

Testimony of Kate Wall
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Before the House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
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Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on the FY2021 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations Act. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) has 15 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 (FY2020) in providing funding for many important conservation programs, and requests your continued support for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity Programs (\$330 million), the USAID sustainable landscapes programs (\$140 million), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (\$139.5 million), and the U.S. State Department and USAID combating wildlife trafficking programs (\$110.6 million) in the FY2021 SFOPS Appropriations Bill.

This last year has brought ever more disturbing news about the state of our natural world. Trafficking in wildlife and wildlife parts remained the fourth most lucrative criminal enterprise worldwide with an estimated annual revenue of \$20 billion—add in illegal logging and fishing, and that number skyrockets to \$1 trillion or more.ⁱ Twenty-nineteen was the second hottest year on record;ⁱⁱ in May, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a report warning that one million species are at risk of extinction due to human activities;ⁱⁱⁱ changing climate conditions wreaked havoc on Australia in the form of catastrophic wildfires; our ocean temperatures rose at record-setting rates;^{iv} and a novel coronavirus emerged from wildlife markets in China to threaten global health.^v

Given the grim challenges we face, IFAW respectfully asks this Subcommittee to exert its leadership in order to reverse these shocking trends. A number of programs that have a pivotal role in addressing our natural crises fall within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, and U.S. action remains a key driver in convincing nations around the globe to invest in conservation.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity Programs support conservation efforts around the world 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. More than that, they address underlying issues that lead to the loss of biodiversity, including promoting peace and stability, health and human well-being, improved livelihoods, and gender equality. Biodiversity loss feeds food insecurity and poverty, and can contribute to political unrest. Illegal poaching fuels criminal enterprises around the world, and trade in wildlife has been linked to diseases, including COVID-19.^{vi} USAID Biodiversity Programs protect not only our natural ecosystems and wildlife but are

critical to our national security interests, economic prosperity, global stability, and global health. IFAW requests \$330 million in FY21 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 \$139.5 million in FY21 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 land 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.^{vii} IFAW requests \$140 million to fund the USAID sustainable landscapes programs in FY21.

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 \$20 billion or more annually from wildlife trafficking. Evidence has demonstrated a link between trafficking 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 \$110.6 million to fund the State Department/USAID wildlife trafficking reduction programs in FY21.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to share IFAW's priority requests to promote conservation in the FY21 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs 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 many generations of Americans and wildlife lovers around the world. Thank you.

ⁱ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/482771571323560234/WBGReport1017Digital.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2019-was-2nd-hottest-year-on-record-for-earth-say-noaa-nasa>

ⁱⁱⁱ IPBES, *Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Summary for Policymakers*. 2019. Available at https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/inline/files/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf

^{iv} Cheng, L., and Coauthors, 2020: Record-setting ocean warmth continued in 2019. *Adv. Atmos. Sci.*, 37(2), 137–142, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00376-020-9283-7>.

^v <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/health/coronavirus-animals-markets.html>

^{vi} Id.

^{vii} <https://www.usaid.gov/climate/sustainable-landscapes>