



# Animal Investigators: How the World's First Wildlife Forensics Lab Is Solving Crimes and Saving Endangered Species

*Laurel A. Neme*

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Inside the Clark R. Bavin U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory lies a rarely seen world, a *CSI* for wildlife, where a walk-in freezer contains carcasses and animal parts awaiting necropsies (animal autopsies); shelves and drawers hold pills, rugs, carvings, and countless other products made from parts of endangered animals; and a dedicated group of forensic scientists is responsible for victims from thirty thousand animal species.

Accomplished environmental journalist Laurel A. Neme goes behind the scenes at the wildlife forensics lab -- the only crime lab of its kind -- to reveal how its forensic scientists and the agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working to investigate wildlife crimes, protect endangered species, and stem illegal wildlife trafficking, the third largest illegal trade in the world.

In three fascinating cases -- headless walrus washed up on the shores of Alaska, black bears killed for the healing powers of their gallbladders, and gorgeous feathered headdresses secretly shipped to the United States from the Amazon -- Neme traces the USFWS's daring undercover investigations and how the scientists' innovative forensic techniques provide conclusive evidence of a crime. Throughout, she underscores the staggering international scope of the supply and demand for wildlife and animal parts.

Filled with the suspense and thrilling detail of a crime novel yet driven by the all-too-real drama of a small band of scientists and investigators battling a lucrative, high-stakes underground industry, *Animal Investigators* is an engrossing account of crime and cutting-edge science.



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