

## High-level Seminar On Wildlife Crime Enforcement in Lucknow being organised Uttar Pradesh Law Enforcement Agencies in collaboration with Wildlife SOS and One Voice.

*In a bid to devise a strategy to effectively combat wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trafficking, the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, Police in collaboration with Wildlife SOS and One Voice Association, France are conducting a high level Seminar on "Wildlife Crime Enforcement" on the 26th September, 2007 from 10 a.m onwards at Hotel Gomti, Lucknow.*

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Uttar Pradesh by way of sharing its state borders with over seven states and one international border is often exploited by Wildlife Crime Traffickers who use these borders to smuggle wildlife products. Internationally, Wildlife trade ranks second only to Narcotics trade in the world as a 10 Billion US\$ Dollar illegal organized crime industry. The international wildlife trade has resulted in around 650 species being pushed towards extinction globally. In India, sadly Uttar Pradesh is the centre of this nefarious trade in wild animals and birds.

Crime analysis has increasingly shown that narcotics & wildlife crime often go hand in hand. The same offenders deal in drugs, wildlife products and sometimes even illegal weapons!

Amongst other things, illicit trade in wildlife in Uttar Pradesh goes on in Tiger Parts (Tiger Penis, Claws, Bones, Skin), Bear (Gall Bladder, Live Cub Trade for Paw Soup, Claws), Leopards (Skin and Claws), Otter (Skin), Mongoose (Hair for Brushes), Crocodile (Skin for leather products), Turtle (For Live Pet Trade and Meat), Pangolin (Scales for Medicine and Meat), Snake (Skin and for Venom) and Ivory.

The districts in Uttar Pradesh sensitive with regard to wildlife conservation which are targeted by poachers include Agra, Mathura, Saharanpur, Bijnaur, Moradabad, Bareilly, Kheeri, Pilibhit Bahraich, Shrawasti, Balrampur, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Azamgarh among others etc.

In a bid to devise a strategy to effectively combat wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trafficking, the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department is conducting a high level Seminar on 'Wildlife Crime Enforcement' on the 26th September, 2007 from 10 a.m onwards at Hotel Gomti, Lucknow.

The Seminar is being organized by the PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden - Mr. D.N.S Suman, IFS in collaboration with Wildlife S.O.S and One Voice Association-France, NGOs involved in Wildlife protection and conservation . The Director General Police - Mr. Vikram Singh has been exceptionally supportive and encouraging of this seminar which will be the first ever one of its kind in Uttar Pradesh where Senior Police & Forest Officers will present case studies on Wildlife offences. The Honourable Minister of State (Independent Charge) Forests - Mr. Fateh Bahadur Singh will inaugurate the seminar.

Mr. Vikram Singh, IPS, DGP (Uttar Pradesh) who has himself been responsible for cracking several successful wildlife crime cases. His encouragement and vast experience would be of aid in the creation and conceptualization of a 'Strategic Plan' that would aid in combating instances of Wildlife Crime in the region.

Keynote speaker Mr. D.N.S Suman, IFS, PCCF (Wildlife) & CWLW has recently been nominated to the Advisory Board - National Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Government of India and is one of only three Chief Wildlife Wardens from across India who has been selected into the coveted body (the other two CWLWs belonging to Madhya Pradesh and Manipur). Mr.Suman has also held Director of Dudhwa National Park in the past.

The seminar aims to provide a discussion platform for law enforcement agencies in tackling wildlife crime and conviction of wildlife criminals and will hopefully be the beginning of networking system amongst Forest and Police officers to help combat wildlife crime in U.P. which is rich in biodiversity boasting of 24 sanctuaries and 1 National Park.

Recent seizures of wild animal skins in Gorakhpur and subsequent cross investigations of arrested people have revealed that the wild animals are killed from the jungles across India and are transported through Uttar Pradesh over to Nepal and South East Asian Countries where they are sheltered and hidden and brought back to India by traders when they receive a demand by the traders in the country.

Copies of Wildlife Law Book Manuals, produced by Wildlife S.O.S would be distributed at the seminar followed by presentations and discussions on the different aspects of Indian Wildlife Laws by Mr. S.N Vashishth, Supreme Court Advocate.

This seminar is the first in the series of workshops that would be held in different districts of Uttar Pradesh to train the frontline staff protecting National Parks and Sanctuaries across the state. These workshops would be organized as collaborative effort of Uttar Pradesh Forest and Police Departments and Wildlife S.O.S in which manuals on 'Wildlife Crime' in vernacular language would be distributed to facilitate identification and detection of wildlife crime and subsequently aiding effective conviction of wildlife criminals.

Wildlife S.O.S gathers intelligence on Wildlife Crime and Trade through its Intelligence and Surveillance Unit called Forestwatch, run with support from One Voice Association, France. Forestwatch works through its system of informers across 8 states of India and provides the gathered intelligence to law enforcement agencies to carry out seizures. The confiscated and rescued animals are taken to Rescue Centres.

In few of the major seizures performed over the past year by Law Enforcement Agencies in Uttar Pradesh with the aid of intelligence gathered Wildlife S.O.S, 8 bear cubs were rescued from Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Baliya and Varanasi Districts of Uttar Pradesh, leopard skin was recently seized in Gorakhpur and over 36,000 specimens of dead marine animals was confiscated in Agra from Biological Specimen Supplier which revealed the unfortunate existence of a highly organised and structured large-scale trade of marine products from the coastal states of Southern India to cities in Uttar Pradesh before making their way for the International markets.

Through this seminar, we aim to bring together Law Enforcement agencies and Intelligence-gathering skills of NGO's like Wildlife SOS to effectively detect, control and prevent instances of Wildlife crime in the interest of India's precious wild heritage.

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**Wildlife S.O.S** is an Indian Non-Governmental organisation working in the field of Wildlife rescue and Rehabilitation since 1995. Our main project is the rescue and rehabilitation of 'dancing bears', which are Indian Sloth Bears exploited by a gypsy tribe, called Kalandars for street entertainment purposes. In collaboration with the State Forest Departments, Wildlife S.O.S runs the World's largest Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre for Sloth Bears in Agra along with 3 other centres in Bhopal, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Working in tandem with the government law enforcement agencies, including state forest departments, Wildlife S.O.S has rescued around 400 Sloth bears from leading miserable lives with Kalandars and with the recent extension to the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, we hope to eradicate the profession of 'bear dancing' by rescuing the remaining around 500 bears off the Indian streets and rehabilitating the bear dancers as well, so that they and their generations do not revert to 'dancing or poaching bears' ever again. Join hands with us in giving both man and animal a life of Dignity and Freedom!!! The Bear Rescue & Kalendar Rehabilitation Programs of Wildlife S.O.S are primarily funded by International Animal Rescue. Other international partners are Free the Bears Fund Inc - Australia, Humane Society International - Australia and One Voice Association, France.

For more, visit our website, [www.wildlifesos.org](http://www.wildlifesos.org)

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You can also visit [www.wildlifesos.org](http://www.wildlifesos.org) for more information.