R.A. Sollund, *The Crimes of Wildlife Trafficking: Issues of Justice, Legality and Morality*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020, 288pp, US\$49.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Rimona Afana

Guiding Ragnhild Sollund's engagement with wildlife trafficking (WLT) are several significant distinctions or contrasts recurrent throughout the book: her seeing animals as free-born sovereigns vs. personal property or common good, which is alas still the norm in most societies; her concern for the suffering of animals as sentient individuals and not just as species and ecosystems worthy (or not) of conservation efforts; her embracing a critical victimology angle vs. traditional criminological approaches: animal victims become the centrepiece of research, not the offenders, the judicial system or process; her emphasis on the chasm between crimes and harms: criminalization remains narrow and skewed by anthropocentrism, legal trafficking is not necessarily ethical, hence her concern for harms against free-born animals, not just crimes. This vision materializes not only in Sollund's interpretation of theory and empirical data, but also in her emancipatory language: using "who" instead of "which", "she/he" not "it", "abduction" not "poaching", "free-born animals" not "wildlife", and other choices also preferred by some green criminologists to counter the semantic laundering accompanying the (ab)use of animals.

Two case studies anchor the analysis: Norway, mostly a destination country when it comes to wildlife trafficking, and Colombia, which due to its biodiversity is mostly a source country. The book navigates the harms of WLT across 14 chapters, drawing on criminological literature, court records, police files, customs statistics, interviews with experts, as well as with offenders. The first two chapters introduce us to the abduction, trafficking, killing of (endangered) animals, and to the ecofeminist vision guiding the research. Chapters 3–8 discuss different facets of WLT in Norway, including the types of animals and animal products trafficked, the varied nature of abuse and its limited criminalization, the different suppliers and beneficiaries involved, the deficient enforcement of WLT legislation, and the dynamics within and between different national and local agencies dealing with wildlife. Chapters 9–11 examine WLT in Colombia, tracking some of the same aspects discussed in the Norway case: animal victims, forms of abuse, motives and incentive structures, stakeholders, and (non-)enforcement. Chapters 12–14 reflect on the (lack of) effectiveness and ethics of current WLT legislation, the specifics of animal victimization, concluding with philosophical and practical alternatives.

The legal framework examined is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a multilateral treaty drafted

in 1973, (among) the oldest and most comprehensive international agreements on conservation and sustainability. CITES introduces protections against *overexploitation* (note the phrasing) for nearly 6,000 species of animals and 33,000 species of plants, by subjecting international trade in these *specimens* (again, note the terminology) to controls, through a licensing system. As Sollund documents, contrary to its purported role, CITES reduces nature and conservation to an anthropocentric, utilitarian perspective (fauna and flora are seen as resources, so trade is limited only if its consequences might impede further trade because of the extinction of species), thus in practice CITES allows the perpetuation of harms to non-humans. This finds tragic, absurd illustrations throughout the book, such as the routine killing in Norway of confiscated free-born animals, including endangered species, because returning them to their habitat or rehabilitating them in zoos or reserves proves too complicated and pricey. To enforce CITES, which supposedly advances conservation, authorities murder thousands of beings. Abstractions like (tentative) retribution and deterrence weigh more than the lives of individual animals or the survival of their species and ecosystems.

Law and law enforcement often have little to do with justice: as the book shows, animal victims often end up doubly victimized—first by traffickers, then by legislation and agencies intended to protect them. Sollund documents intersecting, mutually reinforcing problems: the lack of expertise on WLT of police, customs, prosecutors and judges; the deficient coordination between relevant agencies; lack of funding for capacity-building on WLT issues; poor priority-setting, for instance drug offences being given significantly more attention than crimes against living non-humans; long delays in the judicial system; the majority of cases getting lenient punishment: limited fines and only rarely short prison sentences; and an anthropocentric logic driving the entire system: from suppliers, middlemen, customers, to law enforcement and even many environmental agencies, which makes the lives and deaths of non-humans relevant only insofar as they serve human interests. Also, regulating WLT is shown to have indirectly led to parallel legal and illegal markets: as trade in certain free-born animals is illegal yet trading in the same species bred in captivity is legal, traffickers sometimes sell abducted free-born animals as captive-bred. WLT, legal and illegal, amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars annually, with the United States, the European Union and China as prime consumers/offenders and, as the book consistently shows, these harms have a gendered dimension: it is mostly men driving the trade.

In a series of sinister case studies we learn about the massive number of animals victimized—abducted, exploited, tortured, maimed, killed: killed during violent abduction operations; killed in transport because of heat, cold, long periods without food, water or proper ventilation; killed by keeping them captive in inadequate conditions in homes or zoos, which leads to illness; killed during medical

experimentation; killed during hunting; killed to extract parts of their bodies for collectors or “alternative”/“traditional” medicine; killed when seized by authorities. Defining WLT is not death (as that feels natural, inevitable) but killing, whether deliberate or out of negligence or ignorance. Sollund argues that no trade, legal or illegal, in free-born animals is ethical, since “the legal status of the harm is irrelevant for the animal victims involved” (3). “Just like one would not argue for *regulating* human trafficking and enslavement, one cannot argue for the *regulation* of wildlife trade. Whether trafficking in humans or animals, it is an abominable crime” (205). This resonates with my own view on the sovereignty of all animals; the same argument can be extended, I believe, to industrial animal farming or to warfare and the weapons industry, where we also witness the casual, perverse legislation of killing. Humanitarian law can never be humane when it essentially regulates who can be killed, how and why. Similarly, the animals we raise to then slaughter cannot be “sustainably raised” or “humanely killed”. Likewise, the abduction, captivity, exploitation, killing of free-born animals should not be legal.

While the ties between state crime and WLT are not explicitly dissected in the book, it seems to me that the core factor impacting the state crime component would be speciesism: the legal system views differences in species as a necessary hierarchy and anthropocentrism normalizes the exploitation of other beings. Ethics and legality remain mis(shaped) by economic calculations and by an antiquated nature/civilization binary. Like with other grave forms of wrongdoing, criminality can continue unabated for centuries or millennia before jurisprudence catches up. In my view, states should have ample positive and negative obligations towards all sentient beings; from this perspective, our current harms against other beings should not only be treated as crimes perpetrated by individuals but also indirectly by states. Not criminalizing a grave harm is itself a form of criminality. Before we create space for this ambitious notion of il/legality, it is perhaps useful to return to a humbler path charted by Sollund towards the end of the book: the significance of care ethics (feminist alternative to consequentialist and deontological ethical theories) when it comes to non-humans—our duty to truly *see* them as sentient beings with a legitimate right to not suffer and stay alive, and to honour our capacity for compassion when relating to them.

To me the most significant (and upsetting) contribution of the book is its mapping of the multitude of harms against free-born animals, the ignorance and cruelty of humans, and the inadequacy of both law and law enforcement to meaningfully prevent, disrupt, repair these harms. Coming from transitional justice, a field just as anthropocentric as conventional criminology in its understanding of crime and repair, I can only hope transitional justice scholars and practitioners will awaken to the many harms against non-humans, wildlife trafficking being just

one among many forms of harm and criminality, since the victimization of non-humans is significantly more widespread and severe than any crimes now faced by humans. The book is a sobering testament to the inhumane ramifications of anthropocentrism and speciesism, and a reminder that the time is long overdue to reconsider the human condition and accordingly elevate law and everyday ethics.

Rimona Afana

Emory University School of Law, USA.