Legal Protection of Endangered Wildlife in Indonesia: Analysis of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon under the Conservation Law

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Abstract

This study examines the legal protection of endangered wildlife in Indonesia through the enforcement of Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. The analysis focuses on Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon of the Bon District Court, which involved the illegal trade of protected wildlife species. The research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the legal framework in deterring wildlife crimes and assess the role of the judiciary in upholding conservation efforts. Using a normative juridical approach combined with case analysis, this paper highlights key legal considerations, including the interpretation of criminal liability, sentencing consistency, and the alignment of court decisions with conservation objectives. The findings reveal that although the legal provisions are comprehensive, enforcement challenges—such as light sentencing and limited deterrence—remain significant obstacles. The study concludes that stronger legal interpretation, enhanced coordination among law enforcement agencies, and public awareness are crucial for the effective protection of endangered species in Indonesia. This case serves as a reflection of the broader struggle between legal norms and the practical realities of wildlife conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the world's most biologically diverse nations, often referred to as a "megadiverse country." [1] It is home to a remarkable range of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic and found nowhere else on Earth. [2] This biodiversity is not only a natural treasure but also a vital part of the country's ecological balance, cultural heritage, and economic sustainability. [3] However, the rich biodiversity of Indonesia is under serious threat. One of the most pressing concerns is the illegal trade of endangered wildlife, which continues to flourish despite existing legal protections. [4] This growing threat has brought the issue of wildlife protection to the forefront of national and international discourse. [5]

Illegal wildlife trade is a transnational crime with far-reaching implications. It contributes to the decline of species, disrupts ecosystems, and undermines the rule of law.[6] In Indonesia, species such as orangutans, Sumatran tigers, hornbills, and various types of reptiles and birds are frequently targeted by poachers and traders. [7] Despite being protected under national legislation, these animals are often found in black markets, smuggled abroad, or sold openly online. [8] The persistence of these crimes raises serious questions about the effectiveness of existing laws and the commitment of enforcement agencies to combat such practices.

To address this issue, the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. [9] This

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1 Hoban, S., Hvilsom, C., Aissi, A., Aleixo, A., Bélanger, J., Biala, K., ... & da Silva, J. M. (2025). How can biodiversity strategy and action plans incorporate genetic diversity and align with global commitments?. *BioScience*, *75*(1), 47-60.

2 Holliday, S., & Holliday, G. (2025). *Wildlife of the Eastern Caribbean*. Princeton University Press.

3 Sengar, N., & Shah, S. R. (2025). Geological Heritage Across the Globe: Importance, Conservation, and Future Directions. In *Sustainable Strategies for Managing Geoheritage in a Dynamic World* (pp. 155-170). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

4 Setyawan, A. D. (2024). Liability For Illegal Trade In Protected Non-Endemic Wildlife In Indonesia. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi*, *5*(2).

5 Pizarro Choy, A. (2025). *The geopolitical ecology of conservation: discourse and power in counter wildlife trafficking programmes in Peru* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of St Andrews).

6 Osorio, C. P. (2024). Battling the Illegal Wildlife Trade Through Regulatory Finance: The Southeast Asian Context. *Journal of Academics Stand Against Poverty*, *5*(1), 44-74.

7 Bell, C. E. (Ed.). (2024). *Ency Worlds Zoos Vol 2 Only*. Taylor & Francis.

8 Koutchoro, A. M., Amahowe, O. I., Houessou, L. G., & Lougbegnon, T. O. (2024). Role of local markets in illegal wildlife trade and conservation efforts for trafficked species. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, *54*, e03110.

9 Muslikhun, M. (2024). Regulatory Enforcement and Restoration: Natural Resource Maintenance for Indonesia's Sustainable Economy. *Citizen: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia*, *4*(4), 278-287.

law serves as the main legal instrument for wildlife protection in Indonesia. [10] It outlines the categorization of protected species, prohibits various forms of exploitation, and imposes penalties for violations. While the law is comprehensive in its scope, implementation remains a critical challenge. Weak enforcement, corruption, inadequate inter-agency coordination, and lenient judicial decisions often hinder the law's deterrent effect. In this context, the judiciary plays a vital role in interpreting and enforcing legal provisions to ensure accountability and uphold conservation objectives.

The present study focuses on a specific legal case: Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon issued by the Bontang District Court. [11] This case involves the illegal sale of protected wildlife species, an act explicitly prohibited under Law No. 5 of 1990. [12] The defendant in the case was found guilty of trading endangered animals without proper permits or licenses. However, the case also highlights several key issues, such as the interpretation of legal norms, the adequacy of sentencing, and the broader implications for environmental justice in Indonesia.

Analyzing this case is particularly important for several reasons. First, it provides a concrete example of how conservation law is applied in practice. Second, it allows for a critical evaluation of the judiciary's role in addressing environmental crimes. Third, it contributes to the broader discourse on wildlife protection and the challenges of implementing legal frameworks in developing countries. The case is not merely a local or isolated incident; it reflects systemic issues within Indonesia's environmental governance and judicial system.

The verdict in question was delivered in response to the defendant's actions involving the capture, possession, and sale of several protected species. According to the court documents, the defendant was apprehended with a number of rare birds and reptiles, including species listed under Appendix I and II of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), to which Indonesia is a party. [13] Despite the seriousness of the offense, the sentence handed down was

[10] Setyawan, A. D. (2024). Liability For Illegal Trade In Protected Non-Endemic Wildlife In Indonesia. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi*, *5*(2).

[11] Pratama, A. B., & Fahmi Fairuzzaman, M. H. (2024). *Tinjauan Yuridis Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Satwa Liar Dilindungi Di Indonesia: Studi Kasus Putusan Nomor 185/Pid. B/LH/2020/PN Bontang* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).

[12] Thahir, I. F., Sunarmi, S., Mulyadi, M., & Ekaputra, M. (2024). Money Laundering Crimes Arising from The Illegal Trade of Protected Wildlife. *Locus: Jurnal Konsep Ilmu Hukum*, *4*(2), 91-98.

[13] Chavez, J., Payuse, I. N. A. D., Campera, M., & Nijman, V. (2024). Tourism, international wildlife trade and the (in) effectiveness of CITES. *Environmental Conservation*, *51*(1), 64-70.

relatively light, consisting mainly of a short-term imprisonment and a modest fine. This has led to concerns among conservationists and legal scholars about the consistency and deterrence value of such judicial outcomes.

Moreover, the case underscores the gap between legal theory and practice. While the statutory provisions are clear in prohibiting the trade of protected species, their enforcement often falls short. Investigations are frequently hampered by resource constraints, lack of training among law enforcement personnel, and procedural inefficiencies. Additionally, judicial outcomes tend to vary significantly, with some courts imposing strict penalties while others opt for more lenient sentences. This inconsistency undermines the credibility of the legal system and diminishes public trust in environmental law enforcement.

The analysis of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon also serves a didactic purpose. It can be used as a reference for legal education, policy reform, and advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening wildlife protection in Indonesia. By scrutinizing the court's reasoning, examining the evidentiary standards applied, and evaluating the proportionality of the sentence, this study seeks to identify gaps in the current legal process and propose actionable recommendations for improvement.

Furthermore, the case has broader implications for Indonesia's international commitments. As a signatory to CITES and other environmental treaties, Indonesia has pledged to take effective measures against wildlife trafficking. [14] Failure to enforce these obligations not only harms biodiversity but also risks damaging the country's international reputation and weakening its diplomatic credibility in environmental negotiations. Therefore, improving the implementation of domestic conservation laws is not only a national priority but also a matter of international accountability.

In conclusion, the urgency of conserving Indonesia's rich biodiversity cannot be overstated. Legal instruments such as Law No. 5 of 1990 provide a foundation for protection, but they must be supported by robust enforcement mechanisms and a responsive judiciary. [15] The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon offers a critical lens through which to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Indonesia's legal response to wildlife crime. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute to the development of a more effective, consistent, and just legal framework for the protection of endangered

[14] Eryan, A. (2024). Review on illegal wildlife trade provisions in Indonesia: cost-benefit analysis and law enforcement. *Available at SSRN 4869692*.

[15] Dixon, R. (2024). The new responsive constitutionalism. *The Modern Law Review*, *87*(4), 799-832.

wildlife in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a normative juridical approach combined with a case study analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of legal protection for endangered wildlife in Indonesia. [16] The normative juridical approach is used to examine the laws and regulations, particularly Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems, and its enforcement in the context of wildlife protection. The approach involves an in-depth study of legal materials including statutes, court decisions, academic commentaries, and related legal literature.

In addition, a qualitative case study method is utilized, focusing specifically on Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon. This method includes an analysis of primary legal documents such as the official court decision, indictment, and trial transcripts (where available), as well as secondary sources including news articles, environmental reports, and expert opinions relevant to the case.

The objective of this methodology is to provide a comprehensive legal analysis of the implementation of conservation laws, identify the challenges in enforcement, and assess the judicial interpretation of statutory provisions. [17] This combination of normative and case study methods allows for a holistic understanding of the intersection between environmental law and judicial practice in the context of wildlife crime in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal protection mechanisms for endangered wildlife in Indonesia, the following discussion is divided into four key themes.[18] These themes aim to analyze not only the formal legal framework but also the practical challenges in law enforcement, the judicial interpretation through a representative case, and the broader policy and international implications. Each section sheds light on the critical dimensions necessary for effective wildlife conservation, particularly in the face of growing environmental crimes. This structured approach will facilitate a more in-depth

[16] Kartowijono, K., Yuliantiningsih, A., Sudrajat, T., & Jati, B. K. H. Community-Based Collaborative Management: Impacts and Challenges of Sea Turtle Conservation on the South Coast of Central Java, Indonesia. *Jurnal Hukum*, *40*(1), 223-243.

[17] Syahwami, S., & Hamirul, H. (2024). The Erosion of Privacy in the Digital Age: A Constitutional Challenge in Indonesia. *Enigma in Law*, *2*(2), 75-84.

[18] Zakaria, N., Juahir, H., Nor, S. M. M., Hanapi, N. H. M., Jusoh, H. H. W., Afandi, N. Z. M., & Abdullah, M. T. (2024). Challenges and realities in Asian elephant research: A global bibliometric analysis highlighting conservation crises and collaborative opportunities. *Ecological Informatics*, 102662.

and analytical review of the issues at hand.

1. Legal Framework for Wildlife Protection in Indonesia

Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems serves as the principal legal foundation for wildlife protection in Indonesia. [19] This law categorizes species into protected and unprotected groups, outlines the types of prohibited activities, and stipulates criminal sanctions for violators. [20] Additionally, the law mandates permits for the collection, maintenance, and distribution of certain species. However, despite its relatively comprehensive structure, implementation is often hindered by limited institutional capacity, unclear enforcement procedures, and outdated species lists. As biodiversity threats grow more complex, there is a pressing need to revise and update the legal framework to address emerging challenges in wildlife crime and conservation management.

Law No. 5 of 1990 is the primary legal framework for wildlife protection in Indonesia. [21] Conceptually, this law has a broad scope, covering various aspects ranging from the protection of endangered species to the regulation of sustainable natural resource utilization. [22] One of the key strengths of this law is its ability to categorize species into protected and non-protected groups, prohibiting activities such as illegal hunting and the trade of protected wildlife species, while imposing criminal penalties for violators.

However, despite Law No. 5 of 1990 being recognized as a progressive legal instrument for biodiversity protection in Indonesia, its implementation faces significant challenges. One of the primary obstacles is limited institutional capacity. Law enforcement against wildlife violations is often hindered by a lack of human resources, infrastructure, and funding for relevant agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA) and the police. [23] In some cases, the lack of specialized training for law enforcement officers—who may not have a background in environmental issues—results in low effectiveness in handling wildlife crime cases.

Moreover, unclear enforcement procedures often lead to inconsistent implementation of Law No. 5 of 1990. For example, in the investigation and processing of cases, the legal proceedings concerning wildlife crimes can become bogged down by

[19] Syaikhu, S., Pelu, I. E. A., Badarulzaman, M. H., Ihsan, R. N., & Patrajaya, R. (2024). Community, Family and Animal Conservation Sustainability in the Perspective of Normative Law and Maqasid Sharia. *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga*, *7*(2), 521-540.

[20] Maria, J., & Indrayani, L. (2025). Criminal Liability for Owners of Protected Animals Without a Permit. *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah*, *10*(1), 85-94.

[21] Paradipta, I. K. K., RS, H. N., & Saputra, K. E. D. (2025). Juridical Review of Decision Number 809/PID. SUS/2024/PN DPS Related to the Protection of Protected Animals in Review Based on the Law on Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems. *Edunity Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan*, *4*(1), 1-19.

[22] Dekhkanova, Z., Atamkulova, E., Minbaev, S., Abdyraimova, A., & Zheenbekova, Z. (2024). Modern Legal Approaches to Natural Resource Management: A Comparative Analysis. *J. Envtl. L. & Pol'y*, *4*, 71.

[23] Ikhsan, M., Hidaya, W. A., & Muharuddin, M. (2025). Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions Against Trafficking of Protected Wildlife in Sorong City. *Journal of Law Justice (JLJ)*, *3*(1), 63-72.

bureaucratic red tape or a lack of awareness about the proper procedures to follow. Additionally, in terms of legal updates, the list of protected species under the law is not fully up to date with the current state of endangered species. Many new species are threatened by illegal poaching and trade but have not been included in the protected list due to the slow pace of updates to this list.

Given the increasing complexity of threats to biodiversity, there is a pressing need to periodically update this law to address the emerging challenges of wildlife crime and conservation management. For example, the advancement of technology that facilitates the illegal wildlife trade online calls for adjustments in the legal framework to address cross-border trade and digital monitoring. Therefore, revising Law No. 5 of 1990 should be a serious priority in the fight against wildlife crimes. [24] This revision should include strengthening penalties, improving inter-agency coordination, and applying more efficient technology for monitoring wildlife trade.

As a first step, the revision of the law should focus on updating the list of protected species to include all species that are truly endangered. Furthermore, strengthening the legal system to support the fight against wildlife crime—from investigation to trial—is essential for creating a more robust legal framework. A holistic approach that integrates conservation policies, effective law enforcement, and community participation in monitoring natural resources will be crucial in ensuring the sustainability of wildlife conservation efforts in Indonesia.

2. Analysis of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon

The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon is a valuable point of reference for examining the judicial application of conservation law. The defendant was charged with the illegal possession and trade of protected species without the required permits. The court found the defendant guilty; however, the sentence imposed was minimal relative to the severity of the offense. The decision reveals gaps in legal reasoning, particularly in weighing environmental harm and the need for deterrence. This leniency may stem from inadequate judicial awareness of ecological issues, lack of sentencing guidelines, or insufficient evidence presented during trial. Such outcomes highlight the need for specialized training for judges and prosecutors in environmental law.

The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon serves as a critical case study for assessing the effectiveness of judicial application of conservation laws in Indonesia. While the conviction of the defendant for illegal possession and trade of protected species was a necessary first step, the severity of the sentence does not align with the gravity of the offense. The defendant's actions, which involved trading endangered wildlife species without the proper permits, not only violated national conservation laws but also contravened international commitments under agreements like CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), to which Indonesia is a signatory. [25] The leniency of the sentence, which primarily involved a short-term

[24] Van Uhm, D. (2024). Green Criminology and Biodiversity Loss: Crimes and Harms against Flora and Fauna. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*.

[25] Chavez, J., Payuse, I. N. A. D., Campera, M., & Nijman, V. (2024). Tourism, international wildlife

imprisonment and a modest fine, raises significant concerns about the deterrent effect of such judicial decisions.

This relatively light punishment may be attributed to several factors. [26] One possible explanation lies in the limited awareness among judicial authorities of the broader ecological and societal impacts of wildlife crimes. [27] In many cases, judges and prosecutors may fail to fully appreciate the profound consequences of the illegal wildlife trade, which goes beyond the immediate harm to individual species and extends to disruptions in ecosystems, biodiversity, and even local economies. The lack of a specialized understanding of environmental law and the intricacies of wildlife conservation could contribute to a failure to impose appropriate penalties that would effectively deter future offenses.

Furthermore, the absence of clear and binding sentencing guidelines for wildlife crimes could have played a role in the minimal sentence. Without consistent standards or established benchmarks for sentencing, judicial discretion may vary significantly from case to case, leading to inconsistent outcomes. In some instances, judges may lean towards more lenient sentences due to a perceived lack of "public urgency" surrounding wildlife crimes, particularly when compared to more visible or immediate forms of criminal activity.

Additionally, the insufficient presentation of evidence during the trial may have undermined the severity of the judgment. The prosecution may not have been able to present a compelling case that effectively conveyed the full extent of the ecological damage caused by the defendant's actions. Without strong, scientifically-backed evidence, judges may struggle to make informed decisions on sentencing that align with the law's intent to protect biodiversity.

This case underscores the pressing need for specialized training for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers in environmental law and conservation principles. Providing judicial authorities with a deeper understanding of the environmental, social, and international dimensions of wildlife crimes would foster more informed, consistent, and deterrent sentencing. The establishment of more robust and standardized sentencing guidelines for wildlife crimes would also promote uniformity in judicial decision-making, ensuring that wildlife offenses are met with commensurate penalties.

Moreover, this case highlights the broader challenge of integrating environmental concerns into the judicial system. In a country like Indonesia, where environmental issues often compete with other pressing social, economic, and political concerns, wildlife crimes may not always receive the level of attention they deserve. However, by strengthening the legal framework, educating judicial authorities, and ensuring effective enforcement,

trade and the (in) effectiveness of CITES. *Environmental Conservation*, *51*(1), 64-70.

[26] Al-jbour, K., Almakhzoumi, O., Krishan, L., & Al-Brim, A. (2024). The Impact of Criminal Dangerousness on Criminal Penalties. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, *16*(2).

[27] Atta, N., Sharifi, A., & Ying Lee, C. (2024). The relationship between the rule of law and environmental sustainability: Empirical evidence from the analysis of global indices. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, *31*(8), 1023-1039.

Indonesia can enhance its ability to address the illegal wildlife trade more effectively and protect its invaluable biodiversity for future generations.

3. Enforcement Challenges and Institutional Weaknesses

A recurring problem in conservation efforts is weak law enforcement. [28] Agencies tasked with monitoring and apprehending wildlife traffickers often operate under constraints, including inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, and jurisdictional overlap. [29] Additionally, corruption and political interference can further weaken enforcement. In the case examined, the investigative process and trial documentation suggest procedural inefficiencies and a lack of thoroughness, which may have contributed to the light sentencing. [30] Improving inter-agency coordination, investing in capacity-building programs, and enhancing accountability mechanisms are crucial for addressing these institutional weaknesses.

A fundamental issue in wildlife conservation efforts in Indonesia, as well as globally, is the persistent weakness in law enforcement. Agencies tasked with monitoring and apprehending wildlife traffickers often face numerous challenges that undermine their effectiveness. One of the most significant constraints is the inadequate funding allocated to conservation and enforcement activities. Without sufficient financial resources, agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA) and local police forces cannot implement comprehensive anti-trafficking operations, conduct regular patrols, or invest in modern technology for wildlife monitoring. [31] The lack of funding hampers their ability to stay ahead of wildlife criminals, who often exploit these gaps in enforcement to continue their illegal activities.

Furthermore, a lack of technical expertise among enforcement personnel exacerbates the problem. Wildlife crimes are often complex, requiring specialized knowledge in biology, ecology, and law to effectively investigate and prosecute offenders. The lack of proper training means that law enforcement officers may not fully understand the scientific or ecological significance of the species involved, which can lead to insufficient or improper handling of cases. Investigators may not have the tools or knowledge to trace the origins of illegally trafficked species, leading to the failure of operations or incomplete investigations. In the case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon, it is evident that a lack of specialized training may have contributed to procedural inefficiencies during the investigation and trial. This lack of expertise could explain why the case was not thoroughly examined, leading to a more lenient judgment.

Another factor that severely hampers wildlife law enforcement is jurisdictional

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28 Salamba, Y. P. (2024). The Effectiveness Of Law Enforcement Against Perpetrators Of Destruction Of Tourism Objects In North Toraja. *Anayasa: Journal of Legal Studies*, *2*(1), 101-113.

29 Giwa, O. (2024). Enforcement Of Illegal Wildlife Trade In Africa: Challenges And Solutions (Nigeria As A Case Study). *Available at SSRN 5011729*.

30 Yong, G. (2024). Hearings of Procedural Adjudication. In *Criminal Procedural Trial in China: Procedure of Excluding Illegal Evidence as an Example* (pp. 155-188). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

31 Rahayu, S., Sakuntaladewi, N., Sumirat, B. K., Widyaningsih, T. S., Yusnikusumah, T. R., Muin, N., & Bisjoe, A. R. H. (2024). The role of local governments in supporting social forestry implementation in Indonesia: A social network analysis and evidence from Eastern Indonesia. *Forest and Society*, *8*(1), 154-178.

overlap and fragmentation. Various government agencies and local authorities often have overlapping responsibilities in wildlife conservation, but coordination between these agencies remains weak. When multiple agencies are responsible for enforcing different aspects of wildlife law, such as illegal hunting, smuggling, and trade, inefficiencies arise in tracking, apprehending, and prosecuting criminals. For instance, the police may be unaware of ongoing conservation efforts by environmental agencies, while the agencies themselves may lack the authority to pursue certain criminals across regional borders. Such fragmentation leads to delays in apprehending traffickers and impedes the swift execution of justice.

Additionally, corruption and political interference further weaken the enforcement of conservation laws. Corruption among law enforcement officers or local officials can allow wildlife traffickers to operate with impunity, particularly in remote or less-regulated areas. Traffickers may bribe or influence authorities to turn a blind eye to their illegal activities, making it harder for enforcement agencies to take action. Political interference may also divert resources or political will away from wildlife conservation efforts in favor of other agendas, leaving the protection of endangered species sidelined.

In Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon, procedural inefficiencies were evident throughout the investigative process and trial. This case highlights the flaws in coordination between law enforcement agencies, the insufficient gathering of evidence, and the apparent lack of urgency in the prosecution's approach. While the defendant's offense was clear—trading protected species without permits—the trial and investigation did not reflect the seriousness of the crime. It is likely that insufficient resources were allocated to thoroughly investigate the scope of the illegal trade or the broader trafficking network involved.

To address these institutional weaknesses, it is essential to improve inter-agency coordination. Government agencies involved in wildlife conservation must work together seamlessly, sharing information and pooling resources to combat illegal wildlife trade. Establishing clear communication channels and creating a unified strategy for wildlife law enforcement can significantly enhance the effectiveness of these efforts. A formalized approach to inter-agency collaboration—perhaps through the creation of a centralized wildlife crime task force—could help streamline operations and reduce jurisdictional issues that hinder enforcement.

In addition to improved coordination, investing in capacity-building programs for law enforcement personnel is crucial. Providing specialized training in environmental law, wildlife crime investigation techniques, and understanding ecological threats would ensure that officers are well-equipped to handle the complexities of wildlife trafficking cases. Furthermore, enhancing accountability mechanisms—such as independent oversight bodies to monitor law enforcement activities—would help reduce corruption and ensure that officers and agencies are held accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, addressing the systemic weaknesses in wildlife law enforcement requires both institutional and procedural reforms. By improving coordination, enhancing technical expertise, and combating corruption, Indonesia can create a more effective and

responsive legal framework for wildlife conservation. The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon serves as a reminder of the significant gaps that still exist in wildlife law enforcement and the need for continuous improvement in both legal and operational structures to combat the growing threat of wildlife crime.

4. Implications for Policy and International Commitments

Indonesia's participation in international agreements such as CITES obligates the country to implement robust measures against wildlife trafficking. [32] The ineffective enforcement of domestic laws, as reflected in Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon, not only hampers conservation goals but also undermines Indonesia's credibility on the global stage. Policymakers must prioritize legal reform, particularly in updating laws to reflect international standards and ecological realities. [33] This includes establishing clear sentencing benchmarks, increasing penalties for repeat offenders, and promoting public awareness. Strengthening international cooperation and leveraging global support can also reinforce Indonesia's efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade.

Indonesia's participation in international agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), places a significant responsibility on the country to enforce stringent measures against wildlife trafficking. [34] As a signatory to CITES, Indonesia is legally bound to take effective actions to protect endangered species, curb illegal trade, and uphold global conservation standards. However, the ineffective enforcement of domestic laws, as illustrated by Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon, not only compromises national conservation efforts but also undermines Indonesia's standing in the international community.

When Indonesia fails to robustly enforce its wildlife protection laws, the broader consequences extend far beyond the borders of the nation. Internationally, Indonesia risks being seen as a country that is unable or unwilling to meet its commitments under CITES. This perception could have significant diplomatic and economic repercussions. For instance, other nations may question Indonesia's credibility and reliability as a partner in environmental agreements, potentially affecting future negotiations on climate change, biodiversity, and environmental protection. In addition, weak enforcement undermines the credibility of global wildlife protection efforts, making it harder to foster collective international action against the illegal wildlife trade.

The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon serves as a clear example of how Indonesia's domestic enforcement mechanisms are failing to align with international standards. The relatively light sentence handed down to the defendant—despite the severe

[32] Gunawan, Y. (2025, March). International Law's Role in Combating Deforestation in the Amazon and Other Tropical Regions. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 1475, No. 1, p. 012003). IOP Publishing.

[33] Pomaza-Ponomarenko, A., Leonenko, N., Cherniahivska, V., Lehan, I., & Puzanova, G. (2024). Dynamics of legal transformatins: Assessment of impact on society and analysis of determinations of changes in the legislative sphere. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, *7*.

[34] Osorio, C. P. (2024). Battling the Illegal Wildlife Trade Through Regulatory Finance: The Southeast Asian Context. *Journal of Academics Stand Against Poverty*, *5*(1), 44-74.

ecological implications of illegal wildlife trade—suggests a lack of urgency and commitment in implementing CITES obligations. [35] This inconsistency between domestic law enforcement and international agreements reflects a gap in Indonesia's conservation strategy. It also raises concerns about the effectiveness of Indonesia's legal system in fulfilling its global environmental commitments.

To strengthen Indonesia's position on the global stage, policymakers must prioritize comprehensive legal reform, particularly in modernizing existing laws to reflect evolving international norms and current ecological challenges. One key reform should include the establishment of clear, binding sentencing guidelines for wildlife crimes. The absence of such benchmarks creates uncertainty and inconsistency in judicial outcomes, as evidenced by the lenient sentence in Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon. By defining consistent penalties for wildlife offenses—especially for repeat offenders—Indonesia can demonstrate a firm commitment to deterring wildlife crime and enforcing stronger conservation measures.

Additionally, increasing the severity of penalties for wildlife trafficking is necessary to send a strong signal that wildlife crimes are treated as serious offenses. The minimal sentence in the case examined suggests that current penalties may not be sufficient to deter would-be traffickers. Higher fines, longer prison sentences, and stricter enforcement of these penalties could help ensure that those who participate in wildlife trafficking are held accountable for the full scope of their actions. Furthermore, implementing measures to ensure that penalties reflect the environmental harm caused by wildlife crimes—such as ecosystem destruction and the loss of biodiversity—would provide a more equitable and deterrent approach.

Public awareness campaigns are another essential component of the reform process. Public engagement is critical to building a national culture of conservation and encouraging active participation in wildlife protection efforts. [36] By raising awareness about the importance of biodiversity and the consequences of illegal wildlife trade, Indonesia can help foster a more informed and responsible society. [37] These efforts should target not only local communities but also the general public, law enforcement agencies, and the business sector, which plays a role in the consumption of illegal wildlife products.

Furthermore, strengthening international cooperation is essential for combating wildlife trafficking. Given the transnational nature of wildlife crime, effective enforcement requires collaboration between Indonesia and other countries, as well as with international organizations such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Environment Programme

[35] Hughes, A. C., Morton, O., & Edwards, D. P. (2025). Urgent policy change is needed to understand the dimensions of legal international wildlife trade to enable targeted management. *Conservation Letters*, *18*(2), e13097.

[36] Jennings, K. K. (2024). *Expanding audience engagement with state wildlife agencies: Strategies for supporting diverse participation* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).

[37] Gunawan, H., Setyawati, T., Atmoko, T., Kwatrina, R. T., Yeny, I., Yuwati, T. W., ... & Kuswanda, W. (2024). A review of forest fragmentation in Indonesia under the DPSIR framework for biodiversity conservation strategies. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, e02918.

(UNEP). [38] By improving cross-border cooperation, sharing intelligence, and coordinating enforcement actions, Indonesia can bolster its efforts to combat wildlife trafficking on a global scale. [39] This collaboration can also extend to capacity-building initiatives that provide Indonesian law enforcement agencies with the resources and expertise needed to effectively tackle wildlife crime. [40]

In conclusion, addressing the challenges of illegal wildlife trade in Indonesia requires a multi-faceted approach that includes legal reform, stronger penalties, public awareness, and international cooperation. Strengthening domestic enforcement, aligning legal frameworks with international standards, and ensuring consistent judicial outcomes are vital to preserving Indonesia's biodiversity and maintaining its credibility in the global conservation community. Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon is a critical reminder that Indonesia must take more decisive and comprehensive actions to meet its obligations under international environmental agreements and protect its unique and valuable wildlife for future generations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the enforcement of wildlife protection laws in Indonesia, particularly in relation to the illegal trade of endangered species, is currently undermined by a range of systemic weaknesses. The case of Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon serves as a stark example of how the legal framework, while comprehensive on paper, fails to achieve its intended deterrent effect in practice. The light sentencing of the defendant in this case raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of judicial processes in holding wildlife criminals accountable. It highlights the need for a more robust, consistent, and well-coordinated approach to enforcement across all levels of government and the judicial system.

Indonesia's participation in international agreements such as CITES further necessitates a serious commitment to wildlife protection. The continued inefficiency in enforcement not only hinders conservation efforts but also jeopardizes the country's standing in global environmental and diplomatic circles. As a signatory to CITES, Indonesia has a legal obligation to combat wildlife trafficking and ensure that its domestic laws align with international conservation standards. The failure to do so can damage Indonesia's international reputation, limiting its ability to influence global environmental policies and attract international support for its conservation initiatives.

To address the current gaps in Indonesia's wildlife protection efforts, a series of critical reforms must be enacted. First, the legal framework should be revisited and updated to reflect contemporary challenges in biodiversity conservation and wildlife trafficking. This includes establishing clear sentencing guidelines for wildlife offenses, particularly to prevent leniency in cases involving significant environmental harm, as seen

[38] Van Uhm, D. (2024). Transnational environmental crime. In *Research Handbook on Environmental Crimes and Criminal Enforcement* (pp. 188-201). Edward Elgar Publishing.

[39] Prasetiyo, A. (2024). Policy Strategy to Combat Illegal Firearms Smuggling as Transnational Organized Crime into Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, *18*(3), 384-397.

[40] Widjaja, G. (2024). Law enforcement role in the management of sustainable natural resources. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, *3*(3), 388-398.

in Verdict No. 185/Pid.B/LH/2020/PN.Bon. Sentences should be made more proportionate to the severity of the crime, with harsher penalties for repeat offenders and a clearer link between ecological damage and the penalties imposed.

Moreover, Indonesia must invest heavily in strengthening its law enforcement capacity. This includes providing specialized training for law enforcement personnel and judicial officials in environmental law and wildlife trafficking. A more effective coordination system between different governmental agencies, local authorities, and international bodies should be established to enhance the investigation, prosecution, and prevention of wildlife crimes.

Furthermore, Indonesia should launch nationwide public awareness campaigns that educate citizens about the importance of biodiversity and the destructive consequences of illegal wildlife trade. This would foster a sense of shared responsibility among the public and reduce the demand for illegal wildlife products.

Lastly, to strengthen its commitment to international agreements such as CITES, Indonesia should engage more actively in cross-border cooperation with other nations, international law enforcement agencies, and conservation organizations. By improving intelligence-sharing and joint enforcement actions, Indonesia can become a more active participant in the global fight against wildlife trafficking.

In summary, Indonesia's legal and institutional responses to wildlife crimes must be significantly strengthened if the country is to protect its unique biodiversity and honor its international obligations. By adopting a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to legal reform, enforcement, and international collaboration, Indonesia can create a more effective and sustainable framework for wildlife conservation and ensure that its laws are a genuine deterrent to those who threaten its natural heritage.

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