

Revision of the Wildlife Protection Law: it's time to say goodbye to commercial utilisation of wildlife

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The authors first outlined the context in which the current Wildlife Protection Law was made – *“in the 1980s, government department did not have the financial ability to invest in the establishment of protected areas; the concept of ‘domestication and captive breeding to conserve’ thus became the main policy of the era. The concept runs through the entirety of the Wildlife Protection Act and informs the insertion of wildlife exploitation and utilisation into the general provisions of the law. The concept has also been implemented in the actions of various government departments, initially due to promotion from relevant departments but later triggering the uncontrollable development of the industry due to the attraction of commercial profit.”*

However that model of “protection” hasn't worked according to the authors: *China’s experiences over the past three decades show that the commercial utilisation of wildlife (including domestication and breeding for commercial purposes) does not have a positive impact on the conservation of wild populations. The Asiatic black bear, red-crowned crane and Siberian tiger are well-known examples of species that have been bred in captivity in the name of conservation, but objective research has indicated that the commercial breeding of these species did not realise the good intentions of the legislation, namely to contribute to the conservation of wild populations. Instead, these efforts have had the opposite effect.*

The authors concluded that this kind of policy regarding the commercial utilisation of wildlife has caused a great deal of suffering – laws and policies guided by mistaken premises, combined with the blind support and implementation of various departments at all levels of government and shortcomings in supervision and administration, have doubtless misled and harmed people like Liu Wu. While they are the criminals whose consciences were blinded by the desire for maximum commercial profit, they are also victims, trapped by misleading laws and policies.

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