Case Study

The #WildEye Journey

The beginning

- 2012: Oxpeckers elected a winner in the African News Innovation Challenge (ANIC)

- Description of project: 'A narrative mapping project that uses satellite imagery and geographic data analysis in stories to expose cross-border criminals and syndicates damaging the environment through logging, poaching and ecological degradation.'

- Africa's first investigative environmental journalism unit established
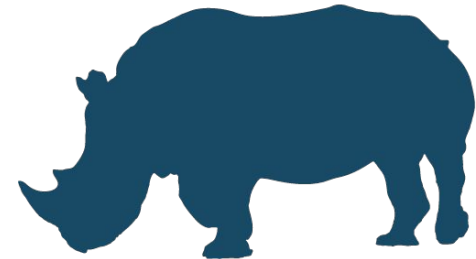
2013

- Collaboration with InfoAmazonia, pioneer of environmental data and geo journalism, based in Brazil
- Launch of oxpeckers.org at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Rio de Janeiro
- Part of the African Network of Centers for Investigative Reporting and Code for Africa
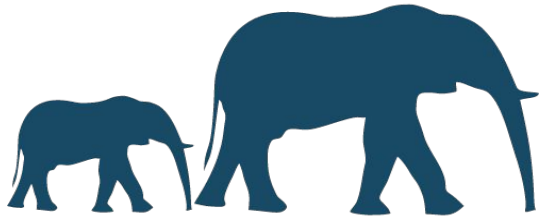
2014

- Launch of Chinese Journalism Project – unique transnational collaborative model, supported by Wits Journalism
- First cohort of Fellows, Hongqiao Liu and Hongxiang Huang
- Over the years Asian journalists working with this Oxpeckers project have produced pioneering dossiers of work
- 'Global wildlife trafficking syndicates employ increasingly sophisticated circumvention tools and technology to avoid detection. It makes sense to expose them by playing them at their own game'

Pioneering data journalism

- Oxpeckers model cited in <u>The Art and Science of Data Driven Journalism</u> (Tow Center, 2014): 'Newsrooms must diversify their staff, and data journalists need to go beyond acquiring and cleaning data to understanding its provenance and source'

- PoachTracker – a data-driven geo-journalism tool that provides instant visualization of statistics on rhino poaching deaths and arrests across Southern Africa

- Data based on official statistics; analysed for use in related dossier of investigations

Mapping Justice

- What happens after wildlife contraband is seized and alleged offenders are arrested?
- Mapping Justice: project started with Rhino Court Cases platform
- After months of chasing SA's Justice Ministry and submission of formal letters of access to information, Minister released a data set of court cases involving alleged rhino poachers – including information on the Dawie Groenewald syndicate (pictured) – case still not concluded
- Data-driven tool tracks & shares updates on + 350 court cases

Accessing information

- [Mapping rhino poaching court cases data](#)
- In the United States, one can set up a Pacer (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) account to keep track of court cases. Other countries have centralised government databases
- In Southern Africa, we resorted to search engines,
- PAIA applications, and individual court records to find the data
- We continue to work closely with government agencies and independent monitoring organisations

Edna Molewa @BEMolewa · Aug 11

Useful data visualisation tool via @OxCIEJ to map #rhino poaching cases on the court roll

oxpeckers.org/maprhinos/

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#WildEye

- [#WildEye a new digital platform](), building on this model to deal with all wildlife crime and justice
- Launched in 2019, in partnership with the Earth Journalism Network, originally focused on Europe
- Part of a broader project that aids and trains journalists monitoring and investigating illegal wildlife trafficking
- Series of in-depth investigations published exposing wildlife smuggling networks and how they work across the continent, and insights into how the links operate on a global scale.
- [Europe cracks down on wildlife crime]()

#WildEye Asia

- [#WildEye Asia launched in 2020](#), again in partnership with EJN
- 'Until now, there was no single place to access information easily on efforts to crack down on wildlife crime in Asia. #WildEye addresses this gap by tracking & sharing data on justice in action'
- Over 18 months, just under 2,000 data points collated and shared on the #WildEye map
- Analysed to produce a series of in-depth investigations in Asia - [How journalists use data to investigate wildlife crime in Asia](#)

Back to Africa

- Lessons learnt in other parts of the globe now being applied in Southern and East Africa
- [New Oxpeckers professional support programme](#) boosts wildlife crime reporting in Southern Africa with data-driven tools and journalist training
- Ambitious project – and you are the path-finders!

Lessons learnt

Success takes time, effort, consistency

Understanding of context and technology opportunities is key to innovation

Foster and nurture contacts, supporters, community

Thank you!

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