

How Aviation Can Help Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean



Wildlife Trafficking in Latin America

Latin America is home to [more than 40% of the world's biodiversity](#), with thousands of endemic and endangered species. The demand for high value species and their parts is strong; scarlet macaws, totoaba fish, sea turtles and jaguars are being sold as pets, medicines and ornaments, both within the Americas and around the world, by organized criminal networks.

Wildlife traffickers exploit the increasing connectivity of international and interregional aviation – targeting global and domestic hubs and flight routes between source and demand countries. Smaller airports and airlines are also at risk, as traffickers fly illicit wildlife products from areas near their natural habitats to far-reaching destinations.



The ROUTES Partnership

The [USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species \(ROUTES\) Partnership](#) brings together air transport and logistics companies, government agencies, development groups, law enforcement, conservation organizations, academia, and donors to disrupt wildlife trafficking in air transport. At the heart of ROUTES is a core group of partners collaborating with the U.S. Government and the transport sector, that includes Airports Council International (ACI), the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), TRAFFIC and WWF.

The ROUTES Partnership is seeking to engage with key air transport and relevant stakeholders in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, to develop a long-term strategy to tackle wildlife trafficking in air transport supply chains.

Examples of Risks of Wildlife Trafficking to Air Transport



Reputational: companies associated with wildlife trafficking often receive negative publicity through media reports.



Business: as a result of wildlife loss in destination countries, companies may experience a decline in passengers traveling for the purpose of wildlife tourism.



Public health: the hazards associated with wildlife trafficking span from physical harm from improper handling of wildlife to the transmission of diseases from wildlife to people*.

* Illegal wildlife trade brings wild animals into close contact with other animals and humans, increasing the risk of zoonotic disease spillover. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the devastating impacts of the spread of disease from animals to humans: in 2020 alone, it has cost airports and airlines over \$500 USD billion in revenue.

What you can do

Air-based wildlife trafficking is increasing throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Tackling this issue requires a coordinated, concerted effort by air transport, law enforcement and conservation.

At the first [High Level Conference of the Americas on Illegal Trade in Wildlife](#) held in 2019, 20 Latin American nations committed to 21 actions to prevent continued trafficking of species in the region, including encouraging active collaboration and strategic public-private partnerships that work to address this issue.

Your air transport company can help combat wildlife trafficking through a multifaceted approach:

- ✓ Demonstrating your company's commitment to take action against wildlife trafficking
- ✓ Informing and training staff to identify the signs of wildlife trafficking
- ✓ Strengthening policies and protocols for wildlife trafficking prevention and reporting
- ✓ Elevating the issue across the industry to encourage others to take action
- ✓ Educating customers about the risks of unsafe transport of wildlife products

Upcoming opportunities to learn more and take action

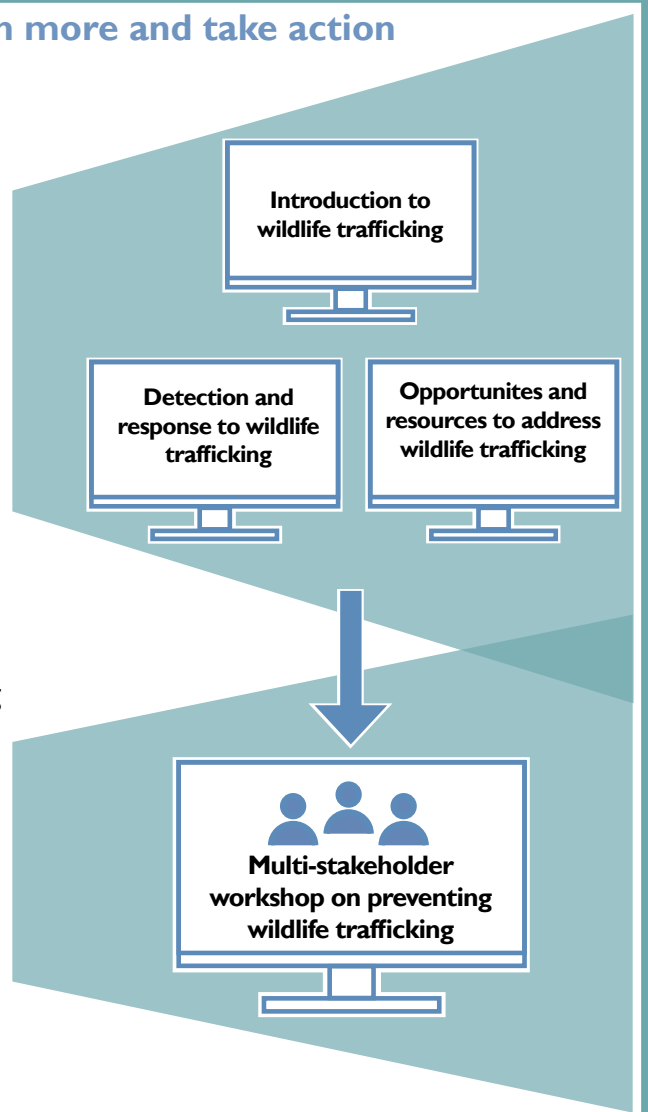
ROUTES partners [ACI](#) and [IATA](#) are hosting a series of webinars and discussions in the first half of 2021 (first webinar February 2) for LAC-based air transport stakeholders, to introduce the issue of wildlife trafficking and how air transport stakeholders can take action. Participants will learn about:

- Wildlife trafficking trends, its impacts and the risks it poses to aviation
- How the ROUTES Partnership can support action by stakeholders
- Available resources through ROUTES for raising awareness and training company staff to identify and respond to wildlife trafficking incidents.

Following the webinar series, the ROUTES Partnership will convene LAC-based air transport stakeholders in a workshop, to co-develop a regional action plan for preventing wildlife trafficking in air transport and protecting Latin America and the Caribbean's unique natural heritage and ecotourism.

If your company would like to take part in this stakeholder meeting, please contact us at the relevant address:

- ACI member airports: environment@aci.aero
- IATA member airlines: wildlife@iata.org
- All other stakeholders: contact@routespartnership.org



Engaging and sharing information with the ROUTES Partnership

To identify opportunities for action and to demonstrate the impact made by companies against wildlife trafficking with ROUTES' support, the ROUTES Partnership records information such as the names of companies attending events and the types of actions taken by companies, where consent has been given. This information is shared according to the agreed level of consent to inform and report on the impact of ROUTES' efforts to its donor partner USAID and to promote industry responses to wildlife trafficking. When engaging with, or participating in, ROUTES activities, you will be able to choose how much information you would like to share through the consent options that will be made available to you.



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