FROM VISION TO ACTION: ADVANCING REGIONAL WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT THROUGH THE CAR-WEN



Presented By
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Overview

1. Background
2. The CAR-WEN Working Group
3. How to Get Involved





Background

Juan Pablo Gonzalez

What are WENs?


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What is a Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN)?

- A WEN is a formal or informal regional collaboration platform that facilitates cooperation among law enforcement actors and other stakeholders to combat wildlife crime through information sharing, capacity building, and other joint actions.
- WENs have developed globally over the past two decades to respond to growing transnational wildlife trafficking, enabling coordinated enforcement across borders.

What is the Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAR-WEN)?

- The CAR-WEN is a developing regional initiative aimed at strengthening cooperation and enforcement capacity against wildlife crime in the Wider Caribbean.
- For over a decade, Caribbean governments, enforcement agencies, and conservation organisations have engaged in ongoing discussions and collaboration, which ultimately led to the formation of the CAR-WEN.

WEN Organisational Model



The WEN Concept (ICCWC Guidelines for Wildlife Enforcement Networks)

Examples of WENs

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN-WEN)

Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement (EAGLE)

Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN)

Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF)

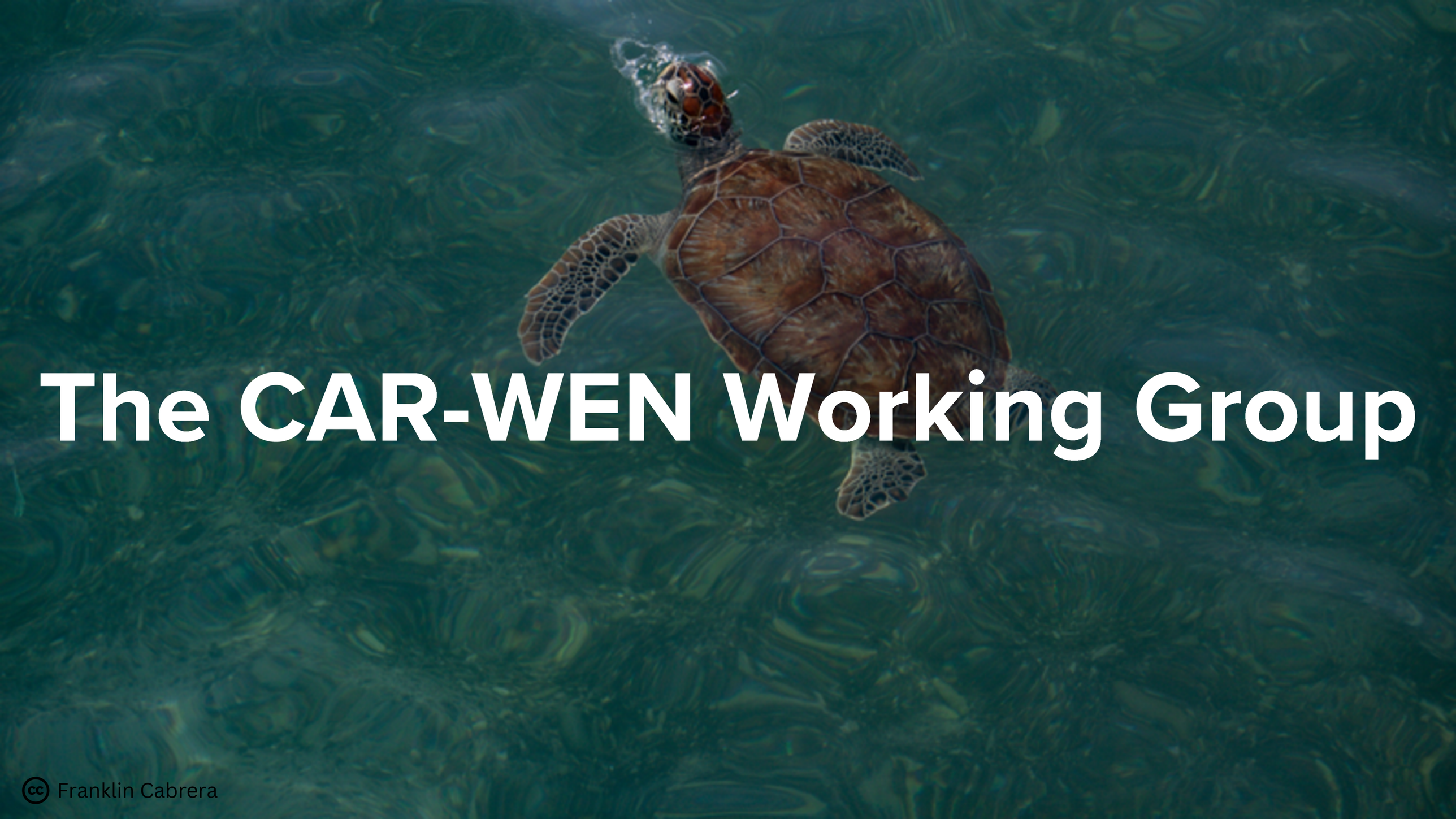
Central America Wildlife Enforcement Network (ROAVIS)

South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)

History of the CAR-WEN Initiative

- **2014:** SPAW Protocol Parties formally recommended creating a regional wildlife enforcement network, and support is provided by the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and UNODC.
- **2016:** 1st Caribbean Regional Wildlife Enforcement Workshop in The Bahamas united officials from 11 countries, recommending a formal CAR-WEN.
- **2017:** 2nd Workshop in Barbados produced a draft MOU and engagement plan for governments and civil society.
- **2018-2021:** Progress stalled due to leadership changes, funding gaps, COVID-19, and shifting political priorities.
- **2022-2023:** The CAR-WEN Working Group relaunched post-CITES COP19, with leadership from Trinidad & Tobago, The Bahamas, Jamaica, and partners like SII and AWI.
- **2023-Present:** Expanded to 25+ countries and territories, with regular meetings, active MOU development, and project implementation underway.





The CAR-WEN Working Group

Franklin Cabrera

Mission, Vision & Values



- **Mission** - To establish a robust and impactful regional enforcement network of governmental agencies dedicated to protecting the region's biodiversity
- **Vision** - A Wider Caribbean free from wildlife crime where nature and communities thrive in harmony.
- **Values**
  - Animal Welfare - Humane treatment of wildlife affected by illegal activities.
  - Biodiversity Conservation - Protecting species and ecosystems to maintain ecological balance.
  - Human Well-being - Promoting sustainable livelihoods and community empowerment.
  - Public Health - Mitigating zoonotic disease risks linked to wildlife crime.
  - Rule of Law - Strengthening legal frameworks and ensuring accountability.

Leadership Team



Desiree Corneille
Co-Chair
The Bahamas



David Mahabir
Co-Chair
Trinidad & Tobago



Mark Gibson
Coordinator
USA



Brittanny Perch
Coordinator
Trinidad & Tobago



Georgia Hancock
Advisor
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Advisor
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Pedro Joaquín Gutiérrez-Yurrita
Advisor
Mexico



Jenny Constantine
Advisor
Trinidad & Tobago



Nigel Noreiga
Advisor
Trinidad & Tobago /USA

Participating Governments



The Bahamas



Trinidad & Tobago



Anguila



Belize



Bonaire



Costa Rica



Cuba



Dominica



The Dominican Republic



European Commission



Grenada



Guatemala



Guyana



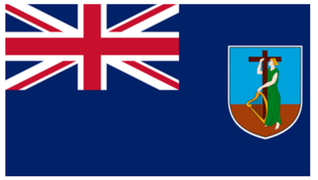
Haiti



Honduras



Jamaica



Montserrat



Puerto Rico (U.S.)



Saint Eustatius



Saint Kitts and Nevis



Saint Lucia



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



Suriname



United States

Participating Governments



Partners

AWI
Animal Welfare Institute

Sustainable Innovation Initiatives
Connecting Concepts for Eco-economies

Lightkeepers

NURTURE NATURE

ifaw

ICCWC

SPAW · RAC

DCNA

UNODC

Network Strategy

- The CAR-WEN Network Strategy is guided by a formal **Strategic Plan**, developed using the **Open Standards for Conservation** and shaped through input from the CAR-WEN Working Group.

- The plan is structured around **four progressive phases**, each made up of multiple strategies that support network development and long-term impact:

    - **Establishment** – Establishes and formalises the CAR-WEN through coordination and early governance tools.

    - **Foundational Operations** – Strengthens internal capacity, refines procedures, and initiates core wildlife enforcement activities.

    - **Expanded Operations** – Broadens enforcement efforts, deepens regional collaboration, and integrates international priorities.

    - **External Support for WEN Operations** – Fosters international collaboration, develops technical tools, and builds global support.



Phased Strategies

Strategies for Establishment

- Network Facilitation
- Social Marketing
- Formalising the CAR-WEN
- Planning and Fundraising
- Catalysing Pilot Projects
- External Stakeholder Engagement

Strategies for Foundational Operations

- Network Management
- Enforcement Capacity Building
- Behaviour Change Promotion
- Knowledge Creation and Management
- Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Reform
- Provision of Tools and Services

Strategies for Expanded Operations

- Alternative Livelihoods Development
- Wildlife Rehabilitation, Sanctuary, and Release
- Intelligence Sharing and Analysis
- Conduct of Joint Operations
- National Wildlife Enforcement Networking
- Biosecurity Surveillance and Control

Strategies to Externally-Support WEN Operations

- Evidence of Effective WEN Operations
- Community-based Wildlife Crime Prevention in the Caribbean
- Establish an Inter-American Wildlife College
- Develop Wildlife Crime Data Collection and Analysis Tools
- Revise the Open Standards to Support WEN Operations
- Enhance Funding and Technical Support for WENs



How to Get Involved

John Cobb

Participate in the Working Group



- The CAR-WEN Working Group includes government focal points, donor and implementing NGOs, legal and enforcement experts, and supporting civil society observers who help steer the network's growth and priorities.

- **Who can join?**

  - **Government Agencies** - Full network membership is open to national government agencies involved in wildlife enforcement, biodiversity management, and general law enforcement in the Wider Caribbean.

  - **Partnerships** - Collaborations with donors, private sector entities, NGOs, multilateral organisations, and academic institutions are especially welcome to expand resources and expertise.

  - **Advisors -** Individual experts may be invited to provide ongoing strategic guidance and support to the CAR-WEN.

  - **Observers** - Non-governmental and non-Caribbean governments are welcome to participate as either public or special observers.

Support the MOU Review and Approval

- The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the CAR-WEN's purpose, structure, and shared priorities. It is the basis for formalising participation and aligning partners.
- **How to support?**
  - Review the MOU with your agency or legal department
  - Recommend clarifications or additions
  - Share institutional or national perspectives
  - Endorse or support national approval where possible



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Participate in Pilot Projects

- The CAR-WEN Working Group is launching pilot initiatives in select countries to test shared systems, capacity-building activities, and outreach strategies.
- **Current pilot areas include:**
  - A Toolkit for the Rapid Assessment of Wildlife Crime and Enforcement
  - Biodiversity Manager - A regional database of contacts, laws, species, and literature
- **How to participate?**
  - Volunteer your country or agency to test a tool or approach
  - Provide feedback and help refine the model
  - Nominate staff to be trained or included in design teams
  - Share lessons to help us adapt and scale

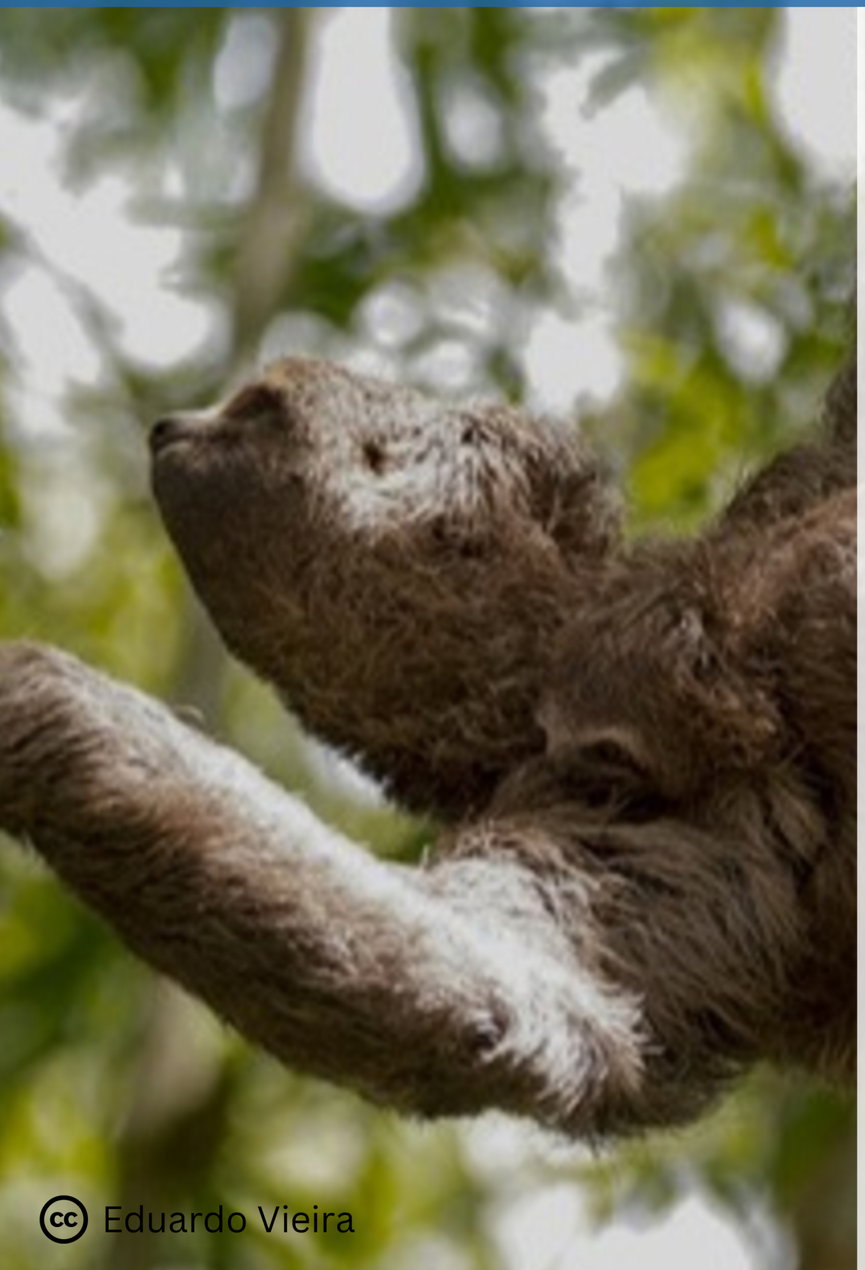


Support Funding and Technical Assistance

- The CAR-WEN's strategy includes a shared approach to fundraising and mobilising technical partnerships that serve national and regional goals.
- **How to help?**
  - Support resolutions and network events at diplomatic fora, including CITES and the SPAW Protocol
  - Align national or donor funding to shared work plans
  - Offer in-kind technical assistance or secondments
  - Connect the CAR-WEN to relevant programmes, platforms, or funding oppertunities



SPAW Recommendation



- Contracting Parties affirm their support for the establishment and sustained operation of the Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAR-WEN), and are encouraged to:
  - Designate national focal points for the CAR-WEN Working Group and communicate their contact information to the Secretariat;
  - Complete governmental review of the draft Memorandum of Understanding with a view to enabling signature upon its opening;
  - Participate actively in pilot initiatives implemented under CAR-WEN; and
  - Mobilise financial and technical assistance in support of regional wildlife crime monitoring, specialised training, and coordinated enforcement operations.



Thank You!

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Learn more at www.car-wen.org