

Our learning journey



#WildEye Southern Africa Data Wranglers



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OXPECKERS
Investigative Environmental Journalism

In this document 5 journalists present the lessons they learnt on their journey to becoming data journalists involved with reporting wildlife crime

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Tips for collecting wildlife crime data

- Databases and organisations are important sources for data;
- Involve a number of people and countries;
- Cultivate good relationships;
- Get to know your data;
- Understand the process well;
- It won't always be easy, persist!



Using the law to access wildlife crime data

- Do not always expect cooperation from law enforcement officials;
- But ...good relationships with officials are key;
- Persistence is crucial;
- Understand the process, it can be rewarding;
- Learn how to work with court officials (you need 'people skills');
- Bureaucracy can frustrate



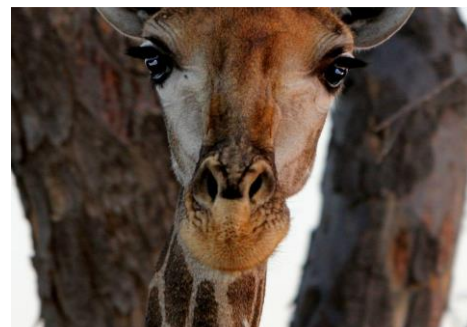
Turning data into stories

- Wildlife crime is on the rise, traffickers are finding new ways;
- Keep an eye on 'hotspots';
- Expect more seizures and arrests than court cases and prosecutions;
- Demand for pangolins and elephant tusks and ivory remains high;
- Despite an increase in rhino poaching, few seizures or arrests;
- There is still a lot of work to be done!



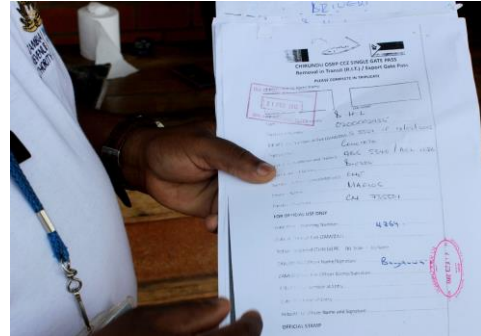
Important lessons learned

- Data is more about people than numbers;
- Exercise scepticism when working with numbers;
- Understand the process and context under which data arises;
- Avoid 'confirmation bias';
- Use multiple sources and databases;
- If you are determined to get the data, you will find a way to make it happen.



The way forward

- Keep pushing for access to information by using the law;
- Cultivate relationships with officials;
- Follow up and keep adding data to existing databases such as #WildEye;
- Publish data-driven investigations using the #WildEye Southern Africa;
- Collaborate with other data wranglers and grow our community.



Project Details

USAID's VukaNow: Combating Wildlife Crime in Southern Africa Activity that supports activities designed to significantly reduce the level of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife through innovative approaches to: enhancing law enforcement capacity, enhancing judiciary systems, minimizing wildlife crimes and illegal trade, enforcing the law more effectively, and reducing the root causes and enablers of wildlife crime.

#WildEye is part of a broader Oxpeckers programme that aids journalists with monitoring and investigating illegal transnational wildlife trade. The scope under the USAID VukaNow grant activity #WildEye: A wildlife crime tracking tool and training for investigative journalism in Southern Africa – is to develop a mapping tool and data-driven geojournalism project that will culminate in the creation of a digital tool to support the training programme to map arrests, seizures, prosecutions and convictions related to wildlife crime in Southern Africa, hosted by Oxpeckers.

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