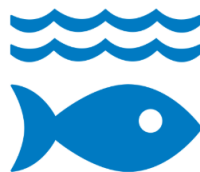


# BACKGROUND BRIEF

United Nations Environment Assembly  
World Scout Jamboree Model UN 2019



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



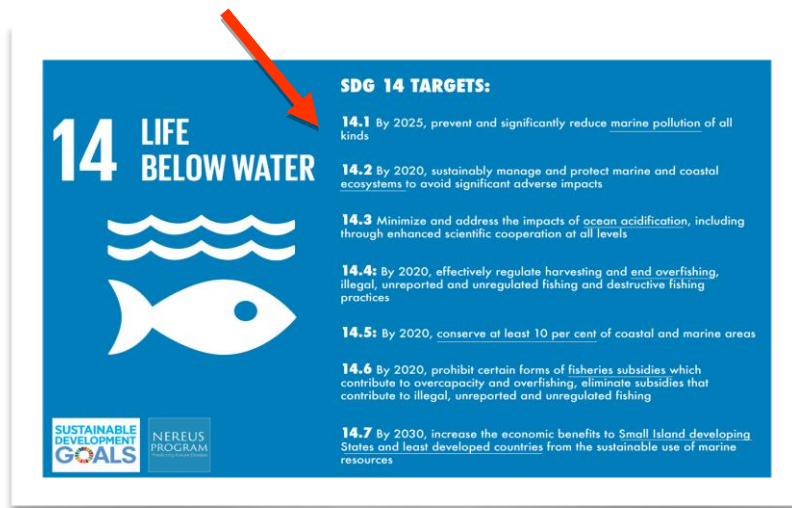
**15** LIFE  
ON LAND



## What is the role of the UN Environment Assembly?

In a world of interconnected ecosystems and global demands, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the highest-level-decision making organization on environmental issues. This UN body addresses the most important environmental challenges that the global community currently has. Addressing these environmental challenges is one of the key commitments included in the **Sustainable Development Goals, particularly, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14**, on **protecting life below water**. SDG 14 also includes specific targets to tackle other important issues such as marine pollution, sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, overfishing, and ocean acidification.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-14-life-below-water.html>



Created in June 2012, this UN body has the primary responsibility of setting the priorities to develop global environmental policies and creating international environmental laws. In other words, the UNEA works to create rules to protect the environment that should be followed and respected by all countries. With its resolutions and relevant calls to action, the UN Environment Assembly leads and promotes concrete actions at a global scale to protect the environment. The Environment Assembly meets every two years to set its agenda. UNEA works and cooperates with other UN institutions, and it establishes multilateral environmental agreements.

## History and Governance

You can learn about the governance of the UNEA at:

<http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/un-environment-assembly-and-governing-council>

In this link you can learn about the most recent UNEA meeting held in Nairobi in March of 2019.

## TOPIC 1: PREVENTING MARINE PLASTIC POLLUTION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



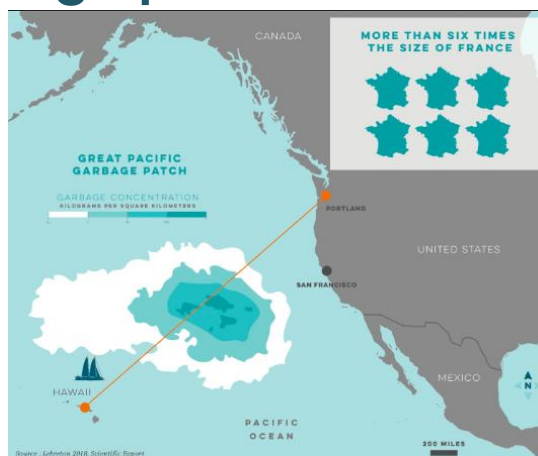
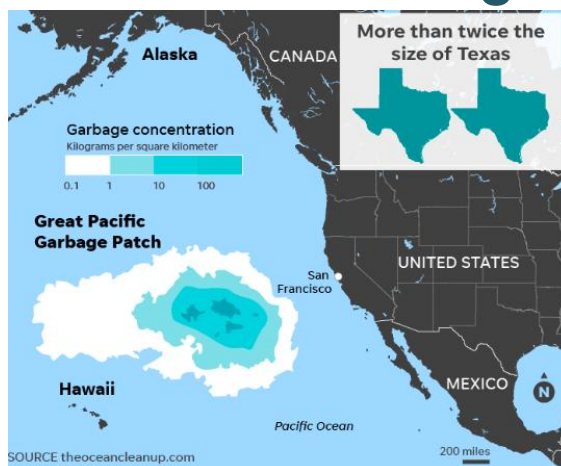
What is the problem? What is the size of the problem?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFZS3Vh4IfI>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/04/556132-feature-uns-mission-keep-plastics-out-oceans-and-marine-life>

Please check these links: <http://plastic-pollution.org/>  
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/great-pacific-garbage-patch-new-size-estimates>

### A garbage patch?



Every minute, one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into our oceans Check the facts: [https://www.earthday.org/2018/04/05/fact-sheet-plastics-](https://www.earthday.org/2018/04/05/fact-sheet-plastics-in-the-ocean/)

[in-the-ocean/](https://www.earthday.org/2018/04/05/fact-sheet-plastics-in-the-ocean/)

## What is sustainable consumption and production? From reuse it to refuse it!



<https://www.cleanseas.org/resources>



### Do you know what are single-use plastics?

If your answer is **NO**, go to <https://www.cleanseas.org/plastic-management> and learn about them. **GO** to the section **RESOURCES**. Then, **download** the guide titled **SINGLE-USE PLASTICS- A ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABILITY**. *It is important to understand what are single-use plastics to discuss topic 1 in the committee sessions!* There are other interesting resources in this link too. You should check the ones titled **MARINE LITTER VITAL GRAPHICS** and **THE STATE OF PLASTICS**.

**Do you need to break up plastics? Watch these short videos. You can take action too!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oyO4eofJrY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76YtUwwW-LI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn3y72YUEo4>

Now that you know what are single-use plastics, ask yourself: once these plastics are created, how long will they be around? Check this:





Do you know what countries are champions managing plastics? **CHECK** this link: [http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21511/CleanSeas\\_final\\_Infographic.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21511/CleanSeas_final_Infographic.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

## What is your country doing to manage plastics effectively?

Does the world need to break up with toxic pollutants? Do we need to rethink plastic management strategies? What are the limitations of recycling plastics?



This resource will also help you understand some key issues to discuss **TOPIC 1**. It is essential for you to understand what percentage of plastics is actually recycled in the world. Likewise, check this resource:

<https://plasticoceans.org/infographic-reduce-plastic-pollution/>



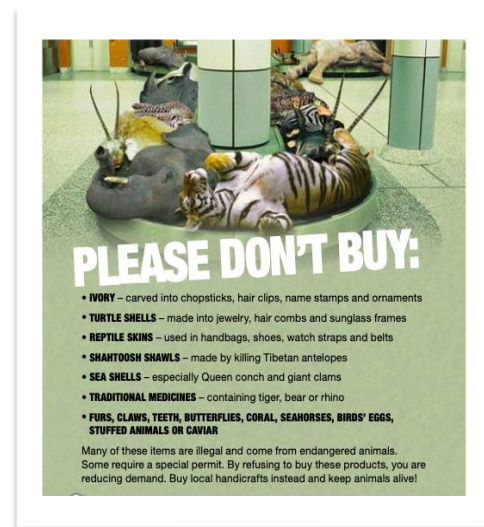
## TOPIC 2: ENDING ILLEGAL TRADE AND WHALING



**ELEPHANTS, TIGERS AND OTHER ENDANGERED WILDLIFE ARE BEING KILLED AT AN ALARMING RATE FOR TRINKETS, POTIONS AND FASHION. PLEASE READ:**

<https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/resource-centre/stopping-illegal-wildlife-trade>

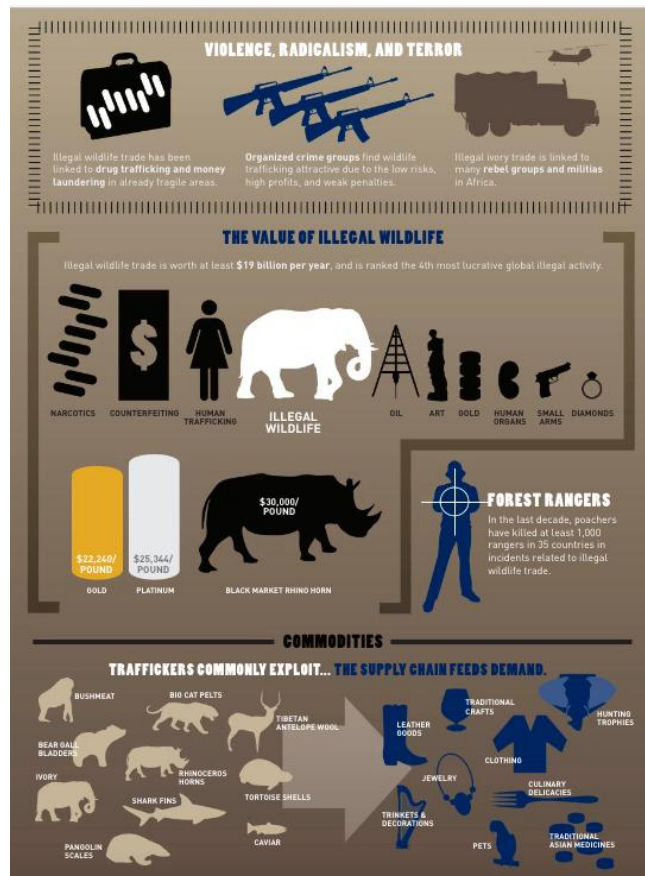
<https://unchronicle.un.org/issue/illegal-wildlife-trade>



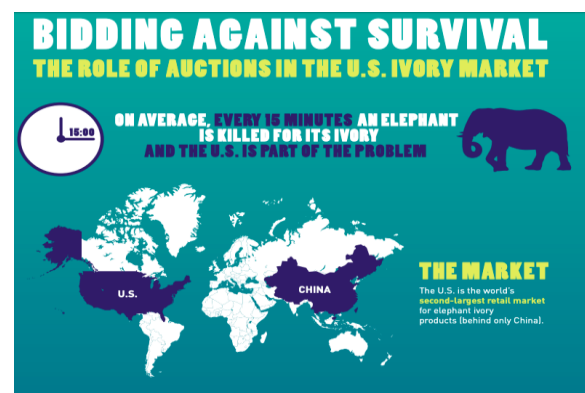
**WATCH THIS VIDEO:** <https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/video-joint-interoperation-https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/video-joint-inteol-operation-worthy-takes-down-ivory-traffickerworthy-t-ivory-traff>

# WHAT DO AFRICAN NATIONS AND OTHER STATES NEED TO TACKLE WILDLIFE ILLEGAL TRADE?

<https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/our-work/political-advocacy/stop-wildlife-crimes> CHECK THE INFOGRAPHICS' SECTION:



<https://www.wildlifeday.org/>



<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development/environment-and-natural-capital/tackling-wildlife-crime.html>

## United Nations' Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

<https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/text.php>

There is a specific convention (CITES). Remember that wildlife protection is connected to Sustainable Development Goal 15:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg15>

### What does CITES do?

CITES is designed to eliminate wildlife trafficking and ensure legal international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. It was founded as a conservation convention to restrict and even prohibit any international trade in wildlife unless it is proven to cause no risk for the species involved. **READ**

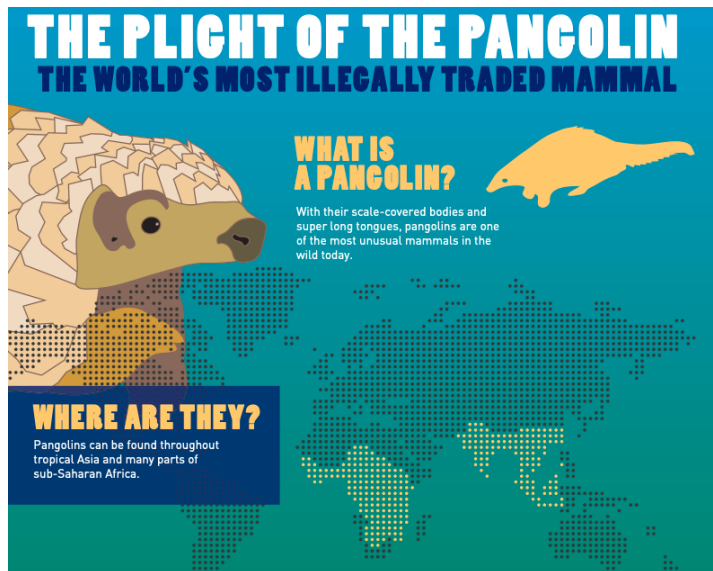
**MORE about this important convention at:** <https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/our-work/wildlife-trade/what-cites>

**How does the United Nations respond to illegal poaching and trafficking?** <http://ask.un.org/faq/88717>

### Wildlife, trade and online transactions?

<https://www.awf.org/news/new-study-reveals-illegal-wildlife-trade-now-exists-darknet>

<https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/node/113841>



Meet the world's  
most illegally  
traded mammal!

You can find additional details about this animal at: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ifaw-panthen/sites/default/files/legacy/IFAW\\_Pangolin\\_Infographic-2016.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ifaw-panthen/sites/default/files/legacy/IFAW_Pangolin_Infographic-2016.pdf)



## Whaling? What is the problem? What is a moratorium?



Photo Credit: Glenn Lockitch/Sea Shepherd

<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/29/asia/japan-whaling-sea-shepherd/index.html>

Why is whaling? Does the conversation about whaling involve cultural considerations, ethical reflections, legal discussions, and economic evaluations? <http://webtv.un.org/watch/malgosia-fitzmaurice-on-whaling-the-gordian-knot-of-international-law/4747236111001/?term=&page=3>

### Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW)



A small number of countries and people take part in what is known as Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW). The IWC does allow aborigines to hunt whales if they need whale meat for nutrition or it has been recognized as culturally relevant to their survival however strict quotas and humane killing methodologies are encouraged. However many animal welfare groups have shown that aboriginal killing methods are extremely crude and thus cause the animals extended suffering as they take longer to die.

It has also been shown that some ASW whalers go on to sell the meat thus negating their excuse that it is a cultural hunt.

In the ASW Russian gray whale and bowhead hunt it took an average of 47 bullets to kill each whale, each of which took approximately 53 minutes to die. In one instance it took 180 rounds and 3 hours 40 minutes to kill one single gray whale. On the St. Vincent Island in the Caribbean, 8 foot long lances are used to repeatedly stab humpback whales in the heart and lungs. These are just some of the brutal methods used by so-called ASW whalers found also in Peru, Russia, Japan, Denmark in the Faroe Islands and Alaska.

<https://www.saawinternational.org/whaling.htm>

Are there different types of whaling? Check the website of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). **CHECK CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT, WHALING** <https://iwc.int/home>

[http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/endangered\\_species/cetaceans/cetaceans/iwc/history/](http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/endangered_species/cetaceans/cetaceans/iwc/history/)

**But do all countries believe that whaling is wrong?**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45364696>

Check the website of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) to understand the history of whaling: <https://eia-international.org/reports-mm/keeptheban/>

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/03/31/japan-whaling-ban\\_n\\_5061568.html?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlMnNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAAM1m0ZDzilxifyEME75m4sQVGB2tBDw8-1i0nWO5PCYY9I64qitXmpvPqCDjb-ATzs14CacaDy8VcnOtarkN2ESRBb1FqxWsnQn1cD1a2pjCVfdkKKb5gghqYCr\\_uTYOb5cp6O6wYhC-UYSQn0ZdX-e7RDtKGmEBYw9N\\_U\\_InXT](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/03/31/japan-whaling-ban_n_5061568.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlMnNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAM1m0ZDzilxifyEME75m4sQVGB2tBDw8-1i0nWO5PCYY9I64qitXmpvPqCDjb-ATzs14CacaDy8VcnOtarkN2ESRBb1FqxWsnQn1cD1a2pjCVfdkKKb5gghqYCr_uTYOb5cp6O6wYhC-UYSQn0ZdX-e7RDtKGmEBYw9N_U_InXT)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/japan-whaling-cites-trade-sanctions-sei-whales-illegal-meeting-sochi-a8564871.html>

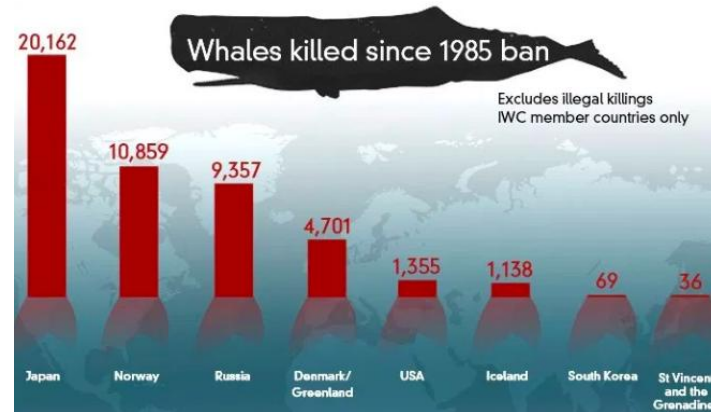


Hvalur whalers cut open a fin whale north of Reykjavik in 2009. Last year the company is reported to have killed 155 fin whales.  
Photograph: Halldor

Kolbeins/AFP/Getty Images

## Is whaling a **BIG** problem?

<http://www.hsi.org/issues/whaling/facts/infographic.html>



<http://www.globalsocialchange.com/2016/02/07/which-countries-are-still-murdering-whales/>