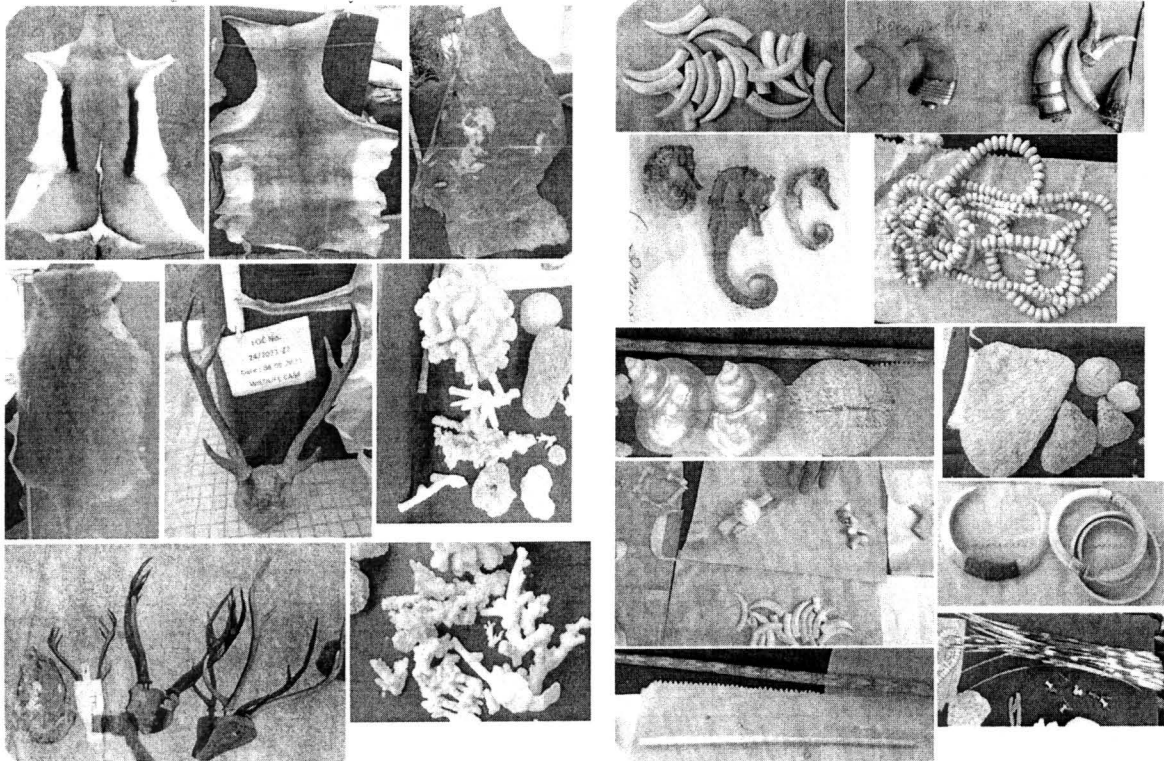




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# OPERATION WILDNET-IV REPORT

WCCB's Countrywide Wildlife Enforcement Operation



WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL BUREAU  
IIND FLOOR, TRIKOOT-I, BHIKAJICAMA PLACE, NEW DELHI-110066

**Report on Wildlife Crime Control Bureau's "OPERATION WILDNET-IV"**

**From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

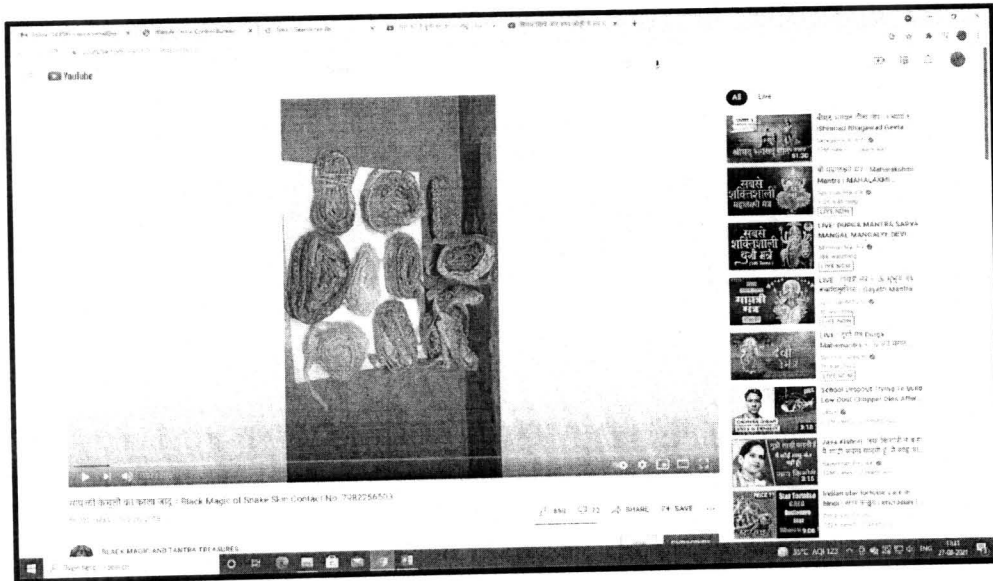
**INTRODUCTION**

The internet has become the world's largest marketplace, a key platform for commerce that is increasingly happening between buyers and sellers located in different countries, thereby driving international trade. Largely unregulated, anonymous, open 24 hours a day and virtually unlimited in reach, it offers endless opportunities for criminal activities, among them a flourishing illegal trade in protected wildlife. The Internet offers access to a pool of potential wildlife buyers that is far larger than the traditional market places.

Internet chat rooms have become the latest hotspot for clandestine trade in wildlife articles. Websites allow buyers and sellers to communicate through encrypted messages, view encrypted photos & encrypted videos of exotic and indigenous animals, decide a price and even complete the transaction online, before the consignment is dispatched. Trade of any native Indian species is illegal and falls under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. However, species protected under Indian laws may not be protected internationally and once the consignment crosses borders it may become a product which can be traded validly in the country concerned as per their local law. Traders use their knowledge of country specific local laws regarding wildlife protection. They evade attention of law enforcement agencies by using animal's code names.

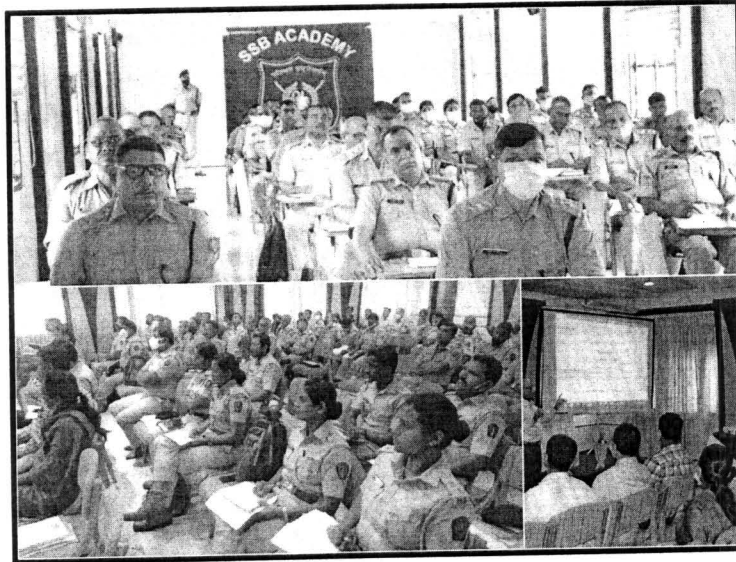
Considering the increasing threat of online wildlife trade, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau envisaged a multispecies enforcement operation, code named as "Operation WILDNET" in May 2017, "Operation WILDNET-II" in September 2019 and "Operation WILDNET-III" from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to drag the attention of the enforcement agencies towards growing online wildlife crime, resulting in registration of criminal cases against accused involved in online wildlife illegal trade. A huge number of e-commerce sites, online trade portals and social media platforms were identified, which were being used for online wildlife trade. Based on analysis of outcome of above operations, three meetings with representatives of online trade

(Indian Cobra, Rat snake, Common Krait, Wolf Snake etc.), Hare, Monitor lizard, Frog as well as articles extracted from wild protected species like Elephant Ivory, Leopard Skins, Pangolin Scales, Turtle carapaces, Deer Antlers, Big Cats Claws/Bones, Bear Biles, Hatha Jodi, Mongoose Hair Brushes, Walrus Tusk, Sea fans and Ambergris were found being traded online. Based on the actionable inputs extracted from open intelligence sources and information available from offers made through online posts with respect to wildlife trade, 43 criminal cases registered resulting in the arrest of 98 offenders and seizure of 5.2 Kgs Tiger Bones, 4 Tiger Claws, 30 Tiger Whiskers, 5 leopard Skins, 11 Leopard Claws, 143 Leopard Bones, 16.1 Kgs Elephant Tusks, 86 Kgs scrap Ivory handicrafts, 22 carved Ivory articles, 2 live Pangolin and 9.6 Kgs Pangolin Scales, 01 Walrus Tusk, 11 live Turtles, 1104 live Alexandrine Parakeets, 25 live Snakes, 1190 Sea Fans and 26.4 Kgs Ambergris.



During the operation, a nationwide illegal network of Ivory traders operating online through Facebook was busted by the Bureau. WCCB penetrated the closed Facebook group pages of ivory traders namely “South India Antique”, “Classic Antique”, “Sham Antique”, “Vicky Antiques – Antiquity at Export Antiques” and extracted the details of illegal network members and shared with the Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan State Forest Departments. On 07.08.2021, a joint operation was conducted by WCCB and Tamilnadu Forest Department at Poothapandy, Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu resulting in the seizure of huge cache of carved ivory articles and arrest of 3 accused. The Ivory had been carved in Kolkatta, West Bengal. In a subsequent raid in Bengaluru, Karnataka on 08.08.2021, again a

WCCB also conducted 25 sensitization programs including 17 online programs on issues related to wildlife crime including online illegal wildlife trade and other issues in wildlife conservation, identification, concealment methods for Central Industrial Security Force, Custom, Police, Forest, Coastal Police, Sashastra Seema Bal, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, WCCB volunteers, wildlife enthusiasts, media persons and faculty members as well as students of educational institutes. During these sensitization programmes, 1394 stakeholders were sensitized on issues related to illegal online wildlife activities and methods to detect activities related to online wildlife trade.



02 awareness programs were conducted for representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and members of local communities living around Balaghat Tiger Reserve and Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on issues related to wildlife conservation, increasing online wildlife trade and its ill effects on biodiversity and how to fight against it. 109 PRI representatives and community members living in/around the protected areas participated in the programs.



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