

# Nigeria: Govt Nabs Fugitive Wildlife Trafficker After Five Years On the Run

The Federal Government has arrested a suspected wildlife trafficking kingpin, Shamsideen Abubakar, in a joint enforcement operation involving the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), and the Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC).

Abubakar, who had been declared wanted by the Federal High Court in Lagos, was apprehended after years on the run over his alleged role in large-scale wildlife trafficking.

Assistant Director, Press, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), Nwamaka Ejiofor, in a press statement, said Abubakar had fled since September 2021 following a coordinated operation by WJC and NCS, which led to the arrest of his associates, Sunday Ebenyi and Salif Sandwidi, and the seizure of 1,009.50 kilograms of pangolin scales in Ikeja, Lagos.

The federal government said the arrest highlights its determination to dismantle illegal wildlife trafficking networks and enforce environmental laws across the country.

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Director-General of NESREA, Innocent Barikor, described the breakthrough as a product of sustained intelligence gathering and strong inter-agency collaboration.

According to him, Nigeria will not be a haven for wildlife crime, stressing that authorities would continue to pursue, arrest and prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law.

Barikor added that the success recorded underscores the importance of strategic partnerships, intelligence sharing and joint enforcement operations in combating environmental crimes.

He also called on members of the public to report suspicious activities, warning that the era of impunity for wildlife traffickers is over.



