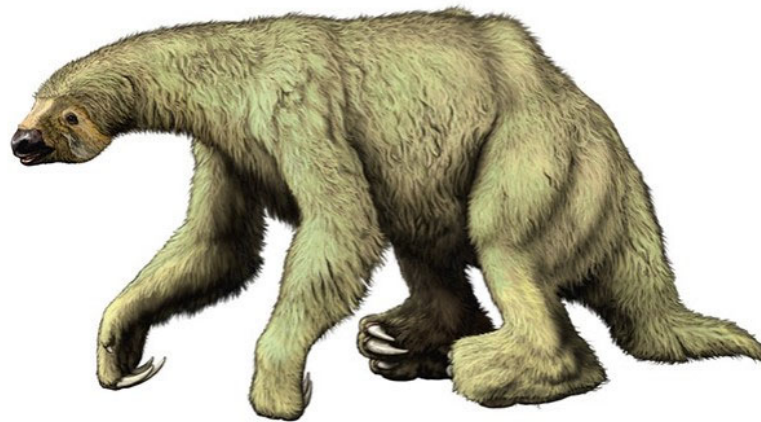
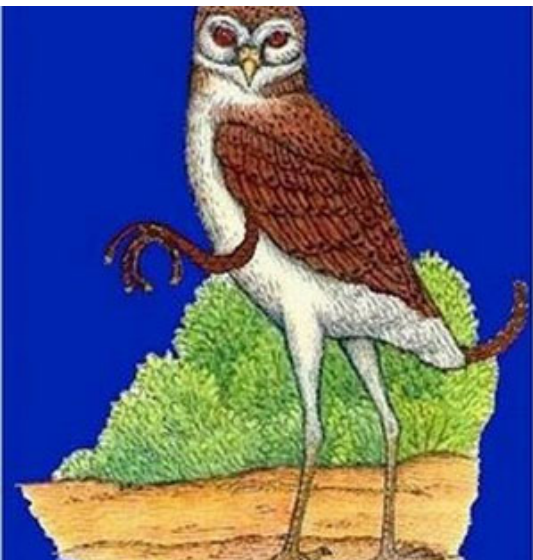


A North American
take on the
institutional, legal
and cultural context
of fauna crime

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Pre-colonial contexts

- By most accounts wildlife was abundant at the time of colonization, but exceptions existed:
 - Island extinctions, megafauna
 - Limited evidence for wildlife law, crime, or enforcement



Post-colonial crashes in wildlife populations

- Logging
- Ranching
- Farming
- Commercial hunting
- Control over first nations and tribes

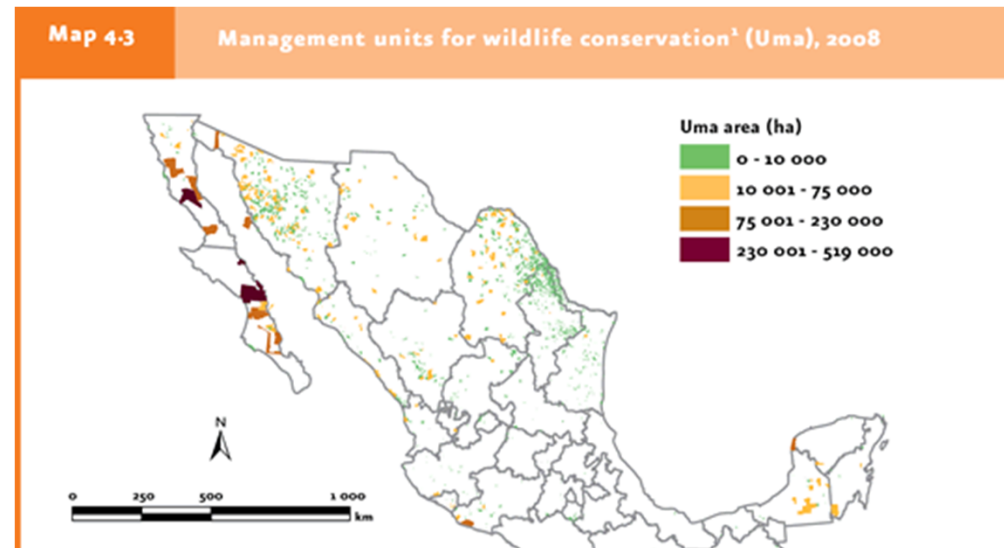
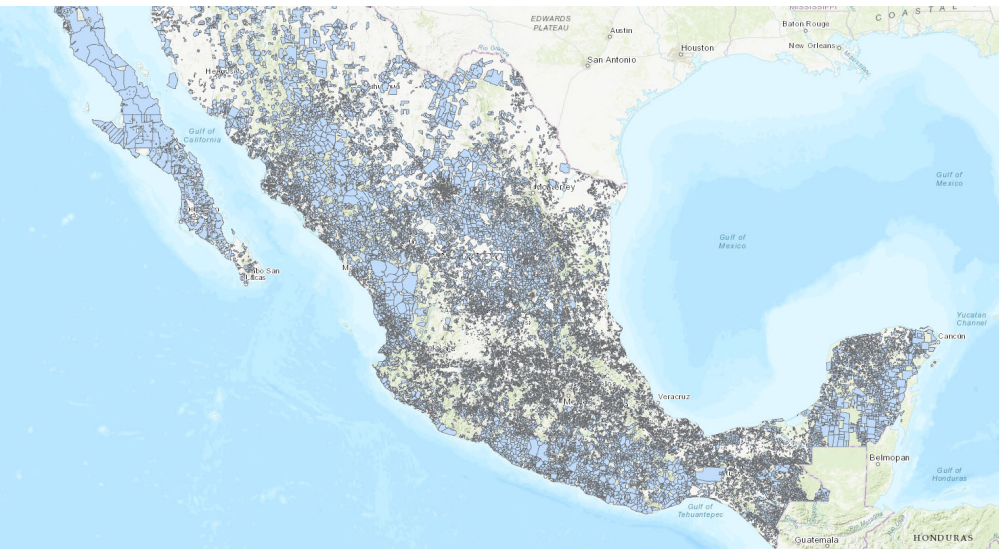


Responses to wildlife population crashes: Mexico

- **Federal** Department of Fish and Game (1894) and game laws (1940+)
- **Federal** engagement in treaties after 1936
- General Wildlife Law in 2000
 - Hunting permits only given for wildlife conservation units and units must have management plans **addressing wildlife crime**
 - **No \$** (2 million USD for all protected areas in 1997 [Yellowstone was 20 million])

Cultural contexts shaping wildlife crime in Mexico

- Post-revolution (1917) land tenure shift **from private to communal** land control
- > 90% of big game hunting permits issued to foreign hunters
 - Most hunting permits issued in border states (trophy sheep, deer)



Wildlife Crime in Mexico

- Unpermitted subsistence hunting everywhere
- Logging, oil and gas, agricultural expansion, particularly in the most biodiverse regions of the nation
- Rampant wildlife trafficking for U.S. and European markets with products sold openly in local markets



Responses to wildlife population crashes: Canada (and US)

- First wildlife refuge/bird sanctuary in 1880s, but rapid expansion in 1920s
- 1916 Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and many treaties since
- Regulated interstate commerce in wildlife in 1941
- 2021 Canadian federal budget invests \$2.3 billion, over five years, to establish protected areas on land and inland waters.
- > 4,100 wildlife enforcement officers (split between federal and provincial/territorial governments)

Responses to wildlife population crashes: United States (and Canada)

- Jurisprudence (1800s): animals are public until harvested
- First wildlife reservation in 1869 and refuge/bird sanctuary in 1903
- 1916 Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and many treaties since
- Regulated interstate commerce in wildlife in 1900
- > 7,000 wildlife enforcement officers (0.5 billion/year in salaries; state bias)
- Endangered Species Act (1973)



Wildlife Crime in The United States

- Rural areas do not benefit from industrialization
- **Closure of the hunting and fishing commons** with wildlife law (opposite Mexico)
- Wildlife protection movement



Enforcement

- Conservation laws (weak deterrent)
 - Low density
 - Low local support for endangered species and predators
- Safety laws



Enforcement

- >90% undetected and unreported (dark figure)
- > 90% operate like traffic tickets with on site 'judgement'
- Very serious cases are rare
 - Evidence is harder to collect
 - Viewed as less serious than human-human crime
 - Prosecutors less interested
 - Judges are considered 'soft' on wildlife crime
 - Wildlife officers as outsiders



The Dark Figure of Wildlife Crime

Summary

- Legal: treaties and national conservation laws (ESA, §) paired with local management laws (harvest)
- Institutional: local policing, very limited deterrence, courts focus on human crimes
- Cultural: persistence of traditional practices, resistance to perceived urban dominance: way of life, resource control, ways of thinking (animal protection)...

Questions?

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