



Genome Sciences Seminar

Wednesday, 11.13.19 | 3:30 | Foege Auditorium



Dr. Samuel Wasser

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“Intelligence-led forensic science: Combating the illegal wildlife trade amidst a burgeoning world market”

Major transnational organized crimes have grown dramatically over the past decade, coincident with massive increases in legal containerized cargo shipped worldwide. Wildlife traffickers are capitalizing on these legal shipments to conceal their contraband cargo. This is depleting targeted non-renewable wildlife populations and their habitat at a frightening pace. Intelligence-led forensic science that capitalizes on genetic divergence between wildlife populations offers a valuable way forward. Genetic divergence can be used to determine the origin of poached material, identify poaching hotspots, and even identify wildlife products derived from the same individual or family group shipped in separate consignments by the same trafficker. This talk describes how our lab uses such genetic tools to track changes in Africa’s major ivory poaching hotspots, as well as the number, scale and connectivity of the major transnational criminal organizations smuggling ivory out of Africa. These tools enable law enforcement to target the illegal ivory trade before the contraband enters transit where it becomes far more difficult and expensive to trace. Results are also empowering financial crime investigations into these criminal networks, which is one of the most powerful tools available to identify, interdict, disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations.

<https://www.biology.washington.edu/people/profile/samuel-k-wasser>

Refreshments served outside the Auditorium at 3:20pm

Questions? Contact Brian Giebel at bgiebel@uw.edu or visit the Seminar website at <http://www.gs.washington.edu/news/seminars.htm>

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