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MONITORING AND EVALUATING ONLINE WILDLIFE TRADE AND DEMAND REDUCTION CAMPAIGNS SUMMARY

In September 2021, USAID’s Combating Wildlife Trafficking Learning Group hosted a [peer-to-peer learning exchange](#) on wildlife demand reduction programs, featuring participants from Thailand, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya. The “[Monitoring and Evaluating Online Wildlife Trade and Demand Reduction Campaigns](#)” brief shares lessons from the webinar, USAID and partner programming, and peer-reviewed literature about monitoring and evaluating efforts to reduce the online wildlife trade. This summary provides a snapshot of the learnings from the brief.

INTRODUCTION

The illegal wildlife trade—including hunting, transporting, selling, and consuming protected species—threatens animals, the global environment, and human well-being. Like many other markets, the illegal wildlife trade is increasingly moving online as dealers and buyers take advantage of the internet’s anonymity and flexibility. **There is significant online trade in illegal wildlife and wildlife products**, which requires collaborative action from conservation practitioners, governments, and the private sector.

Reducing consumer demand for wildlife and derivative products is a key opportunity to disrupt supply chains and create long-term changes in the illegal wildlife trade, which USAID emphasizes in its [generalized Combating Wildlife Trafficking theory of change](#). However, monitoring the impact of demand reduction campaigns through “reduced purchases” is a challenging and moving target.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO MEASURE DEMAND REDUCTION CAMPAIGN IMPACT

There are opportunities to utilize innovative methodologies to improve the monitoring and evaluation of demand reduction campaigns, particularly those targeting the online wildlife trade. The associated brief highlights

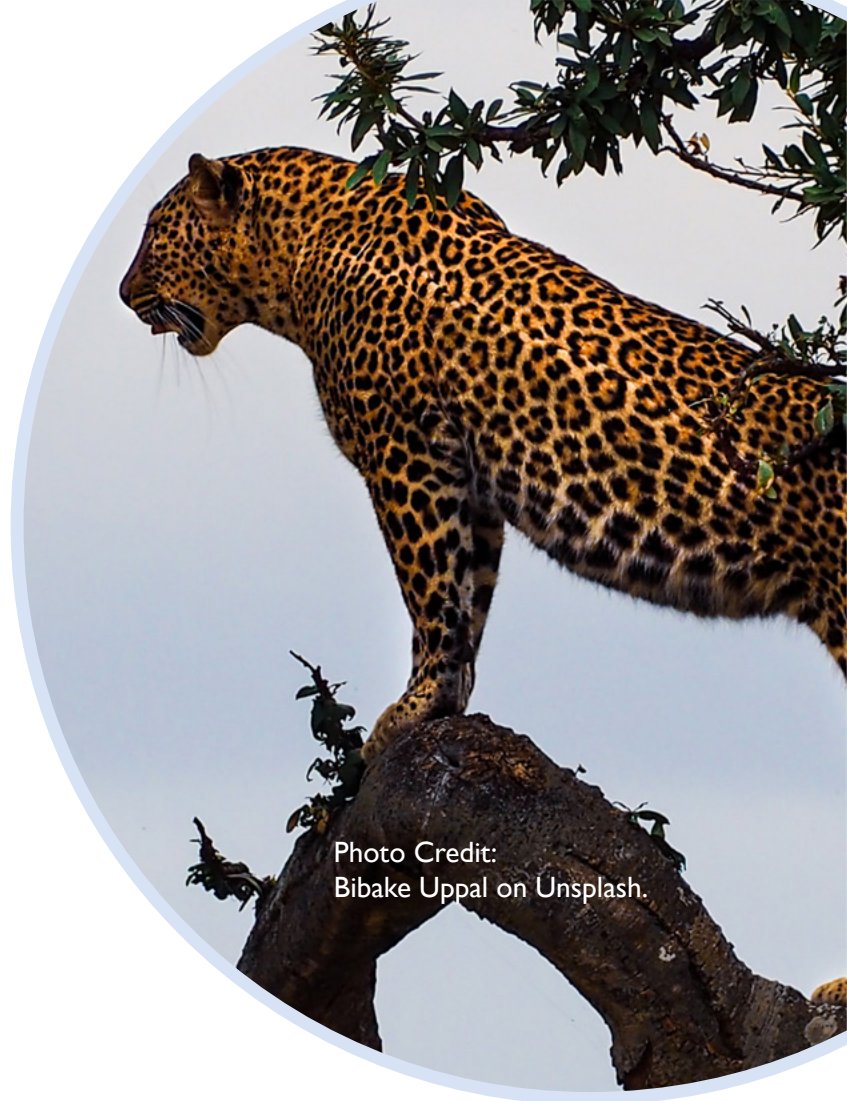


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three methods looking at different data needs and associated case studies. Methodologies include:

- Market surveys for quantifying online trade
- Unmatched count survey technique for estimating illegal consumption
- Social listening and sentiment analysis to identify consumer habits

Quantifying Online Trade: Market Surveys

Market surveys can help practitioners and researchers quantify the scale of the online wildlife trade. These surveys typically document and analyze the number of online advertisements as an indicator of supply and to contextualize consumer demand (TRAFFIC, 2019b). Refer to the [“Monitoring and Evaluating Online Wildlife Trade and Demand Reduction Campaigns”](#) brief for more information and case study examples on utilizing market surveys to quantify online trade.

Estimating Consumption: Unmatched Count Techniques

Unmatched count technique (UCT) is a surveying method that can help practitioners and researchers investigate socially sensitive or illegal behaviors, such as consuming, buying, or transporting wildlife (Hinsley et al., 2019). UCT can be employed at different stages of demand reduction campaigns. Need help deciding if UCT is suitable for you? For more information, refer to the complete [“Monitoring and Evaluating Online Wildlife Trade and Demand Reduction Campaigns”](#) brief.

Identifying Consumer Habits: Social Listening and Sentiment Analysis

Social listening is a big data analytical tool that helps practitioners and researchers identify consumer habits and preferences by looking at the “trends with social media hashtags, search strings, keywords, and other reference points in online conversations and exchanges” (CITES, 2021). Refer to the [“Monitoring and Evaluating Online Wildlife Trade and Demand Reduction Campaigns”](#) brief for more information on the benefits and disadvantages of social listening.

TARGETING POTENTIAL BUYERS: DIGITAL DETERRENCE CAMPAIGNS

As a subset of demand reduction, **digital deterrence campaigns** target online consumers by raising awareness about the illegal wildlife products they are potentially interested in purchasing and consuming (De Guzman et al., 2021). These campaigns increase the consumers’ perceived risks and decrease their sense of anonymity online. They also allow for more robust monitoring by using digital metrics such as number of ads served, number of clicks to landing page, and cost per ad (De Guzman et al., 2021).



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