

# METHODOLOGY

and main findings

## STUDY OF THE ORIGINS AND MOTIVATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

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MIKT4, 9th June 2021



**Nature  
GUARDIANS**  
against environmental crime





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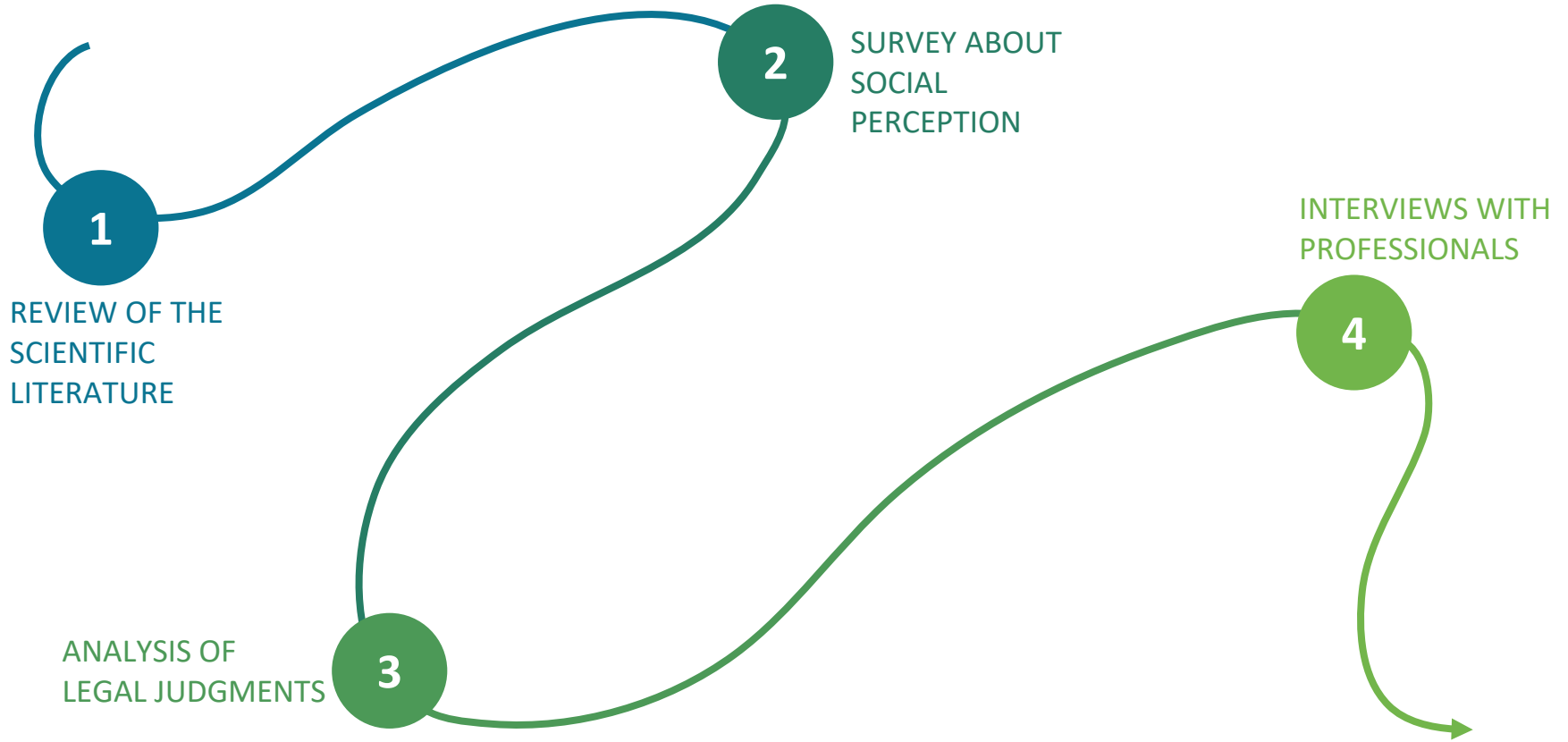
# OBJECTIVES

- 01 Increase the exchange of **experiences** and **best practices** against environmental crimes
- 02 Ensure and strengthen adequate **enforcement** of environmental law
- 03 **Prevent** environmental crime, **raise awareness** and promote **cultural changes**
- 04 Improve the **conservation** status of species and habitats
- 05 **Reduce impunity** in the commission of crimes
- 06 **Increase knowledge** about the dimension of environmental crimes

## MAIN GOAL

The main objective of the project is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of actions aimed at combating environmental crimes in Portugal and Spain, especially those committed against Wildlife.

# PARTS OF THE RESEARCH



## WHAT

The **available scientific literature** on the motivations for environmental crime, its causes, possible profiles, analyses that had already been carried out and other data of interest to the study were reviewed.

## WHY

1. To find out what research on the subject had been carried out **previously** and what were their difficulties and suggestions for future lines.
2. To find out which **factors** seemed to be most relevant in predicting anti-environmental and illegal behaviour.
3. To find out **methodologies and good practices** both in research and in subsequent prevention or intervention actions.

## HOW

The main **database** consulted was *Google Scholar*. *PsycINFO*, *Web of Science* or *Scopus* were subsequently used. Further bibliography was obtained from the review of **specific articles** in **specialised journals**.

## PROFIT



Economic motives are behind illegal commercial activities, such as illegal trafficking of waste or endangered species or their parts.

They are also found in illegal hunting for meat supplies or in fires to free up pastures –but not as much as it is thought to be for land or timber speculation.



## CORRUPTION

Behind the perpetrator of the crime, there is often a network of corruption. It mainly concerns illegal trade in waste, exotic fauna or their parts or rare woods, but also illegal logging and poaching.



## CONFLICTS

The financing of insurgent or terrorist movements frequently comes from wildlife trading.

Poaching is often the source of food for armed groups. Social and political instability encourages this type of crime.

## BELIEFS



Superstition is central to the trade of parts of endangered species (pangolin scales, rhino horn, vulture's brain...). The belief that some types of meat are healthier can motivate illegal hunting, while some forest fires are associated with Satanism and the release of –often invasive– species is part of some religious rites.

## TRADITIONS

Tradition itself motivates several types of wildlife crimes, due to their non-selective or massive nature, or catches that are harmful to the species. It also encourages the use of fire as a means of eliminating brushwood.



## ELITISM

It takes a lot of purchasing power to consume food products from endangered species (pangolin meat, sturgeon caviar), to possess some of their parts (ivory, leathers, scents) or to keep them as pets (parrots, felines). The search of luxury and social prestige is one of the motives for committing these infringements.



## SOCIAL COHESION

Maintaining social ties is an important factor in illegal logging in a number of countries. Poaching is sometimes justified as a way to keep youth away from drugs or as a family activity.

## NONCONFORMITY

Disagreeing with rules, regarding them as unfair or perceiving them as restrictive are ideas linked to many types of crime.

Releasing animals from fur farms, poaching in a protected area, chasing predators or setting fires in protest are some of these offences.



## DETACHMENT



It was identified that the perpetrator is sometimes emotionally or utilitarianly detached from the natural resources that are affected by his or her action. For example, an incendiary may perceive that the vegetation cover means no benefit to him, or an illegal hunter or fisherman has no adherence to the environment if he is not from the area.

Despite all these motivations, the most recurrent factors are **lack of awareness** and **lack of understanding of the real impact** of actions.

**Repression alone is not enough.**

It must be accompanied by awareness-raising, the search for economic alternatives and, in many cases, the participation of the involved actors in the search for solutions.



## WHY

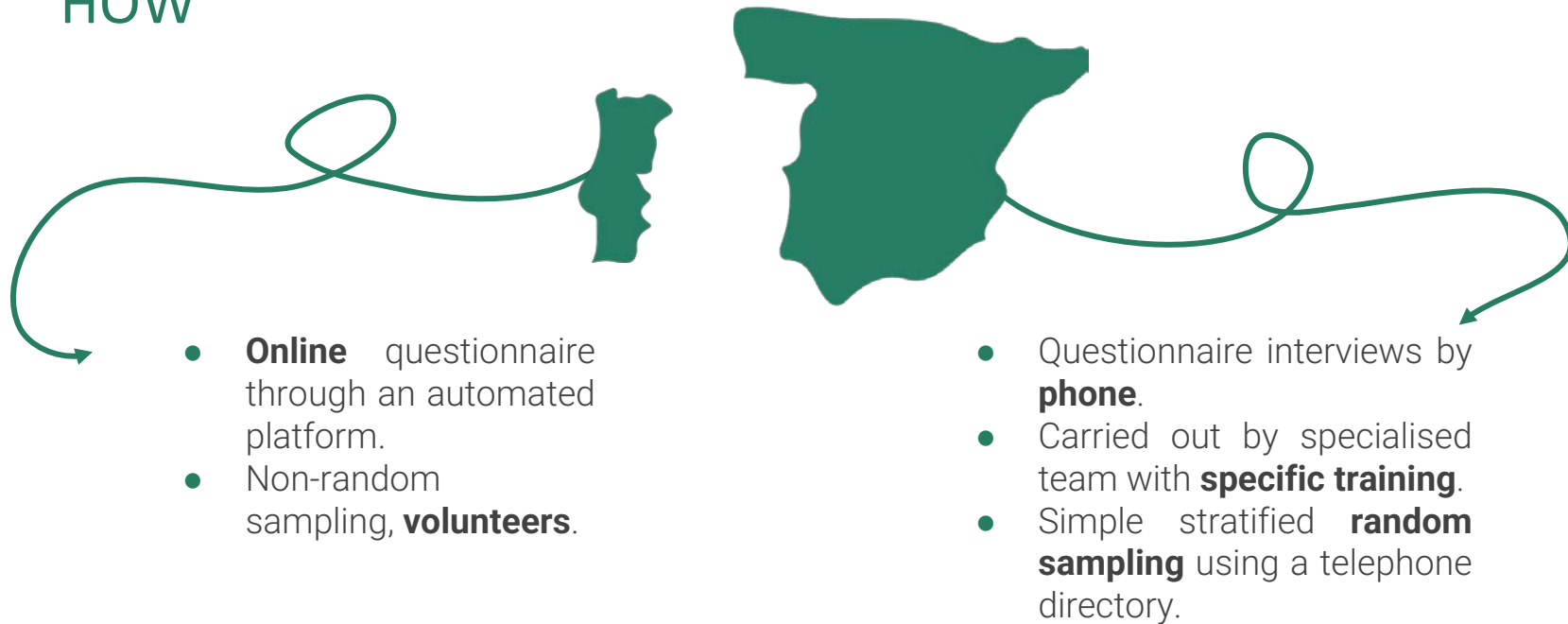
A questionnaire was designed to collect the general population's opinion —**social perception on environmental crime**.

## WHAT

The questionnaire consisted of the following **sections and items**:

1. Specific socio-demographic data —5 items.
2. General socio-demographic data —4 items.
3. Assessment of the actions carried out by different actors in the face of environmental crime —7 items.
4. Knowledge of environmental crimes, penalties and sanctions —3 items.
5. Influence of human factors and type of species affected on the perception of the infraction —5 items.
6. Influence of the media —4 items.

## HOW





Percentage of the Spanish population who thinks that **starting a forest fire is a crime.**



Percentage of the Spanish population who thinks that **releasing alien species is a crime.**

There is a need to inform and raise awareness about the environmental and legal consequences of lesser-known crimes.

## DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, AWARENESS SEEMS TO BE INCREASING:



**4 out of 5 people** believe that environmental issues are not given enough importance especially by the media.



**Almost 90% of the population** believes that environmental crime is as or more important than other types of crime.



**Almost 100% of the population** recognises the seriousness of killing Iberian lynx.

But killing a species of snake, butterfly or lizard, even if it is also protected, is not considered as important.

There is also a need to raise awareness of less charismatic species.

## WHAT

A total of 258 court rulings were analysed, extracted from the **database of the Judicial Documentation Centre** for articles 334 to 337 of the Spanish Penal Code.

## WHY

The aim was to find, from the jurisprudence applied by the courts, the **motivations** of the infractions and the **profile** of their authorship.

## HOW

A **content analysis** was carried out: first the categories were constructed and then the relationship between them was analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics programme.

*The selected variables that have been analysed are...*

PART 1 • LITERATURE

PART 2 • SURVEY

PART 3 • JUDGEMENTS

PART 4 • INTERVIEWS

## COURT JUDGEMENT

Year of resolution

Type of infraction

Articles of the P. C.

Type of decision

Type of conviction

## INFRACTION

Year of infraction

Perpetrator

Number

Gender

Age

Location

Region

Province

Municipality

Environment

Method used

Fauna

Species involved

Threat level

Hunting category

## WHO?

69,4%

Infractions committed by a **single perpetrator**.

His average age is **42 years-old**.

100%

Infractions committed by **men**.

## WHERE?

49%

Infractions committed in **small municipalities** suffering from **depopulation**.

37%

Infractions committed on **hunting grounds**, but **72% is acquitted**.

11%

Infractions committed on **private properties**, and **61% is convicted**.



## BIRDS

are the species that suffer most from wildlife infringements.

They appear in **71%** of the sentences analysed.

## WHAT

Interview with a Commander of the Guardia Civil from the **Technical Unit of the Judicial Police**, specialised in criminal profiling of the incendiary.

## WHY

The objective was to gather information on the process, in first person, of **profiling** people who commit an environmental crime. We extracted some of the fundamental variables and the technical opinions of the specialised agent, in order to build the next questionnaire.



## WHAT

Interview by means of an online questionnaire designed with three main **blocks**:

1. Sample data: place of work, province, experience...
2. Opinion on prototypical offender (profile, legal aspects, motivations, law and sanctions) of:
  - a. Illegal hunting.
  - b. Illegal buying and selling of animal species or derivatives.
  - c. Destruction of nests of protected species.
3. Opinion on the usefulness of the profiles.

## HOW

The sample was contacted by **e-mail** through their agencies and coordinators.

**Quantitative and qualitative data** were triangulated, combining statistical analysis with IBM SPSS Statistics and content analysis.



## ILLEGAL HUNTING

Male.

Between 46 and 55 years old.

Lower-middle socio-cultural level.

Right-wing or extreme right-wing political ideology.

Works in rural areas, mainly as a farmer or stockbreeder;  
or is unemployed.

Usually from the area and familiar with the law,  
but considers it not very legitimate.

May be defiant. They do not usually feel guilty.

Financial penalty does not usually change their behaviour.

Male.  
Between 36 and 45 years old.  
Medium socio-cultural level.  
Has knowledge of the law,  
but does not consider it legitimate,  
so the economic sanction  
is not usually effective.  
May be outgoing and defiant.

# ILLEGAL SALE \ PURCHASE

OF PROTECTED SPECIES OR THEIR PARTS



Male.  
Between 40 and 60 years old.  
High socio-cultural level.  
Right-wing political ideology.  
Works as an antiques dealer,  
businessman or hotelier,  
or is a collector.  
He tends to be confused.  
Although he tends to know the law,  
the sanction can be effective.

Male.  
Between 56 and 65 years of age.  
Low or medium socio-cultural level.  
Working in the primary sector  
or is unemployed, retired or a student.  
The sanction is usually quite effective,  
depending on whether the nest is destroyed  
domestically or for hunting or buying-selling.

## DESTRUCTION OF NESTS OF PROTECTED SPECIES



These profiles are illustrative, and further work is needed to extract more conclusive data.

# 70%

of the experts surveyed  
consider having criminal profiles  
to be **very important** or **essential**.

They can be used for **investigation** of infractions already committed; for **prevention**, by targeting interventions to more specific groups; and for **response**, by promoting restorative practices and community work.

# Proposals for action

To reduce the opportunity for offending

To more targeted lines of investigation

To more efficient reporting, investigation and prosecution system

To the implementation of intervention projects with primary and secondary populations

To the development of various strategies for awareness raising and engagement of the general population.



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*Study of the origin and motivations of environmental crime.*  
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