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Vienna, 21 February, 2022

The Natural History Museum Vienna in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) invites media representatives to the

Press Conference on World Wildlife Day: “Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration”

On World Wildlife Day the press conference aims to raise awareness of the devastating consequences wildlife and forest crime and crimes in the fisheries sector have on the world’s biodiversity, climate and people’s livelihood.

When:

Thursday, 3 March 2022 at 10:30 a.m. (CET)

Admission: as of 10:00 a.m.

Start: at 10:30 a.m.

Where:

Natural History Museum Vienna, Maria-Theresien-Platz, 1010 Wien – Deck 50

Speakers:

- Introductory remarks by **Dr. Katrin Vohland**, Director General and Scientific Director of the Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria
- **Candice Welsch**, Deputy Director, Division for Operations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- **Gerhard Marosi**, Expert for product piracy and species protection, Federal Ministry of Finance, Austria
- **Anton Weissenbacher**, Zoological Department Head, Zoo Schönbrunn, Vienna
- **Dr. Silke Schweiger**, 1st Zoological Department, Herpetological Collection Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria

Q&A moderated by **Jorge Rios**, Chief, Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The press conference will take place in English.

Guided Tour:

The press conference is followed by a behind the scenes guided tour giving insights on the species protection showcase as well as the deep storage and evidence room of the Natural History Museum.

Overview:

Each year, while countless species are driven closer to extinction, criminals make billions from the sale of protected wildlife products. Not only do these crimes have a devastating impact on biodiversity, they also undermine national and regional political and economic security, weaken the rule of law, threaten global health and hinder efforts to responsibly and sustainably manage natural resources in the service of development for all. Wildlife crime is a business that is global; lucrative, with high demand driving high prices; and extremely widespread. Nearly 6,000 different species of fauna and flora have been seized between 1999 and 2018 globally, with nearly every country in the world playing a role in the illicit wildlife trade.

The 2022 World Wildlife Day is marked under the theme of “Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration”. It reminds us of the need to reset our relationship with nature and to address the greatest threats to our biodiversity.

The NHM Vienna & the fight against illegal wildlife trade:

As one of the largest non-university research institutions in Austria, the NHM Vienna takes a leading role in the field of wildlife crime and actively cooperates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as well as with the Austrian Customs Office (Federal Ministry of Finance). Specialists at the museum prepare expert reports on confiscated products. The topic is also dealt with in detail in the museum's exhibitions, for example in the form of a species protection showcase in hall 27 or impressive pictures in the rhinoceros showcase (hall 35).

Public information events on "Wildlife Crime" have also taken place and continue to do so – as on 5 March, 2022 (*Thementag „Wildlife Crime“ – Das Geschäft mit der Natur*):

<https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/veranstaltungsprogramm/wildlifeday2022>

Internationally, the NHM Vienna also cooperates with the LOEWE Centre for Translational Biodiversity Genomics at the Senckenberg Institute in Frankfurt and with the FOGS Forensic genetics for species protection at the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn for the provision of tissue samples of endangered species.

COVID-19 Measures:

The 2G+ rule applies at the press conference.

It is obligatory to wear a mask during the press conference and the adjacent guided tour.

Registration:

Please register for the press conference at presse@nhm-wien.ac.at

Press kit: <https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/presse/pressemitteilungen2022/worldwildlifeday>

For further information, please contact:

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