

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST THE CRIME OF TRAFFICKING IN PROTECTED ANIMALS (STUDY AT THE NORTH SUMATRA POLICE)

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ABSTRACT

The illegal trade of protected wildlife constitutes a serious form of environmental crime that continues to evolve, particularly through the use of social media as a platform for illicit transactions. This study aims to examine the modus operandi of protected wildlife trafficking conducted via social media, analyze law enforcement efforts undertaken by the North Sumatra Regional Police, and identify the obstacles faced in enforcing the law. This research employs a normative legal research method using statutory and conceptual approaches, supported by an analysis of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. The findings indicate that wildlife trafficking has shifted toward digitally based and covert practices, posing significant challenges to conventional law enforcement mechanisms. Although the North Sumatra Regional Police have implemented both penal and non-penal measures, their effectiveness remains limited due to resource constraints, difficulties in digital evidence gathering, and low public legal awareness. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing inter-agency cooperation, and fostering a supportive legal culture are essential to optimizing the enforcement of laws protecting wildlife and ensuring ecological sustainability.

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INTRODUCTIONS

The most cases of trade in protected wildlife in North Sumatra are against Sumatran tigers, pangolins, orangutans, hornbills, and other protected birds. The cases that occur in law enforcement are still weak, with the highest penalty rate for perpetrators who are tried in court is only 3 years, in contrast to the Aceh region which applies punishment/penalties for perpetrators of trafficking in protected animals with a penalty of 5 years. Cases of illegal sataw trade in protected sataw in North Sumatra in 2022 amounted to 12 cases and in 2023 there were 5 cases and the most traded animal was pangolins. In 2022 in North Sumatra, 4 Sumatran orangutans, 1 binturong, 5 protected birds, 1 Sulawesi black macaque, 1 Sinyulong crocodile, and 20 estuarine crocodiles have been traded. In addition, animal

trafficking cases can be in the form of 3 pythons, 2 elephant-footed turtles, 257 kilograms of pangolin scales, 10 hornbills, and 8 pangolin tongues that are traded. (Khoerunisa et al., 2026)

One of the cases that had attracted public attention in 2023 which was handled by the North Sumatra Regional Police (North Sumatra) which began on Monday, November 6, 2023, officers of the Sub-Directorate IV of Certain Crimes (Tipidter) of the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus) of the North Sumatra Regional Police (Polda) received information from the public that there were residents of Wek I Village, North Padangsidempuan District, Padangsidempuan City, with the initials MS, owns and offers for sale body parts (organs) of protected species of wildlife in the form of skin and bones of Sumatran tigers (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) and pangolin scales (*Manis javanica*). Following up on this information, North Sumatra Police officers through the Investigation Team immediately visited Padang Sidempuan City to explore the information in question, on Wednesday, November 8, 2023.

The team then carried out an "undercover buy" by contacting the owner of the protected species of wildlife body parts via mobile phone. The officer and MS then agreed to carry out a buying and selling transaction. The next day, on Thursday, November 9, 2023, at around 10.00 WIB, in accordance with the agreement, took place at the Samudera Hotel, Jl. Teuku Umar, Losung Village, South Padangsidempuan District, Padangsidempuan City, MS and a friend of his DYS, carrying items packed in a cardboard, met with the North Sumatra Police investigator. After a cursory look at the contents of the luggage and it was true that there were several protected wildlife organs to be sold, namely 1 (one) piece of tiger skin, tiger bones and pangolin scales weighing \pm 15 kg, the investigating officer then secured MS and his friend DYS along with their luggage, and took them to the North Sumatra Police Station for further processing. (Cantika et al., 2025; Slão et al., 2025)

Based on these cases, that the trade in protected animals is a neatly organized crime that has a wide and powerful network and uses a strong mode of ownership and maintenance as well as the smuggling of protected animals continues to grow, in some cases the illegal wildlife trade is carried out by wildlife exporters who have official permits.

The crime of trading endangered animals is a profitable trading practice because there is demand from both collectors and demand from the black market. Criminals usually transact the crime of trading in endangered animals by using an *indent* or ordering system. Therefore, traffickers of protected animals will sell to buyers or agents according to demand.

The high rate of hunting, trading, and smuggling of wildlife is caused by the high demand for wildlife by selling it directly on the black market, sold to collectors, or done online. This situation is the cause of the decline in the population of endangered animal species, mainly due to the high selling price for very rare animal species. The trade in animals protected by Indonesia has basically been regulated through law, but in reality wildlife trade continues to occur among Indonesian people. Although there has been Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning the Conservation of Biological Resources and Their Ecosystems (hereinafter referred to as the KSDAE Law), in reality there are animals protected by the government being captured, killed, kept, bred, bred, and even traded. This is one of the unlawful activities where sooner or later the animal will go extinct. (Ramadhan et al., 2025; Stuart et al., 2025)

Poaching activities are another cause that endangers wildlife conservation apart from the wildlife trade itself. Based on the results of monitoring and recapitulation by the *Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU)* in 2012-2014, 80% of the wildlife trade that occurs in Indonesia comes from illegal *poaching*. In fact, poaching is the biggest threat to wildlife life compared to habitat loss or destruction.

To conserve endangered animals from the threat of extinction, the government has issued several regulations related to the protection and trade of endangered animals, including Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law No. 5 of 1960 concerning the Conservation of Biological Resources and Their Ecosystems, Law No. 5 of 1994 concerning the Ratification of the *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity* (United Nations Convention

on Biological Diversity) and Government Regulation No. 13 of 1994 concerning Hunting of Hunting Animals, Government Regulation No. 28 of 2011 concerning the Management of Nature Reserve Areas and Nature Conservation Areas, Government Regulation No. 7 of 1999 concerning the Preservation of Plant and Animal Species, PP. No. 8 of 1999 concerning the Utilization of Plant and Animal Species. However, it is alleged that there are still many practices of hunting, trading and smuggling of endangered animals carried out by the community, both individually and in groups, often involving members of the Indonesian National Army (TNI). Therefore, the Commander of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) instructed all ranks of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) through a Telegram Letter Number. ST/103/2007 for the prosecution of members of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) who were involved in the trade in endangered animals. (Khoirudin et al., 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2025)

Wildlife protection is protected through Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning the Conservation of Biological Resources and Their Ecosystems which is actually intended to protect Indonesia's natural resources from damage. Several articles that regulate animal trade and hunting are in Article 21 Paragraph (2), Article 21 paragraph 2 and 40 paragraph 2. This rule explains that under the law, it accommodates criminal snares for parties who trade wildlife, but the sanctions are not proportional to the profits received by the perpetrators so that they do not have a deterrent effect.

The existence of Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning the Conservation of Biological Resources and Their Ecosystems as the main legal umbrella in the enforcement of the law on the protection of biodiversity in Indonesia still has weaknesses in practice. This law has been around for almost 34 years and during that time has been able to become the basis for the implementation of the conservation of biological natural resources and their ecosystems. However, currently the situation of society has developed, there have been changes in the national strategic environment such as changes in the political and government systems from centralization to decentralization and democratization, as well as changes at the global level in the form of shifts in several international policies in the implementation of conservation, and there has been a development of the modus operandi of the perpetrators of the crime of protected wildlife trafficking. (Khoerunisa et al., 2026; Tadon et al., 2025)

Apart from the substance of the material contained in Law No. 5 of 1990 which is still weak, specifically regarding the investigation process for criminal acts in the field of natural resource conservation contained in Chapter XI Article 39 that there are two agencies, namely the National Police and PPNS of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry which in accordance with the law are given the authority to conduct investigations. This has an impact on the dominance of the PPNS of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry compared to the National Police investigators. If you look at the performance in the field, it is clear that the process of implementing Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning the Conservation of Biological Resources and Their Ecosystems is more carried out by Police Investigators than PPNS from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in monitoring the law and law enforcement.

Based on the above background, this study focuses on the study of law enforcement against perpetrators of protected animal trafficking. This research also focuses on the application of the law by judges to perpetrators of wildlife trafficking in diwali and the role of police institutions to overcome the occurrence of protected animal trafficking through social media. Research Title Law Enforcement Against the Crime of Trafficking in Protected Animals (Study at the North Sumatra Police).

METHOD

The research entitled Law Enforcement against the Crime of Trafficking in Protected Animals (Study at the North Sumatra Police) uses a type of normative juridical research, which is research that focuses on the assessment of positive legal norms that govern a legal event. This research is descriptive and analytical, because it aims to describe

and analyze the provisions of laws and regulations and legal concepts related to law enforcement against perpetrators of animal trafficking crimes protected in the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Police. Through this approach, the research not only exposes the applicable legal norms, but also examines their consistency, effectiveness, and relevance in the context of law enforcement. (Benuf & Azhar, 2020; Satory et al., 2024)

The data source in this study is entirely derived from secondary data consisting of primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include laws and regulations that have binding power, including the Criminal Code, the Law on the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems, as well as various implementing regulations such as police regulations, Supreme Court regulations, ministerial regulations, and regional regulations related to wildlife protection. Secondary legal materials include legal textbooks, scientific journals, scholars' opinions, jurisprudence, as well as scientific papers and papers relevant to the issue of trade in protected animals. The tertiary legal materials are used as a complement in the form of dictionaries, encyclopedias, mass media, articles, and online sources that help clarify the understanding of primary and secondary legal materials.

The data collection procedure is carried out through library research by browsing, reviewing, and inventorying various legal literature and relevant laws and regulations documents to the focus of the research. All data collected are then analyzed qualitatively, namely by organizing and connecting data based on the conceptual and normative framework used. The analysis is presented in the form of a systematic descriptive-analytical description, so as to be able to comprehensively explain the research problem as well as formulate relevant answers and recommendations to law enforcement efforts for protected animal trafficking.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

International Law Regulations Against Wildlife Trafficking Crimes in Protected

In international law, the regulation of the protection of wildlife and endangered wildlife is not codified in a single instrument, but is scattered across the various international treaties and non-binding norms that make up an international environmental law regime. The instruments reflect the development of legal approaches from the protection of separate species to ecosystem-based and sustainable biodiversity management. States that are parties to the instrument are burdened with a legal and moral obligation to integrate international principles into their national legal systems and policies.

One of the most central international treaties in wildlife protection is the *1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES). CITES is designed to regulate international trade in wild animal and plant species so as not to threaten the preservation of populations in their natural habitats. The regulatory mechanism is carried out through the grouping of species into several appendices that determine the level of trade restrictions and surveillance. The CITES approach emphasizes that the use of biological resources is possible as long as it is done in a controlled manner and does not damage the survival of species. (Amalia et al., 2026; Della Puspita et al., 2025)

The scope of CITES regulation is limited to cross-border trade, so its effectiveness is highly dependent on the quality of national law implementation. In the international environmental law literature, CITES is often categorized as a treaty whose effectiveness depends on the domestic actions of the state party. Without strong national legislation, an effective licensing and oversight system, and adequate sanctions, CITES provisions have the potential to become symbolic norms with no real coercion.

Beyond the trade aspect, wildlife protection is also regulated more comprehensively in the *1992 Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD). The Convention shifts the focus of international law from the protection of individual species to the conservation of biodiversity as a whole. CBD places ecosystem conservation, sustainable use of biological resources, and equitable sharing of benefits as key pillars of global environmental protection. Within this framework, wildlife protection is understood as part of an interdependent ecological system.

CBD introduces the ecosystem approach as a basic principle of environmental management, which requires countries to protect habitats, maintain ecological balance, and integrate conservation into national development policies. In contrast to CITES, which is sectoral, CBD encourages structural transformation in national environmental governance, so that its impact on the formation of national laws and policies tends to be broader and longer-term. (Cantika et al., 2025; Halimah, 2023; Tadon et al., 2025)

Another international instrument that has significant relevance is the *1979 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (CMS), which focuses on the protection of migratory animals. CMS is based on the awareness that migrant animals cross the country's jurisdictional boundaries, so their protection cannot be carried out unilaterally. The Convention emphasizes the importance of international and regional cooperation in protecting migratory routes, important habitats, and migratory animal populations.

In addition to legally binding instruments, the development of wildlife protection is also influenced by various *soft law* norms, such as global conservation strategies, biodiversity targets, and post-2020 international frameworks. Although they do not have binding power, soft law instruments play an important role in shaping international standards and guiding national policy direction. Many of the principles that initially developed in soft law were later internalized into national law or adopted in binding international treaties.

Table.4. List of Ratifications of International Law related to Trade and Hunting of Protected Wildlife in Indonesia

International Instruments	Year of Ratification of Indonesia	of Indonesian National Law That Carries Out Ratification / Regulates Implementation	Source / Description
CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) 1973	December 28, 1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 43 of 1978 concerning the Ratification of CITES • Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems (related to the implementation of the trade in protected wildlife)(DDTC News) 	CITES is an important international instrument that regulates trade in animal and plant species to prevent extinction and illegal trade. Indonesia is a party and is obliged to adjust its national laws in accordance with this convention.
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992	1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law No. 5 of 1994 concerning the Ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity • National policies for the conservation and management of biological diversity that adopt the principle of CBD 	CBD ratification requires Indonesia to integrate the protection of biodiversity, including wildlife, into national policies and laws, although its implementation does not always focus on trade aspects alone.

Source: Processed from various sources

In law enforcement practice, the influence of international law is reflected in the use of international standards as substantive and interpretive references. Classification of species based on CITES, for example, is often used as the basis for determining the status of animal protection in national law. This shows that international law does not only play a role at the normative level, but also functions operationally in domestic law enforcement.

However, international studies show that the implementation of international wildlife protection law in developing countries faces serious challenges, ranging from limited institutional capacity, weak inter-agency coordination, to conflicts of interest between conservation and economic development. This challenge underscores

that the effectiveness of the international legal regime depends heavily on the harmonization of national regulations, political commitment, and institutional strengthening at the domestic level.

Overall, the international legal framework regarding the protection of wildlife and endangered wildlife forms a complex and multilayered global legal regime. The diversity of legal instruments, both binding and non-binding, reflects the complexity of biodiversity conservation issues. In the Indonesian context, the applicability of international law is reflected in the development of national conservation law which increasingly adopts an ecosystem approach, strengthens law enforcement, and integrates international principles into national policies. Harmonization between international obligations and national needs is the main key in ensuring the effectiveness of the protection of wildlife and endangered species in a sustainable manner. (Perangin-Angin et al., 2023; Ramadhan et al., 2025; Slão et al., 2025)

Technical Regulations Outside Law Number 5 of 1990 concerning KSDAHE

Government Regulation as a technical regulation of Law Number 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems has the main criteria as a legal instrument formed to describe general norms that are abstract in the law into a more operational and applicable arrangement. Normatively, the criteria of the Government Regulation are characterized by the delegation of direct authority from the law, both explicitly and implicitly, which mandates further regulation of technical aspects of conservation, such as the preservation of animal species, limited utilization, and management of conservation areas. Thus, Government Regulations function as a normative bridge between the provisions of the law and the practice of implementing conservation in the field.

In terms of its position in the hierarchy of laws and regulations, Government Regulations are under the law and are generally binding. In the context of Law No. 5 of 1990, Government Regulations must not deviate from or exceed the content material that has been stipulated by law, but must be consistent and implementing (*executive regulation*). This position confirms that Government Regulations are an integral part of the conservation legal system, which plays a role in strengthening the effectiveness of laws without forming new norms that are contrary to the will of the lawmakers.

The function of Government Regulation as a technical regulation of Law No. 5 of 1990 mainly lies in the operation of prohibition norms and obligations regulated in the law. Through Government Regulations, general concepts such as "protected animals", "sustainable use", and "conservation areas" are translated into criteria, mechanisms, procedures, and technical standards that can be applied by law enforcement officials and related agencies. With this function, Government Regulations play an important role in providing legal certainty, both for law enforcement officials in taking action and for the public in understanding the limits of permissible and prohibited acts. (Iqbal et al., 2021; Narendra & Mahdi, 2025; Sipahutar, 2025)

The purpose of the establishment of Government Regulation as a technical regulation of Law No. 5 of 1990 is to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of the protection and preservation of biological natural resources. Government regulations are directed to create a balance between conservation interests and the use of natural resources, so that wildlife protection is not only normative, but can also be realistically implemented. In addition, the Government Regulation aims to strengthen efforts to prevent wildlife poaching and trade by providing a technical legal basis for the supervision, licensing, and enforcement of criminal law.

From an institutional perspective, Government Regulation in the regime of Law No. 5 of 1990 affirms the role of the government as the main actor in the implementation of biological natural resource conservation. The government, through the technical ministry in charge of forestry and the environment, is given the authority to establish operational policies, conduct supervision, and coordinate with law enforcement officials in the enforcement of conservation violations. This institutional pattern reflects the centralistic character in conservation management, where Government Regulations become legal instruments that consolidate the state's authority to protect protected wildlife as part of national natural resources. (Junaidi et al., 2025; Sitepu et al., 2025)

The criteria for Government Regulation as a technical regulation of Law No. 5 of 1990 can be seen clearly through the enactment of Government Regulation No. 7 of 1999, Government Regulation No. 8 of 1999, and Government Regulation No. 28 of 2011, each of which functions to describe the general norms of the law into operational regulations. Government Regulation No. 7 of 1999 concerning the Preservation of Plant and Animal Species is a concrete example of a Government Regulation that meets the criteria of normative delegation, because it directly implements the provisions of Law No. 5 of 1990 related to the preservation and protection of wild species. This Government Regulation translates the abstract concept of "protected animals" into technical criteria, species-determination mechanisms, and applicable prohibitions, thus providing legal certainty in determining the object of the crime of wildlife trafficking and hunting.

System and Institutional Revitalization as an Effort to Maximize Law Enforcement in Protected Wildlife Trafficking Cases

The trade in protected wildlife is a form of environmental crime that is complex, organized, and cross-sectoral. This crime not only causes ecological losses in the form of species extinction and damage to the ecosystem balance, but also reflects the weak functioning of the state in carrying out the mandate of protecting biological natural resources. In the context of North Sumatra, the increasing cases of wildlife trafficking such as orangutans, pangolins, Sumatran tigers, and protected birds show that law enforcement has not been running optimally despite the legal tools available.

From the perspective of environmental criminal law, the trade in protected wildlife is not just an administrative offense, but a *serious environmental crime* with a long-term impact. Therefore, efforts to counter it require revitalizing the legal system and strengthening law enforcement institutions as a whole, both in terms of legal substance, institutional structure, and community legal culture. Legal substance is the main foundation in the law enforcement system. Law Number 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems (KSDAE Law) has regulated the prohibition of hunting, storing, transportation, and trade of protected wildlife along with its criminal sanctions. However, the development of increasingly sophisticated crime modus operandi, especially through digital platforms, shows that existing legal norms are not fully adaptive to modern crime dynamics. (Fadilah et al., 2023; Raya & Widowati, 2021)

The revitalization of the substance of the law needs to be directed at strengthening criminal norms oriented towards ecological protection (*ecocentric approach*). Criminal sanctions are not only interpreted as a tool of retaliation, but also as an instrument of prevention and protection of environmental interests. In this context, the criminal threat in the KSDAE Law needs to be positioned as *a real deterrent effect*, proportional to the economic value of the crime and the ecological losses caused. In addition, strengthening the substance of the law must also include the application of additional criminal proceedings, such as the confiscation of the proceeds of crime, the destruction of criminal facilities, and environmental restoration. This step is in line with modern criminal law policies that place environmental crimes as *extraordinary crimes* that require a progressive legal response.

The legal structure in the law enforcement system includes institutions that have authority in the prevention and enforcement of crime. In the case of wildlife trafficking, the institutions involved include the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia (Polri), the Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA), the Prosecutor's Office, the Court, and other supporting agencies.

In the jurisdiction of the North Sumatra Police, the main challenges in law enforcement are limited human resources, lack of technical expertise in handling conservation crimes, and lack of optimal coordination between institutions. Therefore, institutional revitalization should be focused on increasing the capacity of law enforcement officials, either through specialized training in the field of environmental crimes or the establishment of specialized units or teams that deal with wildlife trafficking. Institutional strengthening must also include coordination mechanisms that are structural and sustainable. Cooperation between the North Sumatra Regional Police and BKSDA, for example, is not enough to be ad hoc, but needs to be formalized in the form of joint work protocols, data exchange,

and integrated operations. With a solid and integrated institutional structure, law enforcement can be carried out more effectively and consistently. (Fahmiron & Wansri, 2024; Halilintar & Wahyudi, 2022)

The development of information technology has changed the criminal pattern of wildlife trafficking. Transactions that were previously carried out conventionally are now shifting to social media, instant messaging applications, and other online platforms. This condition demands the revitalization of the law enforcement system based on technology and intelligence. Strengthening the integrated information system between institutions is an urgent need. Databases on protected animal species, perpetrator networks, distribution channels, and crime patterns must be accessible in a coordinated manner by law enforcement officials. With an integrated system, the apparatus is not only reactive, but also able to prevent and detect wildlife trafficking crimes.

In the context of North Sumatra, the use of technology can also support the surveillance of forest areas and the distribution channels of illegal trade. The use of digital reporting and data-driven monitoring systems can increase the effectiveness of non-penal and penal efforts simultaneously. The aspect of legal culture has a very decisive role in the effectiveness of law enforcement. The weak legal awareness of the public on the importance of wildlife protection is one of the factors causing the still rampant illegal trade. In many cases in North Sumatra, wildlife trade is still considered an ordinary economic activity that has cultural and traditional value.

The revitalization of the legal culture must be carried out through an educational and participatory approach. Socialization of conservation laws, wildlife protection campaigns, and alternative economic empowerment for communities around forest areas are strategic steps in building collective legal awareness. This approach is in line with law enforcement theory that emphasizes the importance of social support as a prerequisite for legal success. The involvement of indigenous leaders, religious leaders, and civil society organizations is also key in forming a pro-conservation legal culture. Thus, law is not only present as a tool of coercion, but also as a living value in society.

In addition, that the Judiciary has a strategic role in determining the direction of law enforcement of wildlife trafficking. Light and inconsistent court rulings can weaken the deterrent effect and reduce the meaning of environmental protection. Therefore, the revitalization of the judicial system must be directed at the application of an ecological *justice* approach. Judges need to consider the ecological impact and the interests of future generations in making decisions. A progressive legal approach can be used to ensure that the law truly functions as a means of environmental protection and substantive justice. (Panggabean et al., 2023; Ramadhani & Irianto, 2024; Stuart et al., 2022).

Revitalization of systems and institutions in law enforcement of the protected wildlife trade is an urgent need amid the increasing complexity of environmental crimes. In the context of North Sumatra, revitalization must be carried out comprehensively by strengthening the legal substance, institutional structure, law enforcement system, and legal culture of the community. With a holistic and integrated approach, law enforcement can function optimally as an instrument for the protection of biological natural resources and ecological justice.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the legal arrangements regarding trade and hunting of protected wildlife in Indonesia have been built within a comprehensive and layered normative framework, with a clear integration between international law and national law. The ratification of major international instruments in the field of conservation has been internalized into national laws and regulations that regulate prohibitions, obligations, and sanctions against illegal hunting and wildlife trafficking. The reform of conservation regulations shows the strengthening of the legal substance through the expansion of the scope of protection, the increase in criminal and administrative sanctions, the regulation of corporate accountability, and the recognition of ecosystem-based approaches and community involvement. Normatively, the legal framework has been arranged in a hierarchical, systematic, and relatively harmonious manner, and is supported by general criminal law and technical regulations that are operational.

The findings of the study also show that law enforcement by the North Sumatra Police is carried out through a purely repressive approach, but also includes prevention efforts through coordination with relevant agencies and conservation institutions. Criminal action against the perpetrators of the trade in protected wildlife has been carried out as a form of implementation of applicable legal norms. However, the increasingly complex dynamics of crime, including the use of digital technology in illegal trade practices, demand increased capacity of law enforcement officials, strengthening support facilities, and optimizing cross-sector cooperation so that law enforcement can run more effectively and adaptively to the development of crime modes.

This study found that various structural, technical, and social constraints still affect the effectiveness of law enforcement of the protected wildlife trade. Limited human resources and budgets, difficulties in proving in digital-based crimes, and low public legal awareness are factors that weaken the deterrence of criminal law. This condition shows that the existence of strong regulations has not been fully balanced with optimal implementation. Therefore, the results of the study emphasize the need for a more integrated approach through strengthening law enforcement institutions, utilizing technology, increasing coordination between institutions, and building a community legal culture that supports efforts to protect and preserve wildlife.

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