

Clark R. Bavin

WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

To recognize those who demonstrate commitment and excellence in the enforcement of national and international wildlife protection laws

CLARK R. BAVIN served as Chief of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Division of Law Enforcement from 1972 until his death in 1990. During his tenure at the USFWS, he substantially elevated the fight against wildlife crime in the United States and internationally. Among his many accomplishments were the pioneering use of covert investigations and sting operations to expose illegal wildlife trade. In transitioning the USFWS Division of Law Enforcement from primarily a game management role to one focused on criminal investigation, Bavin established a team of officers that became known as the “FBI of the wildlife world.” Under his leadership, the Division of Law Enforcement would grow in recognition until it was considered by many as the most effective wildlife protection unit in the world. In 1991, the USFWS Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, was rededicated as the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory.

In recognition of Mr. Bavin’s contribution to wildlife law enforcement, and to honor those who have followed in his footsteps through their passion, determination, and effectiveness in combating wildlife crime, the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) presents—in coordination with the Species Survival Network (SSN)—the Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award at each Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The award—traditionally presented by the Secretariat General of CITES at the SSN reception—has been bestowed upon law enforcement officers from Canada, China, Costa Rica, India, Israel, Kenya, the Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, other award recipients have included police departments, national and international investigative teams, and NGO representatives.



WILDLIFE CRIME

Wildlife crime is a significant problem throughout the world. From the acts of solitary poachers to well-financed and ruthless criminal syndicates, such crimes have escalated in the past decades as the potential for profit increases and the likelihood of capture and the severity of penalties remain low. Many nations—despite valiant attempts to promulgate stricter laws and expand and improve law enforcement capacity—continue to be plagued by wildlife criminals who rob their citizens, the world, and future generations of our collective wildlife heritage.

Wildlife crime is a multifaceted problem that requires a worldwide commitment to solve. From individuals who illegally collect or kill plants or animals for personal use or commercial gain, to more sophisticated operations that systematically destroy wildlife for their parts and products, such criminal activity can and has severely impacted wild animal and plant populations around the globe. Today, wildlife criminals are not merely those who pull the trigger, cast the net, set the snare, or deliver the poison, but include those who forge documents, engage in Internet sales of protected wildlife, transport illicit products, and finance criminal operations.



Pol. Maj. Gen. Sawaeke Pinsinchai (left) and Thanit Palasuwan (right), recipients of the 2004 Clark R. Bavin Awards

A cadre of wildlife law enforcement officers—relatively few in number—are committed to enforcing national wildlife laws and international commitments like CITES, enacted to protect and preserve the world's biodiversity, imperiled species, and the habitats upon which they depend. Often unheralded, many of these front-line officers routinely risk their lives to apprehend wildlife criminals. Rarely does a week pass in which a law enforcement officer somewhere is not killed while protecting his or her country's wildlife.

Today, to combat the ever-increasing threat to animal and plant species, many countries are increasing their commitment to fighting this scourge through improved communications and international cooperation, better tools and technology, increased penalties, and more comprehensive training. Educational campaigns are also used to inform citizens of the relevant wildlife laws and to advise consumers about how they contribute to wildlife crime when they purchase illicit wildlife products. Consequently, beyond the brave game wardens and rangers who patrol the world's forests, deserts, savannahs, grasslands, and marine areas, there exists a team of dedicated professionals—investigators, forensic scientists, administrators, attorneys, informants, judges, educators, and others—who are all essential in combating wildlife crime.

SOLICITATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2013 CLARK R. BAVIN WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

The Animal Welfare Institute is now accepting nominees for the Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Awards to be presented at CoP16 in March 2013 in Thailand.

Who can submit nominations: Governments, international and national wildlife law enforcement agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, and others are invited to submit nominations for those whom they feel deserve recognition for their dedication and commitment to combating wildlife crime.

Who qualifies for the award: Wildlife law enforcement officers, law enforcement agencies, national and international collaborations or multi-agency teams, agency administrators, criminal investigators, forensic scientists, attorneys, informants, and others who have gone beyond the call of duty and demonstrated a commitment and dedication to combating wildlife crime. Nominations can be submitted for both active and retired individuals. AWI also accepts and encourages the submission of posthumous nominations for those who have died in the line of duty while enforcing wildlife laws.

How to submit a nomination: Please provide a detailed summary of the accomplishments of the nominee, emphasizing why the individual or team deserve to receive the Bavin Award. Please include contact information (i.e., address, telephone number, email address) for both the nominee and for the person, agency, department or organization submitting the nomination. For nominees who are deceased, please provide (if available) contact information for his/her family. Submit the summary, any letters of support, and any other documents relevant to the nomination (i.e., newspaper articles, official reports, other commendations) to D.J. Schubert, Wildlife Biologist, Animal Welfare Institute, via email at dj@awionline.org or by regular mail to 202 Cranberry Court, Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234 USA.

Deadline for nominations: The deadline for all nominations is October 1, 2012. All nominations must be delivered via email or postmarked by that date.

If you have any other questions about the Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award, who qualifies for an award, who can submit nominations, or how to submit a nomination, please contact D.J. Schubert at dj@awionline.org or by telephone at 1-202-390-7680.