

He's trying to keep our wildlife wild

By Paul Wilner
Herald Examiner staff writer

Barry Groveman, a deputy city attorney who spends most of his time prosecuting polluters, keeps a pair of python boots and a lavish stool made from an elephant's foot on display in his office.

They are grim reminders of another aspect of Groveman's work — the enforcement of California's tough endangered-species laws. Those laws forbid the sale of products made from many endangered species, including ivory carvings made from elephant tusks, expensive boots made from pythons and handbags and shoes made of alligator and crocodile parts.

Since December 1980, Groveman has brought successful suits against the T. Gem Co. in downtown Los Angeles for the illegal sale of elephant ivory carvings, Richard's Shoes in Century City and Westwood, Howard and Phil's Western clothing store in Canoga Park for selling boots with python and alligator skins and Rosa Jewelers in the New Otani Hotel for selling ivory carvings.

Most dramatically, Groveman, along with LAPD detectives and state Fish and Game officials who had

conducted an undercover investigation, swept in on the Stanley Galleries in the downtown Hilton last July.

By the time they were through, authorities had seized an estimated \$1 million worth of ivory art carvings, which were being illegally offered for sale. When a verdict was reached in criminal court last August, Stanley Masry, the owner of the gallery, was placed on 18-months probation, ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine, and contribute \$3,000 to the city's Board of Recreation and Parks for an educational display about endangered species.

The city's success in these prosecutions sparked the well-publicized seizure last December by the district attorney's office of \$58,000 in shoes and handbags allegedly made from crocodile and python skins at several swanky Beverly Hills stores.

Monitor Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based consortium of 35 conservation and animal welfare groups, recently awarded Groveman a "distinguished achievement" award — the first ever given to a prosecutor — in recognition of his activities upholding the California law.

Wildlife/A-8, Col. 4



Deputy City Attorney Barry Groveman.