



**Wildlife Justice
Commission**



Annual Report 2022

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Join our fight against wildlife crime

Foreword

2022: Seizing the moment and expanding our reach

As the Covid-19 pandemic slowly subsided and borders opened in the course of 2022, criminal networks went back to business as usual, resulting in an increase in poaching and trafficking of wildlife. In response, the Wildlife Justice Commission stepped up its fight against transnational organised wildlife crime. Our intelligence-led approach allowed us to secure major arrests in, amongst others, Nigeria, Mozambique and Thailand, to deepen our understanding of the criminal dynamics, and to share our expertise with law enforcement, policy makers, and practitioners across the globe.

Investigative and intelligence support was provided to 11 law enforcement agencies, including Nigerian Customs Services (NCS), Mozambique National Criminal Investigations Service (SERNIC), Mozambique National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC), South African Police Service (SAPS), South African National Parks (SANParks), Royal Thai Police (RTP), Thailand Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), US Fish and Wildlife Services (US FWS),

China Customs Anti-Smuggling Bureau (ASB), Vietnam Environmental Crime Police, and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

In 2022, the Wildlife Justice Commission continued to have an effective impact via its media outreach strategy and was a central point of reference on wildlife crime. The Wildlife Justice Commission was mentioned 114 times in international media (as compared to 62 times in 2021). In addition, we produced our own podcast and our work was featured in four other podcasts.

At the global and multilateral level, the Wildlife Justice Commission provides valuable information about its intelligence-led investigations to high-level stakeholders and policy makers. One of the ways in which the Wildlife Justice Commission accomplishes this is through its intelligence reports. In 2022, the Wildlife Justice Commission published four public reports: <https://wildlifejustice.org/publications/>.

Our work is only possible thanks to our generous donors and partners. We renewed our valued partnerships with the Oak Foundation, WWF Netherlands, and the National Postcode Lottery in 2022 with a total funding commitment of over



Olivia Swaak-Goldman

Executive Director,
Wildlife Justice Commission

EUR 4.5 million for the coming years. We welcomed the FRED Foundation and the UK People's Postcode Lottery as new donors. We would like to thank all our donors for their continued support.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our supporters for their generosity and dedication to our shared mission of wildlife justice. Thanks to your support, we were able to achieve great results in 2022. Together, we can make 2023 even more impactful.

Pangolin scales seized during a joint operation with Nigeria Customs Services. Read the story on page 10. © Nigeria Customs Services.

2022 at a glance

February

- Investigation** [LINK](#): Joint operation in Nigeria
- Podcast** [LINK](#): ACAMS' Financial Crime Matters
- Event** [LINK](#): UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice's (CCPCJ) side event

April

- Publication** [LINK](#): Bringing down the Dragon: An analysis of China's largest ivory smuggling case
- Investigation** [LINK](#): Joint operation in Thailand
- Funding** [LINK](#): EUR 1,260,000 from Oak Foundation

June

- Capacity building** [LINK](#): Prosecutors and forestry officials training in Lao PDR
- Event** [LINK](#): UN Ocean Conference - side event
- Capacity building** [LINK](#): Training with USAID in South Africa and Mozambique

August

- Publication** [LINK](#): Rhino horn trafficking as a form of transnational organised crime 2012-2021
- 2022 Global Threat Assessment**
- Event** [LINK](#): UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

October

- Podcast** [LINK](#): Our original podcast series: "Wildlife Kingpin: The rise and fall of Ah Nam"
- Capacity building** [LINK](#): Wildlife and forestry officers training in Malaysia
- Events** [LINK](#): 24h Conference on global organized crime, United for Wildlife (UfW) Global Summit

December

- Event** [LINK](#): USAID Counter Wildlife Trafficking Partnership Coordination Forum II
- Event** [LINK](#): The International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC)

January

- Capacity building** [LINK](#): Prosecutors training in Greater Mekong

March

- Event** [LINK](#): International Anti-Corruption Academy webinar series

May

- Event** [LINK](#): UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice's (CCPCJ) 31st Session
- Investigation** [LINK](#): Joint operation in Nigeria

July

- Capacity building** [LINK](#): Training with USAID in South Africa and Mozambique
- Investigation** [LINK](#): Joint operation in Mozambique

September

- Podcast** [LINK](#): Asymmetrical Haircuts: Wild Things
- Publication** [LINK](#): Ah Nam: The Downfall of Vietnam's Wolf of Wall Street
- Event** [LINK](#): Webinar with WWF South Africa

November

- Events** [LINK](#): CITES CoP19 & United for Wildlife - New Work
- Podcast** [LINK](#): The Rhino Man
- Publication** [LINK](#): To skin a cat: How organised crime capitalises and exploits captive tiger facilities

Intelligence-led investigations

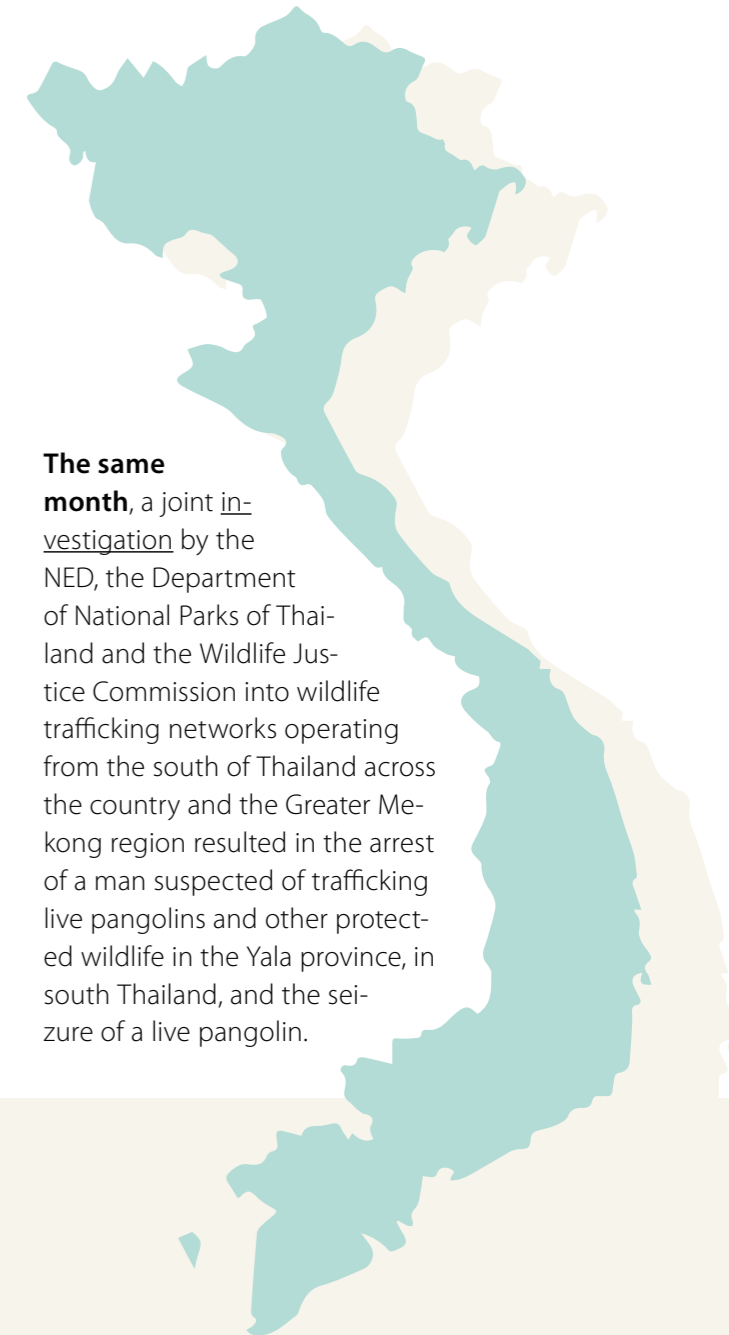
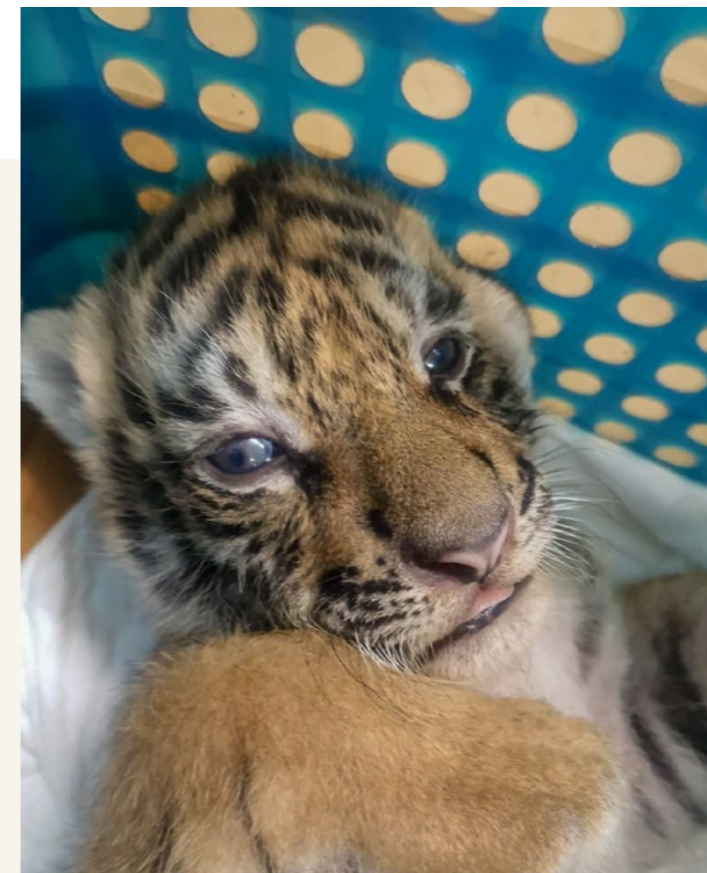
The **Wildlife Justice Commission** has been investigating the illegal exotic pet trade since 2016, with its initial focus primarily on the trafficking of orangutans from Indonesia and Malaysia, and the trafficking of turtles and tortoises (testudines) from Malaysia, India, and Bangladesh. The Wildlife Justice Commission's investigations into the live pet trade

in 2022 led to the arrest of eight traffickers involved in the supply of live tigers and pangolins. The trafficking of endangered wildlife for the pet trade is a multi-million-dollar criminal industry that continues to grow in scale, driven by increasing global demand for rare species.



Joint operations in Thailand

In April, a six-months long joint investigation conducted by officers of the Royal Thai Police Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Suppression Division (NED) and the Wildlife Justice Commission resulted in the arrest of three men suspected of involvement in a big cats trafficking network in Thailand and the Greater Mekong Region. A three-months old tiger cub was rescued from being trafficked by a criminal network. The cub has been named 'Nong Kwan' and is now being cared for at the Bueng Chawak Wildlife Sanctuary in Thailand.

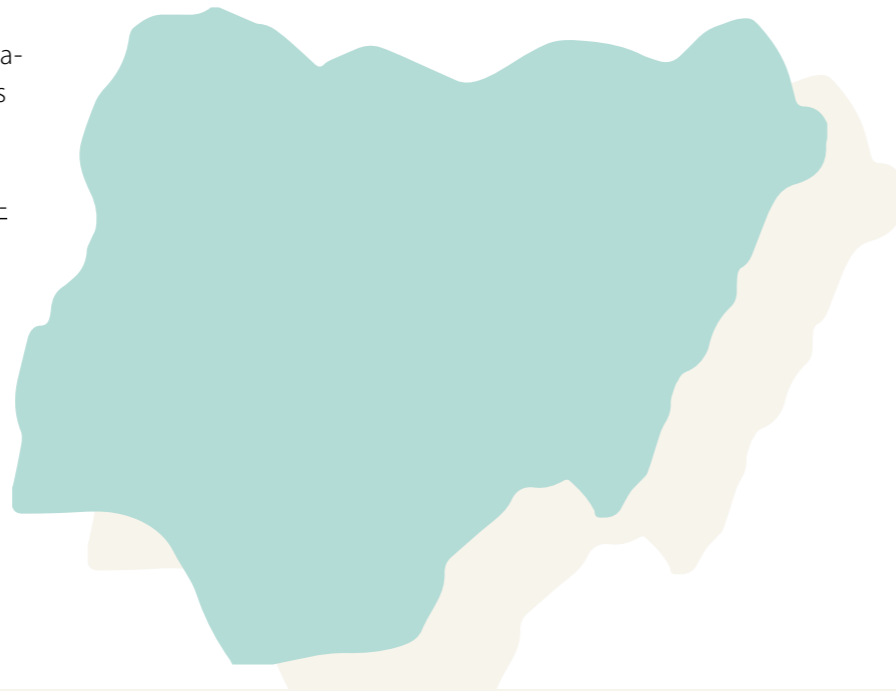


The same month, a joint investigation by the NED, the Department of National Parks of Thailand and the Wildlife Justice Commission into wildlife trafficking networks operating from the south of Thailand across the country and the Greater Mekong region resulted in the arrest of a man suspected of trafficking live pangolins and other protected wildlife in the Yala province, in south Thailand, and the seizure of a live pangolin.



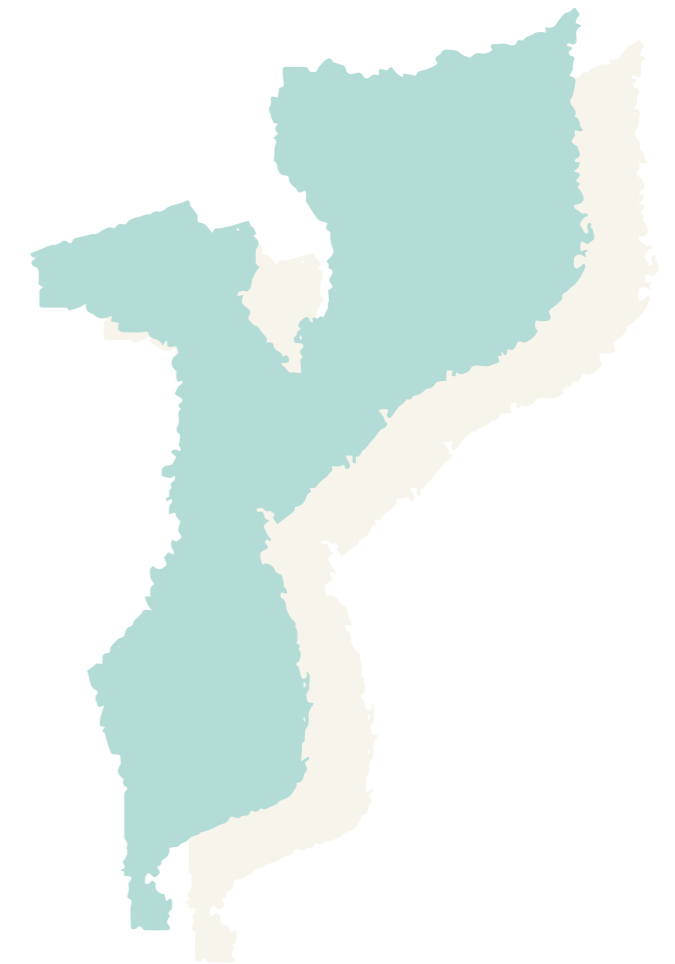
Joint operation in Nigeria

One of our biggest successes was the continuation of our partnership with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), which resulted in the arrest of 14 suspects in three separate operations. These arrests included the arrest of three Vietnamese nationals on wildlife crime charges: high-ranking members of a major organised crime group involved in the trafficking of ivory and pangolin scales from Nigeria and rhino horn and lion bones from Mozambique and South Africa to Vietnam. The three suspects were in Nigeria actively sourcing pangolin scales when they were arrested by NCS officers. It is the first time Nigeria is prosecuting Vietnamese nationals for wildlife crime, and it is a testament to the commitment of the NCS.



Joint operation in Mozambique

In July, the Wildlife Justice Commission provided support to the Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal (SERNIC) during the arrest of a well-known rhino horn trafficker known as "Navara". The Wildlife Justice Commission acknowledges the outstanding work of SERNIC in bringing this suspect to justice. For many years "Navara" has had the reputation of being one of the most notorious rhino poaching coordinators in Mozambique coordinating poaching crews going into South Africa.



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Sharing our findings

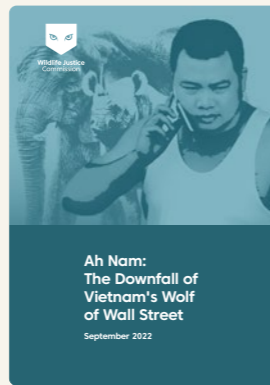
We published four major public reports in 2022:

The Wildlife Justice Commission strives to inform law enforcement and policy makers by publishing public reports and intelligence reports, which include detailed insights into our investigative and intelligence work.



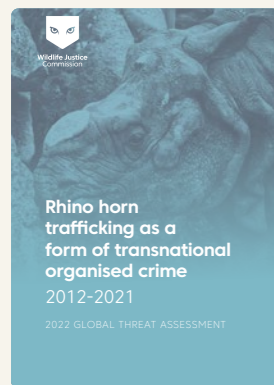
Bringing down the Dragon: An analysis of China's largest ivory smuggling case

Date published: 1/2/2022



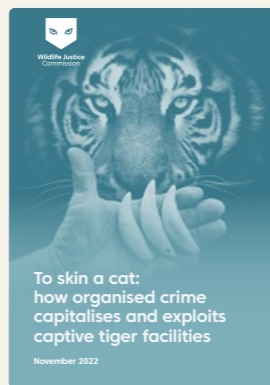
Ah Nam: The Downfall of Vietnam's Wolf of Wall Street

Date published: 28/9/2022



Rhino horn trafficking as a form of transnational organised crime 2012-2021

Date published: 27/10/2022



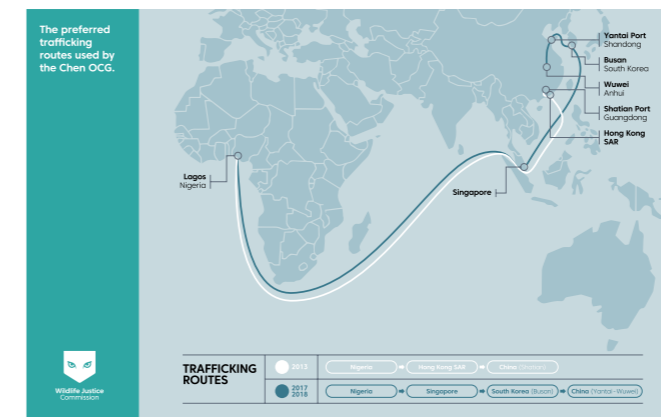
To skin a cat: How organised crime capitalises and exploits captive tiger facilities

Date published: 15/11/2022

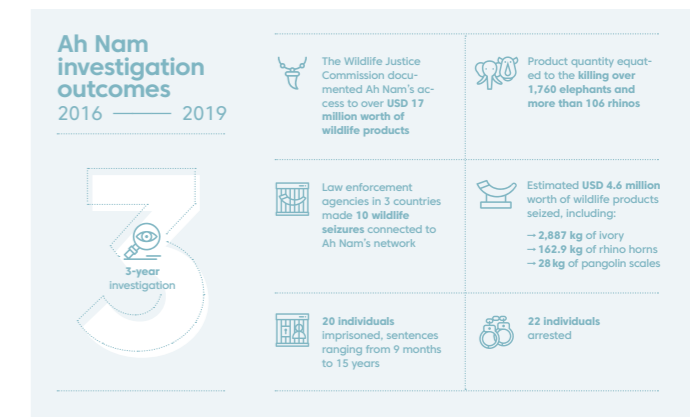
For each report, we created visuals that help communicate key takeaways in an accessible way. These

visuals were also used to help promote the reports on social media and on our website.

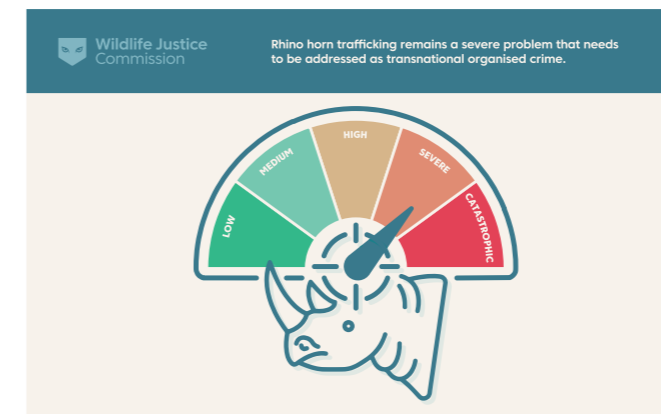
The preferred trafficking routes used by the Chen OCG



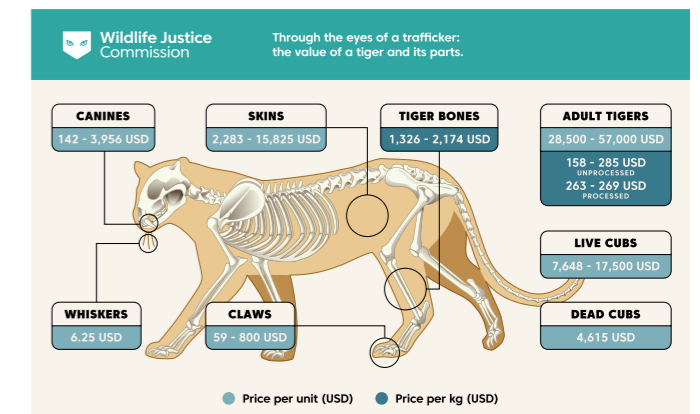
Ah Nam Investigation outcomes 2016-2019



Rhino horn trafficking remains a severe problem that needs to be addressed as transnational organised crime



Trough the eyes of a trafficker: the value of a tiger and its parts



The Wildlife Justice Commission's threat assessment on rhino horn trafficking was covered by 21 media outlets in several countries, including South Africa, India, the United States, Hong Kong SAR, Myanmar, and Thailand. The report's findings and recommendations were widely reported. The Wildlife Justice Commission Executive Director presented the findings of the report in a radio interview on The John Perlman Show in South Africa and on The Rhino Man Podcast in the United States. On World Rhino Day, Wildlife Justice Commission organised a webinar co-hosted with WWF South Africa for a discussion on the latest threats faced by rhinos in Africa. The webinar focused on the status of African rhino populations. The Director of Intelligence presented our findings of a threat assessment on the trafficking of rhino horn over the last decade.



The Wildlife Justice Commission further disseminated these reports by regularly contributing at conferences and expert panel discussions and by hosting events. The Wildlife Justice Commission participated at the UN Ocean Conference, where we highlighted the urgency of tackling the trafficking of vulnerable marine species as transnational organised crime and to use criminal justice approaches to protect these species.



At the United for Wildlife Global Summit, our Executive Director discussed the importance of addressing the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime, which is enabled by corruption and which has a significant impact on biodiversity, climate change, the economy, and rule of law.



The Wildlife Justice Commission actively participated in CITES CoP19 to advocate for the use of relevant investigative and intelligence methodologies to address transnational wildlife crime. Our Director of Programs presented the recommendations emerging from our recently launched global threat assessment on rhino horn trafficking and gave insights into our latest report on the role that captive tiger facilities play in the illegal trade in Southeast Asia.

Expanding our reach

February **1**



Financial Crime Matters podcast by ACAMS
[LINK](#)

September **2**



Asymmetrical Haircuts podcast
[LINK](#)

October **3**



Our original podcast series: "Wildlife Kingpin: The rise and fall of Ah Nam"
[LINK](#)

November **4**



The Rhino Man podcast
[LINK](#)

After the global pandemic, the wheels of international diplomacy started turning again this year. The Wildlife Justice Commission continued urging governments to scale up the fight against wildlife crime. Throughout 2022, we continued to share our expertise with law enforcement, policy makers, and practitioners across the globe.

We also reached out to a wider audience through our own podcast series, and our work was featured in three other podcasts:

Providing capacity building

The **Wildlife Justice Commission** provided tailored training courses for law enforcement agencies and legal professionals in five countries to strengthen intelligence-led wildlife crime investigations and effective prosecutions. We provided judicial training to prosecutors and judges in [Thailand](#); training to prosecutors and forestry officials in [Lao PDR](#); training to the Sabah Wildlife Department and Sabah Forestry Departments in [Malaysia](#); and four training courses for law enforcement agencies in [Mozambique](#) and South Africa.

In **2022**, the Wildlife Justice Commission conducted 11 trainings and one mentoring programme in five countries including Mozambique, South Africa, Thailand, Lao PDR and Malaysia.

In **February 2022**, the Wildlife Justice Commission commenced our contributions to the USAID Vu-kaNow project, with a focus on strengthening the use of intelligence analysis to support intelligence-led wildlife crime investigations in South Africa and Mozambique. The Wildlife Justice Commission first concluded two sets of needs assessments, one each for South Africa and Mozambique. Between June and July 2022, the Wildlife Justice Commission conducted four training sessions to 26 investigators and intelligence analysts from the Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre, DFFE and the South African National Parks (SANParks) in South Africa, as well as SERNIC and ANAC in Mozambique.

To **build the capacity** of the criminal justice sector in the Golden Triangle, the Wildlife Justice Commission provided technical support in Thailand and Lao PDR by delivering judiciary workshops and developing guidelines for prosecuting wildlife cases as part of the “Fighting Wildlife Trafficking in the Golden Triangle” project. These activities aim to empower prosecutors and judges to deter criminals while encouraging more targeted use of legal tools to disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups involved in wildlife crime.

In **April 2021**, the Wildlife Justice Commission commenced a three-year project generously funded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery to expand our in-house Intelligence Development Unit (IDU) into a global Intelligence Development Unit to combat and prevent wildlife crime.

As the first of its kind, this global IDU supports multinational efforts to fight wildlife crime in real time and will drive the use of intelligence in Southeast Asia. This initiative, called Project Galvanise, is designed to strategically support law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders who hold important portfolios for safeguarding protected landscapes and wildlife in Southeast Asia.

In **2022**, the following achievements were realised under this project:

- **Eight intelligence analysts** have been recruited and funded by Galvanise to support this work in Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **We established** a project steering committee that met for the first time in December 2022. The purpose of the group is to bring together key stakeholders who are instrumental for the project for strategic decision making, monitoring progress and addressing any challenges.
- **We began** our intensive training programme for analysts in November 2022 in Malaysia with training provided on topics including open-source intelligence, social media intelligence, online investigations, and the dark web. Three more training courses are planned through to March 2023. After the training, we will support analysts in their agencies with mentoring.



In the news

In 2022, the Wildlife Justice Commission continued to have good results on media outreach and be a point of reference on wildlife crime. The Wildlife Justice Commission was mentioned 114 times in international media (in 2021 the Wildlife Justice Commission was mentioned 62 times).

Highlights

Links to articles and features are available at:



1



SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST
China crackdown on ivory trade deters smugglers, Hague report finds

[LINK](#)

2



BANGKOK POST
Sting nets tiger cubs, smugglers

[LINK](#)

3



OCCRP
Wildlife Experts: Rhino Horn Trafficking is on the Rise Worldwide

[LINK](#)

4



MONGABAY
New protections for sharks, songbirds, frogs and more at CITES trade summit

[LINK](#)

5



THE INDEPENDENT
Fighting wildlife crime: a roadmap that works

[LINK](#)

Social media

During 2022 the Wildlife Justice Commission gained 2,790 new followers, accounting for a total follower base of 14,412 followers in December 2022.

Facebook



By end December 2022 the Wildlife Justice Commission had 1,706 followers, a 2% decrease from 2021.

LinkedIn



By end December 2022 the Wildlife Justice Commission had 6,360 followers, a 44% increase from 2021.

Twitter



By end December 2022 the Wildlife Justice Commission had 5,100 followers, a 9% increase from 2021.

Instagram



By end December 2022 the Wildlife Justice Commission had 1,246 followers, a 56% increase from 2021.

LinkedIn has been our fastest growing platform in 2022 and also provided good opportunities for recruitment.



Our partners

The Wildlife Justice Commission is proud of what we achieved in 2022, but none of it would have been possible without our generous supporters. We are standing up against a multi-billion-dollar illicit industry; to take on this immense challenge, we rely on the contributions of lotteries, foundations, government institutions, non-profit organisations and individuals. United by the drive to protect our planet’s vulnerable wildlife, the Wildlife Justice Commission is extremely grateful for our donors’ continued support and flexibility.

We renewed our valued partnerships with the Oak Foundation, WWF Netherlands, and the National Postcode Lottery in 2022 with a total funding commitment of over EUR 4.5 million for the coming years. We welcomed the FRED Foundation and the UK People’s Postcode Lottery as new donors.

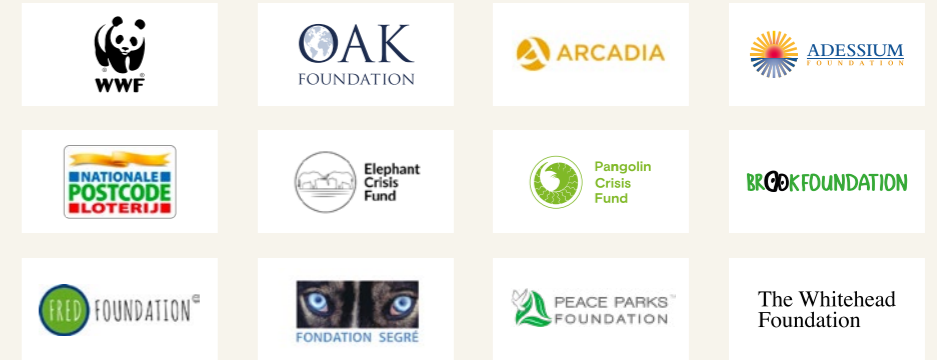


Christopher Parker

Trustee at the Oak Foundation

“Oak Foundation is proud to continue providing core support to the Wildlife Justice Commission in its fight against transnational organised wildlife crime. We believe the work of the Wildlife Justice Commission is tremendously important in protecting our planet’s biodiversity. This is a critical component in countering climate change. It is time to act now.”

Our partners



We also extend our appreciation to the generous donors who wish to remain anonymous.

Thanks

In-kind supporters



The team at the Wildlife Justice Commission

The Wildlife Justice Commission is made up of highly skilled professionals with different cultural backgrounds. The organisation draws strength from its international character and cultural diversity. Wildlife Justice Commission personnel comes from 27 different countries. With respect to gender equality, the team consists of 52 women and 52 men. Four of the eight senior management positions are held by women. Within the Intelligence Development Unit, the largest intelligence unit of a non-profit organisation focused on wildlife crime, all but one of the criminal analysts are women.

Ensuring the safety of our people and the quality of our work is of the utmost importance to the Wildlife Justice Commission. Therefore, the organisation developed and implemented a series of policies and procedures to ensure both are protected. Team members participated in risk and crisis management trainings during 2021, and the Code of Conduct, Whistleblower Policy, and Risk Policy are reviewed and confirmed on an annual basis.

The Wildlife Justice Commission continues to value the support of our supervisory board and ancillary bodies (outlined below), providing expert insights to help guide our work.

FRIENDS OF WILDLIFE JUSTICE COMMISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Friends of the Wildlife Justice Commission Board who support the mission and vision of the Wildlife Justice Commission in the USA.

SUPERVISORY BOARD

A dedicated group of experts who provide both strategic guidance and supervision to the organisation. Members of the Supervisory Board receive no remuneration for their work for the Wildlife Justice Commission.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

The Independent Review Panel (IRP) plays a critical role in the Wildlife Justice Commission's process by conducting objective examination and evaluations of the Wildlife Justice Commission's Case Files. Members of the IRP are therefore carefully selected based on their: 1) affinity with the rule of law, transparency and anti-corruption; 2) independence; and 3) impartiality and high moral character.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The final decision-making body and responsible for the organisation, consisting of the Executive Director and the Director of Programs.



104 field and office staff

52 are women



27 different nationalities

4/8 four of the eight senior management positions are held by women





Join our fight against wildlife crime

Take up our banner:

Share our mission.



Make use of our findings.

[READ](#)

Stay up to date on our latest news and investigations.

[SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER](#)

Support our work directly.

[DONATE](#)

JOIN US

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



**Wildlife Justice
Commission**

www.wildlifejustice.org