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DATE:	15 June 2017
SERIAL:	A-M-15062017
COUNTRIES:	Global

ALERT ---- MARITIME

SUBJECT: **Timber as a Concealment Method for Smuggling Protected Fauna**

DATA: Wildlife traffickers regularly attempt to smuggle illegal fauna (animal) products in shipments of timber and articles of wood, in particular between Africa and Asia, using a variety of different specific concealment tactics and techniques.

Modus Operandi:

According to open source and confidential reporting, traffickers illegally transport substantial quantities of endangered animal products in shipments of timber and wood products. In many cases, these shipments are correctly declared to contain timber or articles of wood (HS code heading 44xx), with the illegal wildlife products hidden with or at times physically within the timber or wood. In other cases, illegal shipments concealed with timber have been falsely declared to contain goods other than timber or wildlife. Timber appears to be used particularly to conceal elephant ivory, based on anecdotal reporting.

Examples, pictured below, of specific concealment methods include:

- Elephant ivory concealed under timber / sawn logs.
- Pangolin scales, elephant ivory, and cheetah skulls and bones concealed in large individual logs which had been hollowed out and resealed with wax.
- Elephant ivory concealed within a box, which itself was hidden under sawn timber.
- Elephant ivory concealed within bags, with the bags packed along with sawn timber.

Geography:

Use of timber to conceal illegal wildlife products should be considered a global problem, although with particular vulnerability to maritime shipping routes between Africa (west, east, and south) and Asia (southeast and east).

Red Flags:

Highest risk of this tactic is likely to be at ports and container depots where port authority oversight is weak, and evidence or perception of corruption is higher.

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PHOTO CREDIT : Brent Stirton

Wildlife Product:
Elephant Ivory

Declared Routing:
Togo - Vietnam

Declared as:
Cashew Nuts

Concealment:
**Packed in container with timber /
sawn logs**

Place of Discovery:
Togo

Method of Discovery:
Tip to Customs Authority, X-Ray



PHOTO CREDIT:
Cambodia Customs

Wildlife Product:
**Elephant ivory, Pangolin scales, Cheetah
skulls/bones,**

Declared Routing:
Africa - China

Declared as:
Timber

Concealment:
**Concealed within hollowed-out logs by a
wax-like substance**

Place of Discovery:
Cambodia

Method of Discovery:
Tip to Customs

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PHOTO CREDIT: Elizabeth John / TRAFFIC

Wildlife Product: **Elephant Ivory**
 Declared Routing: **Togo - China**
 Declared as: **Sawn timber**
 Concealment: **Concealed within a box, Box packed with sawn timber**
 Place of Discovery: **Malaysia**
 Method of Discovery: **Customs inspection based on risk profiling / intelligence analysis, X-Ray**



PHOTO CREDIT: Hong Kong Customs

Wildlife Product: **Elephant Ivory**
 Declared Routing: **Togo - Hong Kong**
 Declared as: **Sawn timber**
 Concealment: **Concealed within bags, Bags packed with timber**
 Place of Discovery: **Hong Kong**
 Method of Discovery: **Customs inspection based on risk profiling / intelligence analysis**

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ACTIONS: This alert is assessed as most relevant to the general categories of action checked below.
All decisions and actions informed by this alert are the sole responsibility of the receiving organization

- Conduct reasonable checks on shipments fitting a similar profile
- Execute / enhance internal controls or procedures relevant to this information
- Report / share information to customs / law enforcement
- Information has potential security implications for company employees

SOURCE: This advisory is based on UfW Transport Taskforce analysis of recent enforcement actions as well as open source and confidential reporting from partners. We have *high* confidence in the reliability and validity of this information, with the following caveat: the data upon which this analysis is based is exclusively anecdotal and is therefore inherently limited to available information and likely incomplete.

PRIORITIES: This alert is related to the following Transport Taskforce information sharing priorities (checked):

- Wildlife trafficker networks, behavior, intentions, and operational tactics and strategy
- Indicators of suspicious or higher risk activity ('red flags') related to wildlife trafficking
- Data potentially reportable to or shareable with law enforcement
- Security/physical risks and vulnerabilities to transport company operations, facilities, or staff
- Unintentional facilitation of illegal wildlife demand or retail trade

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CONTACT: For questions or additional data/analysis relevant to this alert, or to report suspicious shipments or indicators of wildlife trafficking activity, please contact the UfW Transport Taskforce:
transport@unitedforwildlife.org

END