

Testimony of Kate Wall
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Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
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Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on the FY2020 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations Act. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) has 17 offices globally and works in more than 40 countries around the world. IFAW takes a holistic approach to innovating solutions for tough conservation challenges like conflicts between humans and wildlife, and illegal wildlife trafficking. Recognizing the unbreakable link between animals and human wellbeing, we support and empower communities to coexist with and value native wildlife and help those communities develop tools to protect their wild heritage. IFAW appreciates this Subcommittee's support in the current fiscal year (FY2019) in providing funding for many important conservation programs, and requests your continued support for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity Programs (\$300 million), the USAID sustainable landscapes programs (\$135 million), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (\$139.6 million), and the U.S. State Department and USAID combating wildlife trafficking programs (\$100.7 million) in the FY2020 SFOPS Appropriations Bill.

It is more crucial than ever to prioritize environmental protection and conservation efforts. Wildlife and wild lands are in peril around the world. Climate change, habitat destruction, and the Earth's sixth mass extinction event threaten wildlife, ecosystems, and the very fabric of this planet we call home. Trafficking in wildlife and wildlife parts continue to push species to the brink. Scientists warn that species are disappearing so fast that evolution cannot keep up. However, at IFAW we see reasons for hope. If we invest wisely now, we can make inroads against these pernicious threats and preserve healthy ecosystems and wildlife populations for ourselves and for generations to come.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity Programs support conservation efforts in more than 50 countries in partnership with foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, and local communities. These diverse and wide-ranging programs tackle direct threats to wildlife and ecosystems, such as habitat loss, resource degradation, and species conservation. They also address underlying issues that lead to the loss of biodiversity, including promoting peace and stability, health and human well-being, and improved livelihoods. Biodiversity loss feeds food insecurity and poverty, and can contribute to political unrest. Illegal poaching fuels criminal enterprises around the world. USAID Biodiversity Programs protect not only our natural ecosystems and wildlife but are critical to our national security interests, economic prosperity, and global stability. IFAW requests \$300M in FY2020 to fund these important programs.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an independent international financial facility made up of 183 countries private companies, and non-governmental organizations. The GEF provides grants to address global environmental issues, including wildlife trafficking, habitat and landscape preservation, and climate change adaptation. These programs focus on innovative

projects in developing countries that provide real impact, improve sustainability, and protect our shared global environment. All GEF projects are closely monitored and evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness; overall, the GEF leverages more than five dollars for every one dollar invested by private partners and donor countries. The U.S. strongly influences GEF strategies and programming, and GEF projects support many U.S. security and economic priorities. IFAW requests \$139.6 million in FY2020 for ongoing support of the GEF.

USAID Sustainable Landscapes Programs promote sustainable land use, reducing deforestation, strengthening environmental resilience, protecting waters, and conserving biodiversity. Programs focus on target states and regions where degradation is rampant. USAID sustainable landscapes programs have leveraged more than \$500 million in investments and partnered with companies with more than \$4 trillion in global sales since 2012 in order to reduce deforestation and forest degradation around the world.ⁱ IFAW requests \$135 million to fund the USAID sustainable landscapes programs in FY2020.

U.S. Department of State and USAID Wildlife Trafficking Programs support ongoing efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade. The illicit trade in wildlife and wildlife parts and products remains the fourth most lucrative criminal industry worldwide. Sophisticated multinational criminal syndicates generate an estimated \$8-10 billion annually or more from wildlife trafficking. Evidence has demonstrated a link between traffickers in wildlife and other criminal enterprises, including illegal arms, drugs, and even terrorist activities. Therefore, disrupting wildlife trafficking networks can shut down criminal endeavors that threaten not only imperiled wildlife, but also national security and global stability. The US remains one of the world's largest illegal markets for wildlife and wildlife products. Furthermore, our leadership within the global community is a key driver in persuading other nations around the globe to invest in protecting endangered wildlife and combat poaching and trafficking. State Department/USAID efforts to combat wildlife trafficking focus on fighting poaching, improving global enforcement and prosecution, disrupting networks, and reducing consumer demand for wildlife products. This program is critical both to domestic and international conservation efforts and to US security. IFAW requests \$100.7 million to fund the State Department/USAID wildlife trafficking reduction programs in FY2020.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to share IFAW's priority requests to promote conservation in the FY2020 Interior, the Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Wildlife and their habitats are more than our national heritage, they are essential to human health and happiness. We appreciate the continued support of this Subcommittee for conservation efforts globally and within the United States. With your support, we look forward to a bright and healthy future for future generations Americans and wildlife lovers around the world. Thank you.

ⁱ <https://www.usaid.gov/climate/sustainable-landscapes>