

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3538

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Wildlife Confiscations Network, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2025

Mr. GARBARINO (for himself and Mr. QUIGLEY) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Wildlife Confiscations Network, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wildlife Confiscations
5 Network Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Wildlife trafficking is a continued and grow-
9 ing threat to our national security, hinders sustain-

1 able economic development, and undermines our
2 laws.

3 (2) The connections between trafficking in ille-
4 gal wildlife and natural resources with the financing
5 of groups involved in transnational organized crime
6 pose additional threats to the United States.

7 (3) President Donald J. Trump's Executive
8 Order No. 13773 demonstrated continued support
9 for Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to
10 Transnational Criminal Organizations and Pre-
11 venting International Trafficking.

12 (4) The Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16
13 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.) prohibits the importation, ex-
14 portation, transportation, sale, receipt, acquisition,
15 or purchase of any fish or wildlife or plant taken,
16 possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any
17 law, treaty, or regulation of the United States or
18 any Indian tribal law, or foreign law.

19 (5) Congress remains strongly committed to
20 combating wildlife trafficking and transnational or-
21 ganized crime.

22 (6) The United States border is secured by
23 Federal agents and inspectors responsible for identi-
24 fication, seizure, confiscation and holding of illegal
25 imports, including a diverse array of live wild ani-

1 mals, notably at U.S. ports of entry or exit with an
2 increased burden seen in Los Angeles, Miami, and
3 across the Southern border.

4 (7) Customs and wildlife enforcement officers at
5 ports of entry have limited holding capacity, care ex-
6 perience, and transportation options for interdicted
7 live wildlife.

8 (8) Numerous species of wildlife require exten-
9 sive quarantine protocols to protect domestic live-
10 stock and wildlife, beyond the capacity of our ports
11 and borders, that can be administered by facilities
12 within the Wildlife Confiscations Network.

13 (9) When illegally imported live wild animals
14 and plants are seized at U.S. ports of entry, it is
15 critical for law enforcement to obtain forensic docu-
16 mentation, maintain evidentiary integrity, and en-
17 sure the health, wellbeing, and proper care of all
18 seized wildlife and plants in government custody.

19 (10) From 2015 to 2019, the U.S. Fish and
20 Wildlife Service had 834 cases involving live wildlife
21 interdiction, which included 48,793 individual live
22 animals, an average of nearly 30 per day, requiring
23 placement and care.

24 (11) In 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv-
25 ice and Association of Zoos and Aquariums formed

1 a cooperative agreement to implement a pilot net-
2 work in southern California to lessen the logistical
3 burden by serving as a point of contact to coordinate
4 placement and care of seized live animals while
5 maintaining legal chain of custody.

6 (12) The Wildlife Confiscations Network pro-
7 vides a cooperative and coordinated response for the
8 care and wellbeing of wildlife confiscated from illegal
9 trade at United States border crossings and points
10 of entry in Southern California from the point of sei-
11 zure to placement or repatriation and, in just 2
12 years, has successfully placed over 4,100 individual
13 animals into care.

14 (13) Confiscation of trafficked plants and ani-
15 mals is critical to preventing their re-entry into ille-
16 gal trade, empowering law enforcement to document
17 and maintain evidence of and effectively combat ille-
18 gal wildlife trafficking.

19 (14) The Wildlife Confiscations Network clearly
20 aligns with OMB Circular A-76 by supporting wild-
21 life law enforcement, an inherently governmental
22 function, and removing the placement and care of
23 confiscated live wildlife from government responsi-
24 bility. It must be extended and expanded nationwide
25 to allow law enforcement officers across the country

1 to focus on their mission and mandate in combating
2 wildlife crime.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) CITES SPECIES.—The term “CITES spe-
6 cies” means an animal species that is listed in one
7 of the Appendices of the Convention on International
8 Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and
9 Flora.

10 (2) COMMITTEE.—The term “Committee”
11 means the committee established under section
12 4(b)(3).

13 (3) CONFISCATED ANIMAL.—The term “con-
14 fiscated animal” means an individual of a CITES
15 species or a threatened or endangered species that
16 is—

17 (A) seized at or en route to or from a port
18 or border of the United States; and

19 (B) placed at a qualified animal care facil-
20 ity for provision of general care and welfare to
21 such individual.

22 (4) NETWORK.—The term “Network” means
23 the Wildlife Confiscations Network established under
24 section 4(a).

1 (5) QUALIFIED ANIMAL CARE FACILITY.—The
2 term “qualified animal care facility” means a zoolog-
3 ical facility, aquarium facility, wildlife sanctuary,
4 animal rescue organization, animal rehabilitation or-
5 ganization, nongovernmental organization, university
6 that has been reviewed by the Committee and—

7 (A) that, as of the date of the enactment
8 of this Act, provides care to an individual of a
9 CITES species or a threatened or endangered
10 species; or

11 (B) has expertise in the care of wildlife
12 and has received and provided care for a con-
13 fiscated animal within the 5 years preceding the
14 date of the enactment of this Act.

15 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
16 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
17 rector of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-
18 ice.

19 (7) THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES.—
20 The term “threatened or endangered species” means
21 an animal species that is listed under the Endan-
22 gered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et
23 seq.)—

24 (A) as a threatened species; or

25 (B) as an endangered species.

1 **SEC. 4. WILDLIFE CONFISCATIONS NETWORK.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
3 voluntary, cooperative program, in partnership with a pro-
4 fessional accrediting zoological association with existing
5 capacity and expertise in wildlife confiscations, to assist
6 Federal wildlife law enforcement agencies with the place-
7 ment and care of confiscated animals, to be known as the
8 “Wildlife Confiscations Network”.

9 (b) FUNCTIONS.—The Network shall—

10 (1) establish a cooperative and coordinated re-
11 sponse protocol for the care and welfare of con-
12 fiscated animals;

13 (2) create and maintain a database of qualified
14 animal care facilities to provide immediate triage
15 needs and long-term housing and care for con-
16 fiscated animals;

17 (3) establish a committee within the Network to
18 review and approve or reject applications for inclu-
19 sion in the Network submitted under subsection (c)
20 by entities listed in paragraph (1) of that subsection;
21 and

22 (4) act as the single point of contact for Fed-
23 eral wildlife law enforcement agencies to assist in
24 the placement and care of confiscated animals in
25 qualified zoological facilities.

26 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each of the following enti-
2 ties may submit to the Committee an application to
3 join the Network:

4 (A) Wildlife sanctuaries.

5 (B) Aquarium facilities.

6 (C) Zoological facilities.

7 (D) Animal rescue organizations.

8 (E) Animal rehabilitation organizations.

9 (F) Universities.

10 (G) Nongovernmental organizations.

11 (2) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—An applica-
12 tion submitted under paragraph (1) by an entity
13 listed in that paragraph shall contain information
14 sufficient for the Committee to determine whether
15 such entity—

16 (A) has, as determined by the Committee,
17 the necessary credentials, including all nec-
18 essary local, State, and Federal permits and li-
19 censes; and

20 (B) is an effective, responsible, and appro-
21 priate entity capable of assisting Federal wild-
22 life law enforcement agencies in the placement
23 and care of confiscated animals.

1 (3) DETERMINATION.—The Committee shall re-
2 view each application submitted under paragraph (1)
3 and approve or reject each such application.

4 (d) COMMITTEE.—

5 (1) MEMBERSHIP.—The Committee shall in-
6 clude representatives from each of the following enti-
7 ties, provided they are members of the Network:

8 (A) The United States Fish and Wildlife
9 Service.

10 (B) The professional accrediting zoological
11 association partner administering the Network
12 as established under section 4(a).

13 (C) Zoological facility.

14 (D) Aquarium facility.

15 (E) Wildlife sanctuary.

16 (F) Nongovernmental organization.

17 (G) Wildlife rehabilitation facility, wildlife
18 rescue organization, or other animal holding fa-
19 cility.

20 (2) INITIAL MEMBERS.—The Secretary, in con-
21 sultation with community stakeholders, including
22 public and private entities that are actively involved
23 in the care, rescue, and rehabilitation of any threat-
24 ened or endangered species, and with advisement
25 from the partnered professional accrediting zoolog-

1 ical association, shall appoint each initial member to
2 the Committee in accordance with paragraph (1).

3 (3) SUBSEQUENT MEMBERS.—Except for the
4 appointment of the initial members of the Com-
5 mittee under paragraph (2), each member of the
6 Committee shall be elected by a majority vote of the
7 members of the Committee through a call for service
8 and application process implemented by the Com-
9 mittee.

10 (4) TERM OF MEMBERSHIP.—

11 (A) INITIAL MEMBERS.—Of the initial
12 members appointed to the Committee by the
13 Secretary—

14 (i) 2 members shall be appointed for
15 a term of 1 year;

16 (ii) 2 members shall be appointed for
17 a term of 2 years; and

18 (iii) 3 members shall be appointed for
19 a term of 3 years.

20 (B) SUBSEQUENT MEMBERS.—Each mem-
21 ber of the Committee elected under paragraph
22 (3) shall serve on the Committee for a term of
23 3 years.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 To carry out this section, \$5,000,000 is authorized
3 to be appropriated to the Secretary for each of the fiscal
4 years 2026 through 2030.

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