protected under CITES (Runhovde, 2015)
- Differentiate between and enforce regulations pertaining to captive-bred versus **wild-caught specimens** (Nijman & Shepherd, 2010)
- Verify the authenticity of **trade documents** (Sollund, 2013; Rosen & Smith, 2010; Warchol et al., 2003; Runhovde, 2015; Sollund, 2019)

Street-level bureaucrats



Individual officers wield considerable **discretion** in their selection of control objects, i.e. in choosing whom or what to stop or overlook (Côté-Boucher, 2016; Hörnqvist, 2006).

At on-site levels, customs officers may be considered ‘**street-level bureaucrats**’ (Lipsky, 2010) whose individual considerations of what is important in part determines what receives their attention.

Violations that are not considered important enough receive less **enthusiasm** and **priority** among officers (Granér & Kronkvist, 2014).

Finding 1:

A shift in focus

We know a lot more about CITES now than previously. We intercept it earlier. We pay more attention (...) We make more seizures. There has been a change in the organisation, CITES has been given more focus.

Cultural objects? That is not our priority. I can promise you that (. . .). I can't recall the last time I saw one.

I am certain I have opened a suitcase and not noticed cultural objects [in it], and therefore, Customs should raise awareness, so we keep it in mind to look.

Finding 2: Tangible indicators

There must be some intrinsic features that allow me to communicate this information and enforce it and work with. For example, what the archaeologists or art historians keep as information of the object doesn't help me at all because for us it sounds like abracadabra. We don't understand it. It's the same with CITES. If you start quoting an appendix 1 or appendix 2 parrot of that family or what it is called in Latin, well . . . No, what I need is the size and a picture.

Finding 3:

System for dealing with suspected contraband

When it comes to CITES, I have contacts in the Environment Agency who I call. They say, 'Send over a photo' and I receive an answer almost immediately: "no, this is nothing" or 'yes, this you must put aside'. That is how it should be with cultural heritage too.

Officers from the ground often tell that when they seize drugs, they get a premium, [but] when they seize cultural goods, they get a lot of headaches. Because they don't know what to do with it, where to go, who to ask. It becomes such a liability.

What we want are quick decisions. But with cultural objects, if I impound something, then perhaps next week is my week off. Or I only work evenings. Then I can't find anybody to take it further. Then I think, 'Why did I do this?' It is easy to let go when I know it is so difficult to get answers.

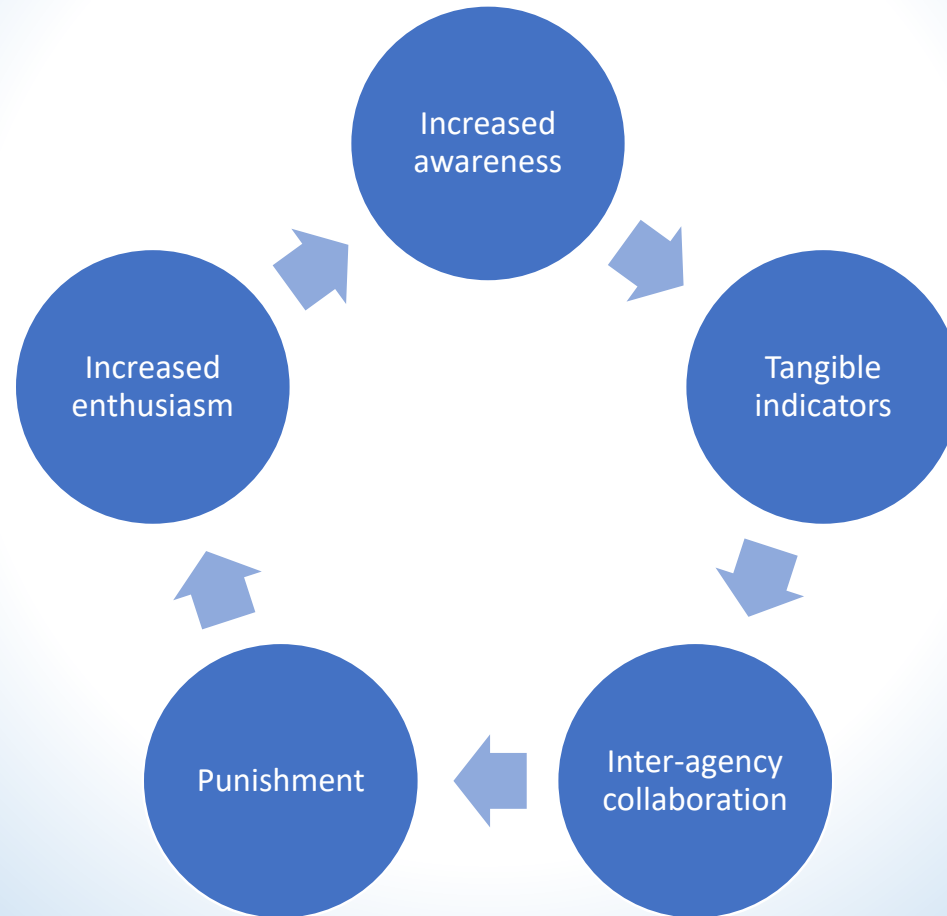
Finding 4:

Punishment as incentive

Now we are keener to write control reports. Because we see that there are consequences.

We have noticed that they have become stricter. Before, they often issued permits afterwards, after we had stopped something that lacked a permit. When we had put lots of work into withholding and seizing. But now they have stopped doing that. Now people are punished. It makes it easier for us when the rule owners follow their own rules.

A Self-Perpetuating Circle



Conclusion

For wildlife crime, officers see that their efforts matter in two ways:

1. By tackling crime that is understood to be serious and harmful,
2. By having tangible outcomes in the form of seizures and sanctions.

Punitive measures serve to motivate customs officers and encourage ***their*** compliance with their responsibility to enforce the law.

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Thank you!

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