



Wildlife Justice  
Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Convergence of wildlife crime with other forms of organised crime:

A 2023 review

October 2023

The Wildlife Justice Commission is grateful to the Brook Foundation for the generous financial support provided to make our work on crime convergence and this report possible.



Our policy work is made possible by the generous contributions to the Wildlife Justice Commission of:



# Executive Summary

**As wildlife trafficking has grown** to become a more serious and profitable crime type during the past two decades, there is also mounting evidence of the increased involvement of organised crime groups and cases where wildlife crime is committed in conjunction with other forms of serious and organised crime.

**In 2021**, the Wildlife Justice Commission published its [first set of 12 case studies](#) illustrating a range of examples of criminal networks dealing in wildlife alongside other illicit commodities. It applied a framework of five key typologies to describe types of connection between the converging crimes: opportunistic, diversification, transactional, embedded, and career shift.

**At that time**, there were mostly anecdotal reports of the convergence of wildlife crime with other forms of organised crime, and limited data or analysis of the issue. The intention of our 2021 report was to document a series of concrete examples where convergence was known to have occurred, to analyse this important intersection. In the intervening two years, the body of evidence has grown with further research reports and case studies published on this topic and commitments to address wildlife crime convergence adopted in the international policy framework.

**This report revisits the issue**, building on the Wildlife Justice Commission's previous work on wildlife crime convergence by presenting additional analysis and insights from three in-depth case studies, based on open-source research and intelligence collected during Wildlife Justice Commission investigations. These three case studies add to the knowledge base on this issue, which will continue to develop globally as more cases are detected.

**These cases continue to demonstrate** that criminal groups may have a range of motivations to diversify their criminal activities and form new partnerships or alliances, infiltrate new markets, or exploit gaps, vulnerabilities, or opportunities. They also show that corruption, illicit financial flows, and money laundering are common underlying factors present in almost all organised wildlife crime cases.

**Crime convergence must be addressed** from an organised crime point of view, taking a comprehensive approach to identify, charge, and prosecute all crimes committed by an organised crime network. Intelligence analysis is an essential tool in this regard, to map the criminal networks, analyse patterns and links between criminal activities, understand modus operandi and criminal motivations, and assess the level of threat posed by the criminal network as a whole.

**Joint investigations and multi-agency task forces** can bring together the resources and expertise needed to target crime convergence. Special investigation techniques should be used to gather evidence against the extended organised criminal network and build a strong case for prosecution, and parallel financial investigations should be conducted to trace where and how money is moving into and out of the network and to identify the proceeds of crime.

**Wildlife crime** is a cross-cutting criminal activity which cannot be tackled in isolation from other crimes. By addressing convergence and removing the common nodes between criminal networks, law enforcement agencies can have a greater impact on disrupting organised crime and preventing networks from reforming.



**Law enforcement and legal  
experts fighting transnational  
organised wildlife crime.**



**Wildlife Justice  
Commission**



**[www.wildlifejustice.org](http://www.wildlifejustice.org)**

© Wildlife Justice Commission