



Oceania Customs  
Organisation Secretariat

**OCO will participate at Oceania Regional CITES Implementation and Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking Workshop,**

The OCO will participate in the *Oceania Regional CITES Implementation and Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking Workshop*, to be held from 29 May – 2 June 2017 in Nadi, Fiji.

The workshop is being spearheaded by the New Zealand's Department of Conservation and in partnership with Fiji's Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Housing. A Number of Regional Law enforcement expert together with OCO will co facilitate different sessions. The overall aim of the workshop is to ensure that regional efforts are properly coordinated to combat wildlife trafficking and transnational crime, which has an adverse effect on livelihoods, ecosystems, and governance.

Specific objectives of the workshop would include building on previous CITES training activities in the region, given increased illicit activity and the growing need for a strengthened skill base; to promote a robust multi-agency approach to CITES implementation and combating wildlife trafficking; to share experiences of both Parties and non-Parties in combating wildlife trafficking; and to identify regional needs and priorities going forward.

Wildlife crime poses a serious threat to thousands of species of plants and animals, which in some cases are being pushed to the brink of extinction. It is a global and a Regional issue affecting almost every jurisdiction, either as a source, transit or destination for illegal wildlife products.

In recent years wildlife crime has grown into a significant and specialized area of transnational organized crime, driven by high demand and facilitated by a lack of effective law enforcement and low prioritization as a serious crime, weak legislation, and non-commensurate penalties. It is a highly lucrative illicit trade, with wildlife products commanding high prices on the illicit market, and global profits estimated to amount to between US\$7-23 billion annually.

Wildlife crime is known to take advantage of vulnerabilities in the legal supply chain, enabled by corruption, fraud, and inadequate regulation, and frequently converging with other forms of serious criminality such as money laundering and counterfeiting. Some wildlife seizures can comprise multiple container loads of illegal wildlife, smuggled across long distances using complex routes and sophisticated modus operandi.