

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25



"A World Safe From Trafficking"

Copyright: Freeland, 2025
Editor: Kartika Rana

Message from our Founder

It's hard to pause and reflect on 2024 as I sit writing this in 2025 during a historic wave of significant disruptions. Our US Government funding stopped early this year (but may soon restart). There are wars still raging in Europe and the Middle East. Governments are pulling back on support to NGOs due to budget cuts and other priorities. So yes, it's hard to look back when we are steering our ship through very turbulent waters ahead and around us, representing challenges and opportunities. Then it dawned on me: What we did in 2024 and need to do more of in 2025 - and throughout the future - is to demonstrate the importance of connection over isolation. The benefits of this approach - to our world, our work, to our own organization, and to us each of us personally—are enormous.

Whenever Freeland convinced governments, NGOs, and even our own team to put connection before isolation, we saw victories. Tangible examples:

Wildlife trafficking: we gathered officers working on opposite sides of borders of an infamous Mekong River smuggling hotspot to meet and train together. Literally one day after our event, a major trafficker who had been using this channel to smuggle huge amounts of endangered species for years was caught and arrested by one of our trainees. That case has sparked more action that we'll report on soon.

Human trafficking: For years, scam centers have been preying on thousands of victims who think they're getting a well-paid job, only to find themselves locked up, beaten and forced to dupe people through social media scams. Then bold Thai authorities moved on one such center, freeing 7,000 victims, including Asian, African and Latin America citizens, while arresting the perpetrators. New connections between Thai and African agencies were key to this success, and is something Freeland is supporting and expanding.

Freeland finds and connects good people –across borders, continents, and even within country. That's what we do for our living: we form, train and network task forces to stop and prevent trafficking of vulnerable people and wildlife. And we love doing this.

These teams we support consist of rangers and local communities, police and NGOs, and other agencies, as well as our own Freeland staff. We depend on donations and tip-offs to carry out this work and get results.

Thank you to those who donated or provided us tips in 2024. Have a look at the following pages to get a glimpse of what we achieved, learned and are applying now. And keep an eye out for more results that we'll share on social media.

Lets continue on our joint venture to make this world free of wildlife trafficking and human slavery. The more we connect, the less pain and more joy we will all feel.

Steve Galster

Chairman and Founder
Freeland



A Big Thanks to our Global Community

Special mention
and thanks to



B. GRIMM
SINCE 1878

Kian
Gwan
House

Sawhney
Family
Foundation

Freeland thanks many organizations that make it possible for us to deliver on a global scale. We are grateful for their ongoing support.

Donors

- ACET
- B. Grimm Group
- Baker Trust
- David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation
- DT Global Asia Pacific Pty Ltd
- FONDATION SEGRÉ
- Friedman French Foundation
- Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation
- IUCN
- Jeff Morgan
- Kathleen and Tim Flannery
- Michael C. and Linelle Mitchell
- Rikard Ekstrand
- Richard Christian and Deb Walker
- The Thin Green Line Foundation
- The Wagmore Foundation
- US Department of State/INL
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Sawhney Family Foundation
- Wildlife Asia (Australia)
- WildCats Conservation Alliance

Program/ Project Partners

- ASEANAPOL
- AIPA (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly)
- EarthTeam (A Global Alliance to Protect and Regenerate Nature)
- EarthRanger
- Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation (GTAEF)
- International Wildlife Trust (IWT)
- Mekong Club
- Mushie Mushie - NIST International School
- Panthera
- The Guardian Angels Wildlife and Maritime Trust

Business Partners

- AsiaWorks
- Canva
- Detego
- Ferguson Lynch
- Google
- Microsoft
- Taylor & Associates CPAs LLC
- White and Case LLP
- Xynocast
- Xero

Freeland Around the World

Board, Advisors, & Leaders



Amar Sawhney,
Advisor



Petcharat Sangchai,
Executive Director
for Southeast Asia



Juliana Machado
Ferreira, Executive
Director for South
America



Steven R.
Galster, Founder
and Chairman



Dr. Jiqiang Zhang,
Board Member



Ricardo Forrester,
Deputy
Managing Director



Michael C. Mitchell,
Board Member



Thomas Eddy,
Board Member



Jolene Schatzinger,
Board Member



Richard Christian,
Board Member



Onkuri Majumdar,
Managing Director



Tim Flannery,
Board Member



FREELAND PRESENCE:
4 CONTINENTS
35 COUNTRIES



**North America
Regional Office**

Project Locations:
Wisconsin

**South America
Regional Office**

Project Locations:
Brazil Guyana
Colombia Argentina
Peru Paraguay
Suriname

**Africa
Regional Office**

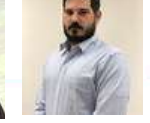
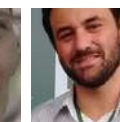
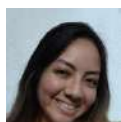
Project Locations:
Kenya Gambia Niger
Benin Guinea-Bissau Nigeria
Burkina Faso Guinea Sierra Leone
Cabo Verde Liberia Togo
Côte d'Ivoire Mali

**South Asia
Regional Office**

Project Locations:
India
Sri Lanka

**Southeast Asia
International Support Base**

Project Locations:
Thailand Philippines Indonesia
Laos Malaysia Brunei
Vietnam Singapore Cambodia
Myanmar
China (East Asia)



Our 2024 Impact

Numbers alone do not illustrate impact. Some actions have more impact than 100 other types of actions

884

OFFICERS TRAINED
to stop human and wildlife
trafficking

2253

STUDENTS

TRAINED as future
stewards of environment

428

VILLAGERS

243

AIRPORT & SEAPORT

Employees Trained to detect
and report illegal wildlife trade

7500+

TREES PLANTED UNDER
REFORESTATION by **1986**
volunteers

\$ 51M

Worth of assets
seized from
traffickers

28

Task forces formed, trained
and networked

37

Schools and **communities**
supported

EVENTS



PARTICIPANTS



INSTITUTIONS



DAYS



COUNTRIES



Our Approach

Freeland's comprehensive approach involves **Protecting** People, Plants and Animals from Trafficking; **Educating** the Public How to Help Stop Trafficking; and **Rewarding** Protectors

Protect



Educate



Reward



Establishing multi-country task forces to unplug powerful syndicates that threaten wildlife and people across the globe

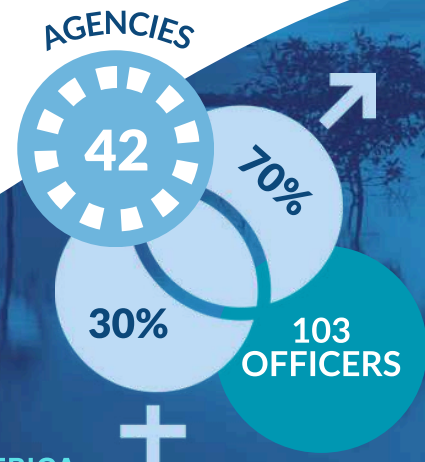


Freeland's training course, "CTOC" (Counter-transnational Organized Crime) is designed to help officers first discover the kingpins who run trafficking networks for financial gain, and then to target vulnerable parts of their supply. This is the most efficient way to provide relief to species under threat, rather than arresting low level smugglers, who are easily replaced. Ultimately poaching continues because the money keeps flowing. Freeland treats wildlife trafficking syndicates as criminal businesses that can only be stopped by eliminating their profits.

The three CTOC trainings in 2024 were funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

The two Southeast Asian CTOC trainings were conducted under the TRIPOD 2 project which took a significant step forward in strengthening regional efforts to address wildlife trafficking. The project established a sustainable inter-agency collaboration approach by integrating law enforcement officials from Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

The South American CTOC training aimed at dismantling trafficking chains for exotic live animal pet trade (mammals and reptiles) traded to Europe and the USA.



SOUTHEAST ASIA

THAI-MALAY

40h / 5 days

35 officers met in Hat Yai

Nov 2024



LAO-THAI

40h / 5 days

40 officers met in Nakhon Phanom

Sept 2024



SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

40h / 5 days

28 officers met in Buenos Aires

Apr 2024



All participants stated that the course exceeded expectations and they would recommend Freeland's courses to other agencies.

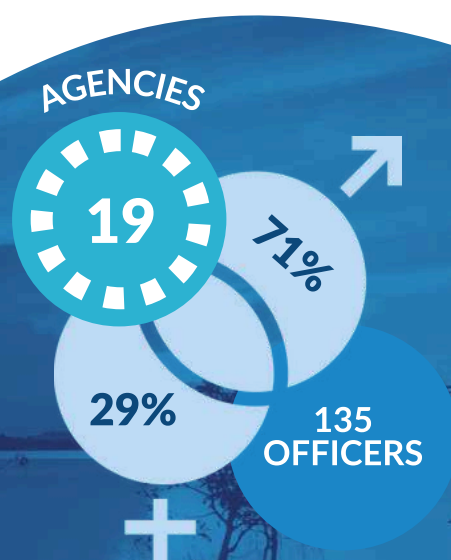


Empowering law enforcement agencies with necessary investigation skills to detect wildlife crime

DETECT (Detection of Environmental Crime Training) courses bring officers together from within countries to go after some of the most notorious trafficking syndicates and wildlife criminals, resulting in seizures, arrests, and millions of dollars of assets forfeited. Freeland conducted four DETECT courses in 2024.

"Freeland's training courses are always very engaging, with very interesting topics and debates"

"A lot of added knowledge and exchange of useful information for combating illegal activities against wildlife"



SOUTH AMERICA

SOUTHEAST ASIA

DETECT Airports - Salvador, Brazil

16h / 2 days

20 officers trained
in aviation
protection

Aug 2024



DETECT Airports, Brazil

40h / 5 days

22 officers trained
in aviation
protection

Dec 2024



DETECT Brazil

40h / 5 days

72 officers trained
in Inter-
institutional CWT

Aug 2024



DETECT Forest Investigations Training - Thailand

40h / 5 days

21 rangers of
Khao Yai
National Park

Sep 2024



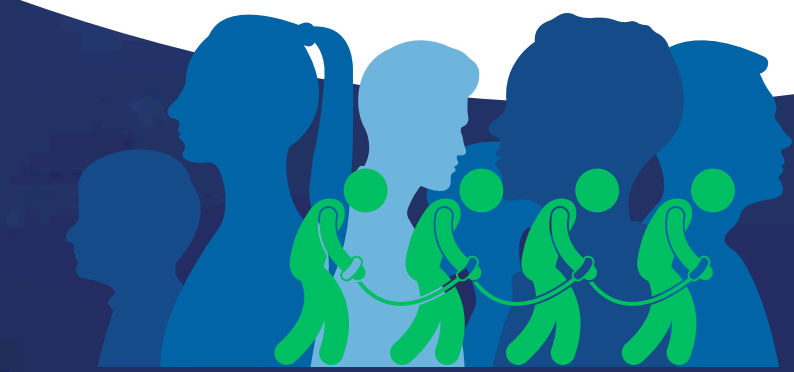
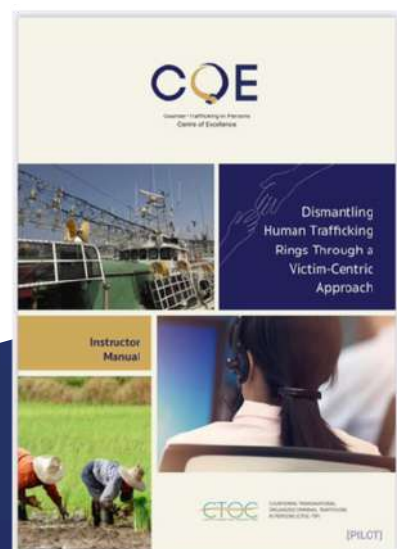


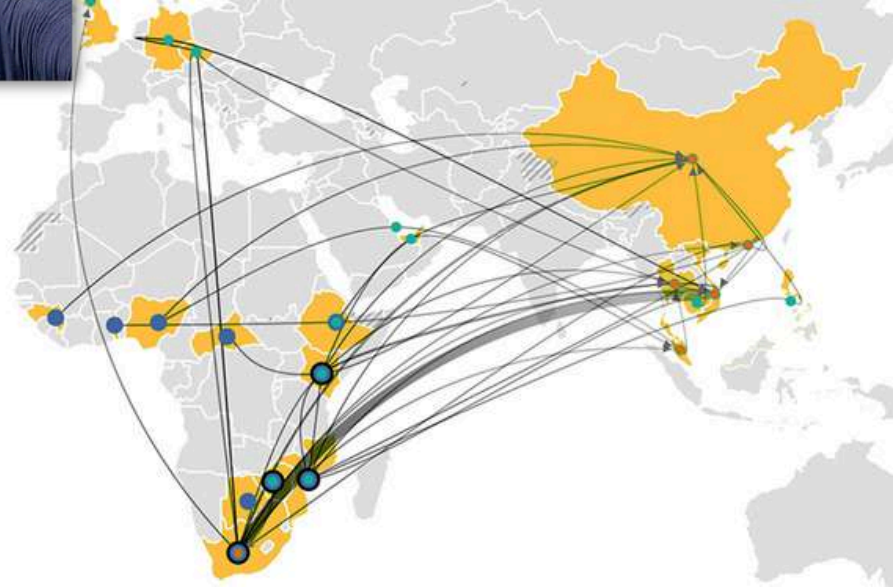
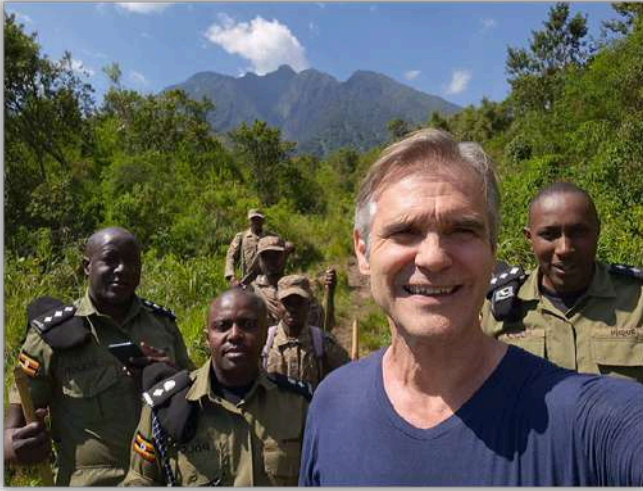
Empowering transnational task forces in Africa and Southeast Asia to combat human trafficking



The new Counter Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Training Curriculum was developed by Freeland, with partners Mekong Club and International Justice Mission, and was officially launched on May 17 at the new Thailand Center of CTIP. Freeland is a sub-contractor to DT-Global, which operates the ASEAN-Act office in Bangkok.

The training program will empower officers to employ a victim-centered approach to dismantling human trafficking syndicates. Victim well-being comes first, so the basic and advanced courses, including CTOC-TIP, ensure that any approach, from arrest, rescue, to asset seizure, results in solid victim protection.





Freeland **AFRICA** team conducted a scoping mission in June to the beautiful Virunga Mountain range at the borders of Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda to respond to Ugandan officials' request for Freeland's assistance to counter wildlife and human trafficking across this tri-border area, which is famous as the last bastion of wild gorillas.

Currently, Freeland, Uganda Wildlife Authority and Police are:

- Planning a task force to protect gorillas and other wildlife in and across these borders.
- Planning a specialized training (CTOC and CTOC TIP) to help police at the border to identify and stop human and wildlife trafficking.



Empowering private and public sector aviation and maritime employees to detect and report wildlife trafficking

The Trafficking Free Enterprises (TFE) Training enhances knowledge and fosters collaboration within the transport sector to help private companies act as eyes and ears for law enforcement. The trainings focus on detection, identification, flagging and reporting of illegal wildlife trade at seaports, airports, cargo facilities, airlines and shipping containers. In 2024, Freeland conducted 5 TFE trainings.



SOUTHEAST ASIA

Laem Chabang Seaport, Thailand

8h / 1 day

40 participants

Aug 2024



Vientiane Wattay Airport, Lao PDR

8h / 1 day

22 participants

Aug 2024



Hat Yai Airport, Thailand

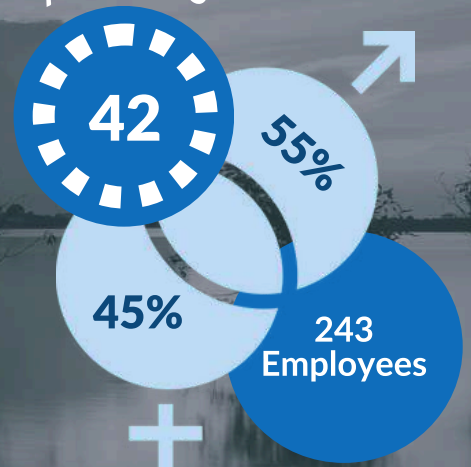
8h / 1 day

34 participants

Aug 2024



AGENCIES



SOUTH AMERICA

Salvador International Airport, Brazil

4h / 2 days

113 OJT trainees

Aug 2024



Guarulhos International Airport, Brazil

16h / 2 day

34 participants

Nov 2024



Creating frontline task forces to protect tropical forests and rangers



Freeland's PROTECT courses are specifically designed for frontline personnel working in protected areas while simultaneously building local training capacity. It introduces participants to the complexities of international organized crime and creates an understanding of the correct course of action to take in the face of dangerous situations, such as engaging armed poachers or loggers, or finding land mines. PROTECT trainings in Thailand's protected areas under Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex for the year 2024 were funded by David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation.



SMART Trainings

18 days/ 6 Trainings

194 participants

May-Jul 2024



Enforcement Ranger Training

40h / 5 day

29 participants

Nov 2024

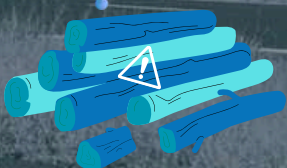


OJT Rangers Training

16h / 2 day

18 participants

Dec 2024



VHF Radio Training

8h / 1 day

38 participants
Dong Yai WS

Mar 2024



First Aid Training

8h / 1 day

15 participants

Jan 2024



EARTH RANGER workshops

2 days/ 2 Workshops

Siem Pang Wildlife
Sanctuary, Cambodia

Apr & Sep, 2024

PROTECT TRAININGS

11

TRAINING DAYS
32

100%

0%

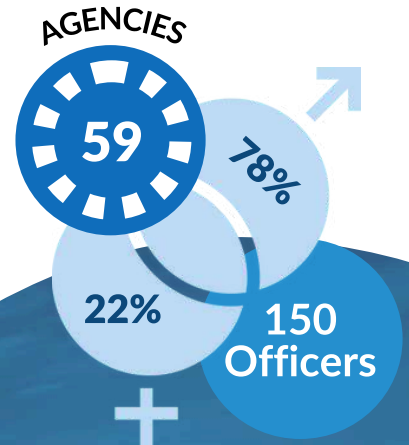
315
PARTICIPANTS



Networking frontline taskforces for securing borders and ports

BORDER AND PORT ROUNDTABLES

During the eight Border and Port Round Tables conducted in 2024, participating agencies discussed challenges, opportunities, efficient interagency and cross-border collaboration and strategies to combat wildlife trafficking in the border areas. Inputs were gathered from various agencies in order to design and deliver the upcoming Special Investigation Group (SIG) meetings. The Roundtables were sponsored by the US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) as part of the Freeland-led "TRIPOD-2" Project (Targeting Regional Investigations and Policing Opportunities for Development).



Nakhon Phanom, Thailand

8h / 1 day

24 participants

Jan 2024



Hat Yai, Thailand

8h / 1 day

37 participants

Jan 2024



Thakhek, Laos

8h / 1 day

27 participants

Mar 2024



Cau Treo, Vietnam

8h / 1 day

32 participants

May 2024

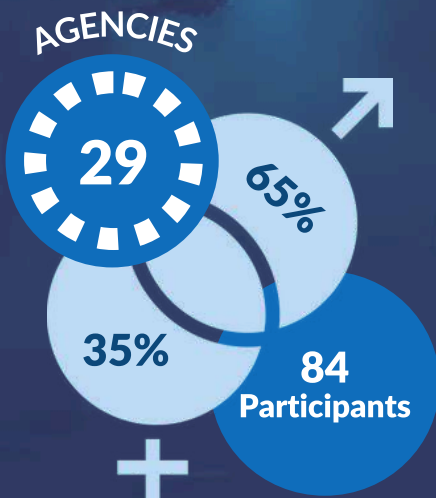


Alor Setar, Malaysia

8h / 1 day

30 participants

May 2024



Laem Chabang Seaport, Thailand

8h / 1 day

28 participants

Aug 2024



Vientiane Wattay Airport, Lao PDR

8h / 1 day

22 participants

Aug 2024



Hat Yai Airport, Thailand

8h / 1 day

34 participants

Aug 2024



Networking global taskforces for dismantling transnational criminal syndicates and supply chains

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION GROUPS

SIG meetings were designed and facilitated by Freeland to enable participants to work jointly on cross-border trafficking cases. On the Job Trainings (OJT) on the topic of OSINT (Open Source INTelligence) trained investigators to use data from publicly available sources and databases, which eventually led to the arrest of a major trafficking syndicate in Argentina.

SIG REPTILES GERMANY

8h / 1 day

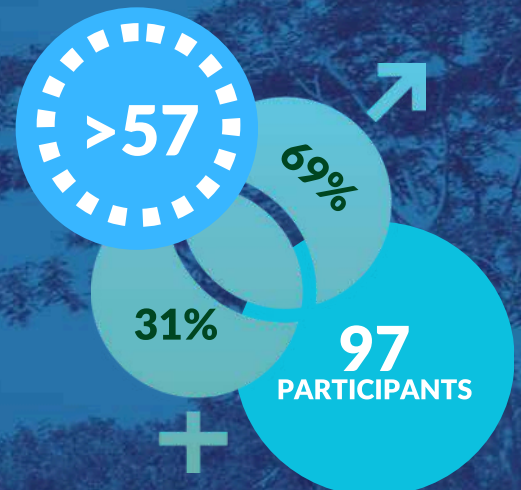
27 participants

Mar 2024



89% said the event exceeded expectations, and all would recommend Freeland's meetings.

AGENCIES



SOUTH AMERICA

OJT OSINT ARGENTINA

32h / 4 days

18 participants

Apr 2024



MINI SIG Poaching - Brazil

8h / 1 day

14 participants

Nov 2024



SIG BIRDS - Brazil

8h / 1 day

38 participants

Nov 2024



"With the experience of several courses that I have taken throughout my career, without a doubt the best organization."



SURVIVING TOGETHER

The analysis is from a 6 month interim report to DSWF (1 Apr 2024 - 30 Sept 2024). Our team is still compiling the remaining data.

The Surviving Together program takes a holistic approach to preserving biodiversity that works to protect vulnerable ecosystems at every level. It's been purpose-built to assist communities by working closely with protected area managers, rangers, and the surrounding communities to address the root causes of environmental degradation and bolster conservation efforts where they are needed most.

In 2024, ST activities aimed at "protecting" the wildlife - Tiger and Pangolin Conservation in Thailand's Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex - funded by David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation and are:

- **Wildlife Monitoring** – Utilizing science-based techniques to monitor key wildlife and threats, ensuring informed and focused protection for these species.
- **Protected Area Monitoring Systems (SMART)** – Institutionalizing systems and tools to monitor patrols and their effectiveness, critical for adaptive management.

PATROLS DONE

880

6
SURVEYS
CONDUCTED FOR

16
ROUTES

38539
KILOMETERS
COVERED



122
CAMERA TRAPS
INSTALLED

8
NEW TIGERS
RECORDED



SNARES CONFISCATED

568

8
VEHICLES
CAPTURED

68
OTHER TRAPS
DESTROYED



34
WEAPONS
CONFISCATED



SURVIVING TOGETHER



The Surviving Together program, which takes a holistic approach to preserving biodiversity and assisting communities, is also instrumental in educating them. Freeland works in national parks in Thailand to build awareness among students and villagers about tigers and elephants living in close proximity to their community. Some activities are:

- **Human Wildlife Conflict Mitigation** – Improving local support for conservation by minimizing the impact of conflict between local communities and wildlife.
- **Alternative Livelihoods** – Empowering and training former poachers and other local community members to switch to environmentally-friendly and sustainable livelihoods
- **Community Education and Outreach** – Improving awareness and inspiring local conservation Champions.

Freeland defines “positively impacted” by skill development, increase in knowledge and awareness of local wildlife and co-existence of human and wildlife in reserve areas.

SCHOOLS REACHED

24

50%

50%

2253
STUDENTS
PARTICIPATED

>7500
TREES PLANTED

1986
VOLUNTEERS

3
PROTECTED AREAS
REFORESTED
INCLUDING
COMMUNITY
FORESTS

COMMUNITIES REACHED

13

47%

53%

428
PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED



Working with budding environmentalists to find solutions for wildlife crime and conflicts while creating local impact



STUDENT ENGAGEMENTS

School students helped to grow **Bamboo Bio barrier** to build a fence to protect wild elephants using bamboo thorns, which is a mitigation measure to reduce human elephant conflict in Thai parks.



Freeland teamed up with the Mushie Mushie Team from NIST International School. This group of creative and committed students have been working with us for several years to support the Surviving Together project under the concept "**Poachers to Protectors**" around Khao Yai National Park (Thailand), focusing on understanding why villagers turn to poaching, which has driven the Mushie Mushie Team. We raise funds to establish legal agricultural careers for poachers who want to change themselves. With a small investment from student funding through mushroom farming, these poachers will be encouraged to open their own mushroom farms.

Freeland gave an awareness lecture to 80 new volunteers from the Center for Wildlife Management and Conservation of São Paulo - CEMACAS **Brasil**, which cares for and **rehabilitates** about 8,000 wild animals per year. The volunteers were mainly students of biological sciences and veterinary medicine.



Freeland's official partner in **South Africa** - The Guardian Angels Wildlife and Maritime Trust - conducted a school and community outreach.



Freeland provided technical collaboration on a **virtual reality film** about wildlife trafficking. The film CAPTIVEIRO is a pedagogical project of raising awareness about wild animal trafficking aimed at middle and primary school audiences, developed by the Arbo Institute, **Brasil**. The action involved taking film and virtual reality headphones to schools. Freeland provided technical support, imparting knowledge on the dynamics of wildlife trafficking, and the stages of the supply chains, among others.

Partnering with likeminded experts and organizations through Earthteam to work towards ONE HEALTH projects together



In 2024, Freeland co-hosted a series of townhall webinars discussing One Health approach, and how it addresses the health threats at the human-animal-environment interface. Human health and the health of animals, plants and the environment are all linked and interdependent. Fighting the trafficking of wild fauna and flora is not just a battle to preserve our planet's precious resources, it is a fight for the health and well being of all of us.

EarthTeam is a global, frontline alliance of individuals and organizations united in protecting our planet from pandemics, species loss, climate change, and habitat destruction. To learn more about EarthTeam, visit www.earthteam.org



Freeland continues to harness the power of media to reach and raise awareness among large, targeted audiences around the world

EDUCATING THROUGH MEDIA



Steve's interview on CNN International with Julia Chatterly, talking tigers and the planet on World Tiger Day. There's hope! Watch on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/fkoj15CVqG0?feature=shared>



Freeland founder Steve Galster was invited by BBC Newsday to talk about the alarmingly rising cases of rhino poaching, and how Freeland is prepared to tackle it while working alongside law enforcement agencies across the globe. Listen to this short audio.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19Lx2LG5Va/>



Steve Galster, Chairman, Freeland was part of the team that first discovered Vixay Keosavang - dubbed the "Pablo Escobar of wildlife trafficking". A new Sky documentary focuses on the hunt for a kingpin in Laos who sent his team to take rhino horns from South Africa and smuggle them back through Thailand. [Read the article here.](#)



Steve Galster on BBC #NewsDay talking about the #thegreatrhinorobbery series and the latest scene on global rhino illegal wildlife trade.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1FPGRFY9gf/>

Freeland acknowledges the best performers from our training programs and recommends them for future events and networking

BEST PERFORMING TRAINEES



Trafficking Free Enterprises
Training in Thailand and Lao PDR



Counter Transnational Organised
Crime Training in Thailand, Lao
PDR, and Malaysia



Freeland continues to collaborate, participate, network and represent at international meetings and events

GLOBAL REPRESENTATION



Dr. Juliana M Ferreira, Executive Director and Dr. Nadia Moraes-Barros, Scientific Coordinator of Freeland in Brazil participated in the planning office of the 2nd cycle of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Conservation of Big Cats, which took place between November 4 and 8, at the Center National Conservation and Research of Carnivorous Mammal - ICMBio/CENAP.



Dr. Juliana M. Ferreira spoke at the meeting organized by Brazil and co-sponsored by Peru, Angola and Costa Rica, together with 16 civil society organizations, with support of the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime, during the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime of the UN (UNTOC). The theme of the event was "Devastating Impacts of Crimes Against Wildlife: How can the enhanced international cooperation help prevent and fight these crimes?" The event took place on October 17, during the #CrimeCop12, at the International Center in Vienna, Austria.

Freeland as an associate member of the International Ranger Federation participated in the 10th IRF World Ranger Congress in Oct 2024. Freeland was present with four Thai rangers funded by Freeland's partners, together as the founding members of the Thai Ranger Association.



- 5-Year MoU with DNP, Conservation in Thailand's Natural World Heritage Sites in May.
- World Ranger Day, Thailand, in July.
- Global Tiger Day, Bangkok, Thailand, in July.
- UNDP Tiger Conservation Sustainable Financing workshop, Bangkok, Thailand, in Aug.
- IUCN Regional Conservation Forum, Bangkok, Thailand, in Sept.



Freeland participated in the first annual meeting of the Wildlife Regulatory Observation and Implementation Network in South America -SudWEN which took place in Lima, Peru from October 2-4, 2024. Dr. Juliana M Ferreira, gave a presentation on: Need for Regional Coordination, Lessons Learned from ASEAN WEN and Opportunity to Strengthen the International Rainbow to Confront Wildlife Trafficking.



Freeland continues to assist law enforcement agencies globally to catch criminals and seize assets

SUCCESS

STORIES

On July 31st, Thailand's King of Tigers Task Force of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation in collaboration with Royal Thai Police conducted a successful operation against a transnational timber trafficking crime group involving Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and China. The Task Force benefited from the use of technical equipment donated by Freeland, which were used to identify the crimes in action —vital for evidence in court.



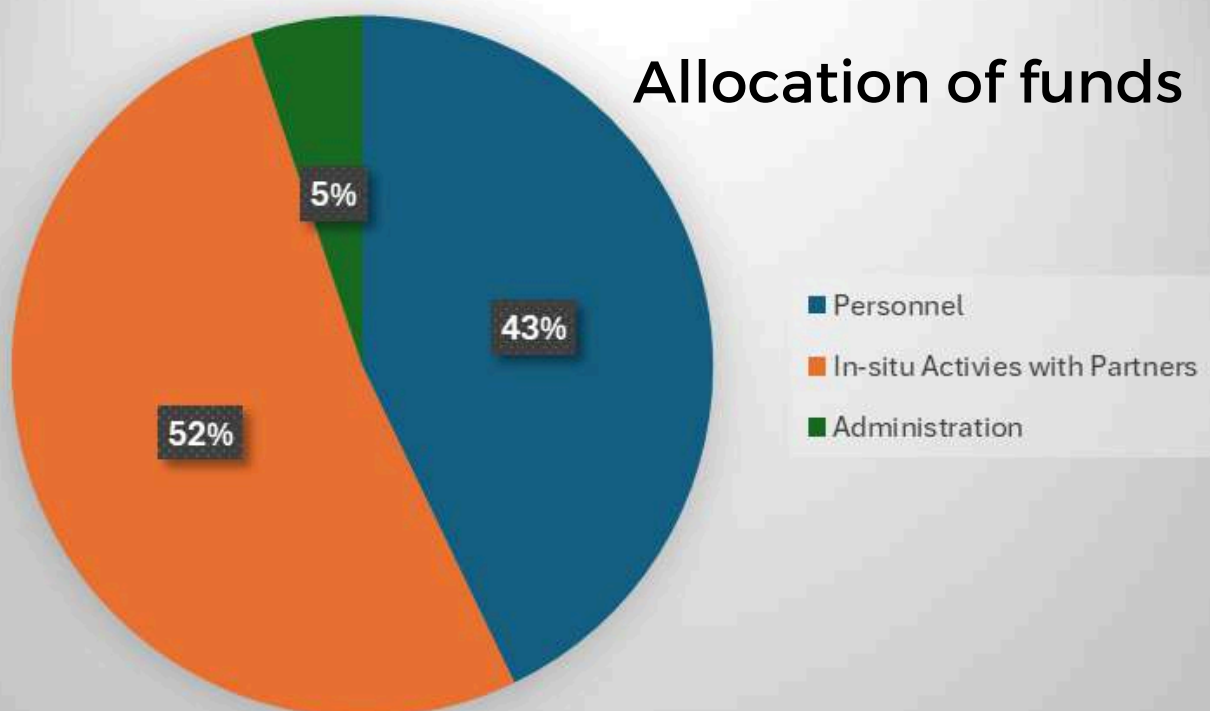
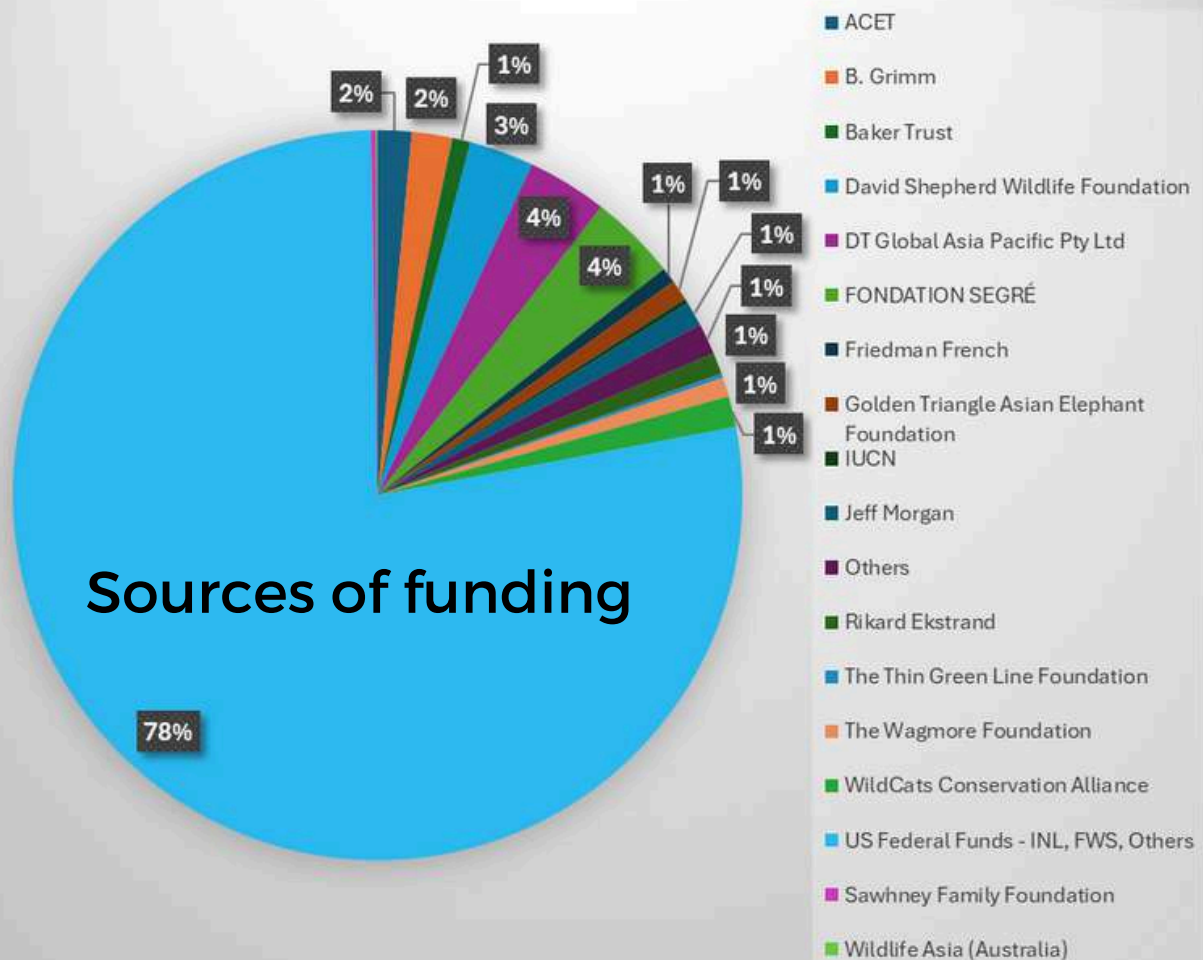
In August, based on a 2 year long collaboration with Argentinian law enforcement agencies and information supplied after the OJT OSINT, a series of raids and arrests were made on Caza and Safaris Argentina facilities and Nester Noya was arrested with 3 others. Around \$11 million USD worth assets were seized. During the operation, 1 puma and 3 peccaries were rescued.

In August, Detego Global collaborated with Freeland to equip CTOC investigators with skills to uncover vital evidence related to animal trafficking using digital forensics. One trainee immediately put their new skills to use. By leveraging the cutting-edge Detego tool, they were able to arrest a trafficker moving 1.4 tonnes of pangolins – the most trafficked mammal in the world – through Thailand!



In February, traffickers attempted to use a lifeboat to move some animals from South America to West Africa. They were smuggling Lear's Macaws (12) and Golden Lion Tamarins (19). Freeland with help from African partners were able to provide intelligence and assist in the arrest and seizure of these traffickers and rescue of animals.

Financial Information '24



We deeply appreciate your continued support for our programs.



- Help Us Put an End to Wildlife Trade
- Let's Stop Human Trafficking
- Join EarthTeam to End Future Pandemics

