

## #60 (ANDREW LEMIEUX)

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Reducing Crime features conversations with influential thinkers in the police service and leading crime and policing researchers. Andrew Lemieux manages the problem-oriented wildlife protection program for Lead Ranger, an organization that supports wildlife park rangers around the world. We talk about poaching, wildlife crime, habitat management and problem solving in these unique and diverse wilderness places.

I'm Jerry Ratcliffe and welcome to the Reducing Crime Podcast. Being Episode 60, this one completes five years of the podcast. When I started, I wasn't sure how long I would do it for, but it's still a lot of fun and I get to spend time with some truly dedicated and wonderful people. And with more than 190,000 downloads and plays, you guys seem to agree. So I guess I'll keep going a bit longer.

Now, have you ever walked into a coffee shop and seen a couple of people engrossed in a conversation and wondered, "What the hell are they talking about?" Well, if you've been in an Amsterdam coffee shop one morning back in February, you might have heard me and Andrew Lemieux having a fascinating chat about tackling wildlife crime and poaching.

When I was a younger fella back in my twenties and thirties, I would take three-month blocks of unpaid leave from the police to work on conservation projects in remote parts of the world. These extended trips gave me a chance to live in the game parks of Kenya and Zimbabwe, the national forests of Patagonia, and the rainforests, Borneo, Dar es Salaam and Sabah in Borneo. So I've long appreciated the importance of the work people like Andrew and his colleagues in wilderness conservation do.

Dr. Lemieux was born in the mountains of Arizona, but after getting a PhD in Criminal Justice from Rutgers University in New Jersey, he spent a decade engaged in wildlife crime research at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement in Amsterdam. He now manages Lead Rangers Problem-oriented Wildlife Protection Program, teaching problem analysis and crime prevention to the global conservation community.

## REDUCING CRIME PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

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Andrew is also the Editor-in-chief of the Wilderness Problems Resource Portal, an open source collection of guides and manuals, specifically written for field teams and hosted by the Center for Problem-oriented Policing. He's a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the United Nations office on drugs and crimes, World Wildlife Crime Report, and a fellow at both View University and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement.

I just landed in the US, so I went straight from the airport to meet Andrew at a coffee shop. And no, it wasn't for the usual reason that tourists from the US rushed to visit Amsterdam's famous coffee shops. I stress this because it might have sounded like we'd been indulging, given I was trying to make sure that I pronounced his name correctly. Lemieux.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Lemieux.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Lemieux, not Limo.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, so technically in French it's Lemieux, but of course, when my family migrated from Canada, they Americanized it. So, you say Lemieux, but the French would be horrified.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, you've got this French-Canadian name Lemieux, and then you were raised in Arizona. It makes complete sense, right?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

No, no, exactly. Because my father was from North Dakota, because the family crossed over and grew up right on the Canadian border, but then we moved to Arizona and yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It is the longest unprotected border in the world, pretty much, isn't it, I think?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

I think so, yeah. And yet nobody's fleeing across.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You're big thing now is wildlife conservation and preservation now. Is that something you were into originally when you were growing up in Arizona?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Not necessarily engaged in the way I am now. We always work outdoors and enjoyed seeing wildlife, but I never thought of myself as a conservationist.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Most people in Arizona just shoot the wildlife, don't they?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Many like to. Many like to. So, it was a bit of a path change as I grew, as both a student and then as a PhD that I ended up here but have fallen completely in love with wildlife protection and the men and women who do the job and whatnot.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Your undergraduate, I know you started not in criminal justice or conservation at all.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, I was a biochemist studying Type-2 diabetes and the impacts of exercise and the biochemical functions.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Sounds enthralling.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It was good, I enjoyed the lab. I enjoyed the lab, but I took a minor in criminal justice, and that's when I saw, in many ways this huge difference in how science was being used in the lab versus how it was being used for public policy and crime prevention. And that sparked my interest in how could the experimental method be my standard and be not the norm for serious things like incarceration or arrests and whatnot. And I decided to get a PhD in criminology and-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Which was from?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

.... Rutgers.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And who did you work with there?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Ron Clark and Marcus Felson. Marcus was my dissertation chair.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, that must have been a trip.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

I was the last one-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I love Marcus, don't get me wrong.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

... Yeah, that was the last one he did at Rutgers and we had a good time doing it. But Marcus is a man to be reckoned with.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Marcus is Marcus.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Marcus Felson. Yeah.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. But he was great working with those two, and Ron's the one that got me introduced to wildlife crime, and Ron and I wrote a paper years ago on the impact of the ivory ban on elephant poaching in Africa. And slowly that got me into the field and really getting to appreciate how much work could be done in ranger operations and protection operations and community operations using things that I think we often take for granted, crime analysis, crime prevention ideas that weren't in the conservation sphere at the moment.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The area you're working in is really interesting, but environmental criminology in so many people's minds is about the built environment, it's about the urban environment, but you're really applying these principles in much more of what a public perception of what the environment is, which is the wildlife conservation environment.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep, exactly. Big rural areas, wilderness areas, mostly on land, haven't done much work at sea or on water. But indeed, these ideas of environmental criminology and how it shapes decision making, applying that now to proper foraging that's happening, both for people looking for animals to hunt, as well as for law enforcement operating in areas that don't have roads and don't have cities or populations and whatnot necessarily.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How big is the issue of wildlife crime now?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's got a lot of attention in the last decade since I first started writing about it, which was actually now 15 years ago. But it's a big issue because it encompasses a lot of things. So environmental protection is also illegal logging, illegal

mining, mineral exploitation in areas. But wildlife crime on its own also causes lots of issues. We're seeing the sixth mass extinction, basically due to, not only hunting and whatnot, but also environmental changes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

This isn't being too hyperbolic, this really is being considered as an extension?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. I think the paper was 2016, where they published this, about we're entering into a sixth mass extinction phase, due to a number of things, not just wildlife crime, but wildlife crime plays a part of it, and it undermines a lot of rule of law as well as just preservation tactics. If you want to try to protect areas, there's a commercial element to this crime type now that can be very destructive.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Is your focus specifically wildlife or is it more broad in terms of preventing crime against conservation areas?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's more broad. The principles that we're teaching and that we're working with can be applied across all crime types, but what we find is that many times, because this is donor funded, you end up looking at charismatic species, elephants, rhinos, tigers, but at the same time, some teams are very interested in logging and how to stop illegal logging in their areas because that has other impacts.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, when people see adverts to protect the tigers or to save the dolphins and they give a little bit of money, some of that money actually does go to this area about preventing crime and harm?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

For sure. And especially when it comes to things like rhinos, elephants, tigers, that problem's being handled by law enforcement units in different countries and national parks. But we're also looking at issues like wildlife damage, where a lion comes and eats a herdsman's cow and it causes them to perhaps retaliate, killing a lion.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. As you know, I've spent chunks of my life, I used to go off pay and done some expeditions with Operation Rally, used to be Rally International. And spent five months in Kenya, and I spent three months in Zimbabwe. And what you could see in places like that was the continuing growing encroachment of human settlements moving more and more into the territories of animals and into the national parks. And then, that comes back to those environmental criminology principles. It creates an opportunity for crime because of the proximity of the offenders to the vulnerable targets.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep. As well as the proximity to when humans become the victim, when that elephant comes out and hurts them and then it becomes-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Because it's its territory.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

... Exactly. And it becomes these conflicts that... A guy that I work with, he often says, "Wildlife damage doesn't have to become conflict." An elephant can ruin crops, doesn't mean that elephant needs to be retaliated against. But the principles of crime prevention and crime analysis and understanding problems, we can apply that to anything. But it also comes a lot of times down to political will, because some things such as mineral exploration, those have a lot of money attached to them. And so, going and looking into those problems many times doesn't have the political will from a government.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You talked about different funding agencies. How much are national governments in places like Africa, in places like Borneo where I know that you're going to be doing some work, and I've done some work in the orangutan sanctuary, there seems to be limited government support for it, because the government makes more money from the logging than it does from the wildlife conservation?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. And so, usually government investment is at that institutional level of, "We're going to have a ranger force. We're going to have a national wildlife authority." And those government departments aren't necessarily the most well-funded compared to other departments that might be looking at counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, policing cities, because it's a different economic model. And indeed, sometimes getting rid of nature is seen as being more beneficial than keeping it, and that's really difficult.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You clear the rainforest, you make palm oil plantations, you're making money from the palm oil taxation, you're not making a cent from the rainforest.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. Some of the estimates of charcoal coming out of Central Africa earning groups \$70 million a year, and that definitely becomes this issue of, where's the priority, where's the funding going to be? And also, when you look at the sheer number of people involved, these areas are huge, and you might have a couple 100 rangers protecting 2,000 square kilometers of land. It's a numbers game right there that you just immediately realize it's hard to make it work.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I love that you are using problem-oriented policing, because I think so many people think of problem-oriented policing as being very much an urban law enforcement type of employment, but it's ideally suited to this environment where you can't rely on any kind of enforcement to achieve the goals that you want, you have to think more imaginatively.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

For sure. And you also need to find ways to work with communities to make it become mutually beneficial. Because if you go for fortress conservation, we're just going to patrol and make sure nobody comes in. It's a numbers game, you're going to lose and you're going to lose the goodwill of the community who are wondering, "Why are the elephants worth more than myself?"

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How would you define fortress conservation?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's kind of a term that when you have a national park, it's an exclusive wildlife zone. No, people can go in and out or maybe for tourism. But it's also this idea that your job is to keep people out of it and nobody's allowed in, as opposed to sustainable use model or co-management model with communities where you're saying, "Okay, we realize you live next to these dangerous animals or next to these plentiful resources. If you use them sustainably, it's a different story."

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

All right. So, you're really talking about porous borders, but find ways to manage those porous borders so that both communities benefit?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. And also, just finding a way to work with people to get them involved in controlling some of the problem or reducing the problems and making them see it as a valuable exercise.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

What are some of the crime analysis challenges?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

So, one of the biggest ones is, is there data, anyways? And much of the data is patrol data, which you'll know from your own research, patrolling information is limited. But in our case, the biggest problem, I call it the silent victim problem. And it's this idea is that animals don't call the police. So anytime we're looking at snare concentrations where people have laid traps, it's highly dependent on where we've looked for them. And when I say, I mean the teams that I work with, and where they found them and detected them. So, there's a humongous sort of dark figure that becomes really challenging for crime analysis if you're going to say, "We want to know where the hotspot is." Unless you're doing a very systematic approach, it's hard to determine that.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

This is not dissimilar to the issue that people have around where drug markets are located, because really, the only place where the data show the drug markets are where enforcement is taking place. If police aren't making arrests, if police aren't making stops, you're not going to find that many people calling the police. And you've got the same problem, which you've got this sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, where we patrol is where we find the problem.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. I always use speeding as an example in my courses. Where do you find speeders? Where you look for them. So, finding ways to get more information to triangulate, by looking at bush meat markets as well as where the snares are found. So you can see how much of this meat is being offered in communities as a way to see, is the problem going up or down or how many people are involved. I'd say, that's probably one of the hardest things, combined with a general inclusion of analysts in the staffing of a department or of an NGO working to support crime analysis is a very new idea in wildlife conservation or wildlife protection.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And we should say that NGOs, for those who don't know me, non-governmental organizations such as?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Penthera or the Wildlife Conservation Society or WFF.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The kind of organizations that when you come out of the supermarket, they're wanting money from you?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. Yeah, exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Why is it a new idea? Surely it's fairly obvious that the more information you have, the better you are able to tackle a problem, and they've definitely got a problem.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Biggest problem that I've come across, is that when data is being collected in national parks, it's for biological monitoring purposes. For example, you might be out doing surveys and you find traps, but you're there for the elephant survey, and then the trap data may never get used in the decision-making process, because many times it's different silos within an organization. But research and monitoring is here, law enforcement's here, and law enforcement hasn't used that data the way they could have if they even had it. I've worked with a number of organizations where there was no data capture and we set it up so they could begin doing it.



**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How sophisticated is this data capture? Are we talking about rangers just plotting and mapping their routes, or are we talking about using GPS? How sophisticated?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

With smartphones it's changed a lot, because you can track the GPS, you can easily digitize data.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Even in zero signal environments?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Some of the more heavily canopied forests, they'll have to use a handheld GPS and they'll take notes. But in a lot of the Savanna areas, you can use smartphones to capture GPS data. And normally it's, where did the men and women go and what did they see? And that's the basic patrol data and maybe an investigation might have some additional stuff. But again, it's combining that information to make a good analysis that many people struggle with because of divisions between departments, because of mandates. Once an arrest is made, maybe it's turned over to national police. They end up with a completely different data set that's not linked to the snares inside the park because it's in fully different government agency.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So you've really got two problems. You've got the primary data capture is pretty weak. And then on top of that, once you do have some kind of data capture, you've got this secondary level of just trying to pool everybody's knowledge.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. It might be that four different national parks have one government agency, but four different NGOs supporting them. And so to look at the, are there commonalities between parks, you also have to get those NGOs to work together, which can be politically sensitive.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Are you trying to use that as a polite euphemism for an utter shit show?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yes. I've often said that sometimes the politics of conservation are worse than the poaching, because this is a problem for donors as well, funding separate organizations, not funding collections so that you actually create infighting and not a reason to cooperate. Which again, if you're doing problem solving in a city, you're going to have some of those same arguments between city departments and whatnot, or even policing forces that are next to one another. But we see it a lot in conservation.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Okay. Pardon the interruption, but I'm about to mention a place called Tabin Wildlife Reserve. During the recording, I forgot to mention that Tabin's on the island Borneo, but afterwards thought you would appreciate the context. It's a fantastic mountainous rainforest area of about 500 square miles in the eastern part of the Malaysian province of Sabah. It's a great place to visit now as it's open to tourists. But back in the early nineties, it was still an almost impenetrable wall of primary rainforest, spectacular place.

And back then, in my younger days, I spent three months leading treks from one end to the other. While there, I released orangutan into the wild and caught malaria ... and a future ex-wife. But yeah, those are maybe stories for another day.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And because originally you were working in policing in and around law enforcements, you have seen that kind of chaos-

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yes. Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

... in those different environments? It's a shame to find it in this kind of situation.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

No, I understand completely the challenges of the data capture that you're talking about. Back in my twenties, I took some unpaid leave from the police, and I spent three months leading treks through Tabin Wildlife Reserve, and you'd be in the middle of nowhere spotting an orangutan in the wild. And you think, there isn't a village for 100 miles through mountainous rainforest. Then you go down to the river and you find a poacher's net.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep, yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And you think, "Okay, there is sufficient incentive, financial incentive for people to be tracking a lot of miles from villages into mountainous rainforests and living in there."

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The financial incentives are huge.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. And even when they're small, what it comes down to is sort of understanding who's involved and why. Even if it's a relatively small financial incentive, why are they still doing it? And many times you find, maybe they have a substance abuse problem, that they're just feeding that and getting a little bit of meat so they can buy some more drink. Or maybe they don't have any other options, and they sort of feel that this is what they can do. And this is where the problem solving becomes super important, because when people go to do crime prevention in these areas, they often do it at a high level and it just won't work, because it's definitely less than 1% of communities involved in the activity, yet you're kind of targeting your outreach to the hundred percent that live there.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, it's a very inefficient method of doing things?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. A great example that I've seen play out in a couple different places, but an organization wants to provide alternative livelihoods, "Rather than enforcement, let's try to reduce incentives." So, they hold community meetings. Well, if you don't understand what's happening in that community, you hold the meeting at 10:00 in the morning, but everybody who's collecting firewood goes in at 7:30. So you start having alternative livelihood meetings with people who aren't your target group and that's because of a lack of understanding of who's involved. But if you find the people who are involved and give them that targeted outreach, much like focused deterrents can work, it's a different story. And that's where, again, I feel that problem solving helps people get more focused because context is everything. And as you said, these areas are huge. And so, a community on one side could be very different than a community a 100 kilometers up the border.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

This is the same as, I think we often find in places like summer jobs programs. If they're very broad and they're not targeted towards the kids who are most at risk or are likely to engage in crime, you are spending an awful lot of money on kids who would not engage in crime anyway.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Absolutely. It's making me think, when I was a high schooler, I participated in the GREAT program, Gang Resistance Education And Training. I was not going to be a gang member, ever. And I loved it, I flew actually, I actually got to fly a plane as part of that. So for me, it was a great summer program, but as you say, that was because I signed up, that was not a targeted outreach.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And of course, it's one of those things that more likely you are to sign up. You're already self-selecting, probably out of the gang lifestyle at that point.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. I was seeing it as a good way to learn more in the summer, which clearly is not the agenda of many people who might be needing outreach.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You mentioned a lot of this local level, somebody just doing it for substance abuse. Looking at a different scale, how much involvement is of organized crime is involved in this kind of stuff?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's a good question, and it's kind of debated. And I would say it depends on the product, of course, as well as where the market is. So, when you look at ivory trafficking, I'd say many times at the local level, it might just be opportunistic. There might be some people who are being tasked to hunt, but eventually that ivory has to get to a consolidation point, and then they're going to ship it across. And so that organized element usually will come there.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, it could be a local business in and around the park itself?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But then, at some point the ivory reaches the city and organized crime gets involved to find a way to illegally traffic it overseas?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. Because, especially ivory is something that isn't really used on the continent of Africa very often for traditional purposes, so the markets used to be Europe and North America. In the eighties after half of elephants got murdered in Africa, it's shut down for a bit, and now it's very much going to the east. So, that's why you need somebody with connections to get it across, because it's not just moving it 100 kilometers down the road to the capital city where it's being sold, ivory again, same with rhino horn.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I know you're currently working in Africa, that you're about to set some projects up there.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep. So the new organization I'm with, Lead Ranger. We're a training organization that basically, I help people who are interested in doing problem solving. I mentor them through the process a bit or give them training on how it works and what are the theories behind it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's fantastic. So you've got rangers in places like Zimbabwe in Kenya and out in Borneo and Sabah in Malaysia, who are learning about Marcus Felson and Ron Clarke and situational crime prevention. That's fantastic.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, exactly. Tomorrow's Cambodia and then Central America, basically.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's amazing, right?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's quite a global reach. And the idea is that we don't have our own projects.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But it shows just how applicable-

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Oh yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

... you should never use the word theory, right? It's one of the seven dirty words to never say.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But it shows how applicable these theories are to crime problems generally. It's fantastic. It works in the inner cities in Baltimore, and it works in Philadelphia, and it works in Cambodia, in wildlife reserves in Cambodia. It's fantastic.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

One of the things I've been saying recently is, "From the bush to the urban center, problem solving works." We can use it to look at illegal hunting at a small scale in an Indonesian forest. We can use it for preventing tiger poaching in Malaysia. We can use it for looking at homelessness in US cities. Problem solving helps you reel it in. The goal is to get more case studies to show people, this can work, you can try something different. And that's another big part of what I'll be doing.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Is there much of an evidence base around this?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

It's starting to grow, but it's very small because of some of these data issues that I was speaking about earlier. As well as, if you ask somebody to write a systematic review on the effectiveness of anti-poaching standards, it would be really difficult. Because there isn't the right data, nobody's done the right research, because it's kind of been accepted. People just accept this idea that a deterrence model will work. But it's definitely not, I don't have any very clear examples of, "This organization's really got it done and doing it well for the last 10 years." I'm seeing a lot of positive change in people solving problems and finding solutions that are working, and we can prove that they work because we set a baseline and we measured it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But in the absence of that, that gets concerning then for people wanting to put money into these NGOs and fund them, right?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Because you were increasingly in all, I think in all areas of society, we're increasingly looking for an evidence base.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

A hundred percent.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

"And I know you're doing stuff, but show me that it works.", right?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Are the NGOs willing to fund that? And I ask because I can imagine they're a little bit worried, "But what if we find it doesn't work?"

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep. And that's 100% what you will find. And that's because we don't have all these great stories of success right now that I can tell you. And I think the biggest problem that I've seen on this front is the lack of meaningful metrics. Conservation law enforcement is largely measuring effort, number of arrests, number of patrols, full stop.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

We had an input, we hired more rangers, we had an output, we had more arrests. But did it actually save the animals?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Did it preserve the environment and build a relationship with the community? And none of those outcome measures.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. Again, a few projects here and there have done it. But ultimately, if you look at what donors are giving money for and the plans they're signing off on, they're asking for input metrics largely. And that's another conversation we're trying to have with our partners, is how do we change that? How do we show these differences? How do you actually measure impact? Because that requires that biological monitoring data. So you need to do a law enforcement approach, but then combine it with biological monitoring data to show the recovery. But if they're two separate departments that don't work together-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, that's really interesting, because in policing in an urban environment, the police are gathering the data that they themselves are using to try and figure out how to solve the crime problem. But here, you'll have monitoring of how many animals there are, is done completely different than the park ranger system.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

... Yep. And it depends on the organization, but largely it will be biological monitoring, camera trapping. That's a separate department and a set of tasks. Then law enforcement will be patrolling, they will be collecting patrol data. But combining those for a shared vision of, "We did this new type of patrolling, did it work? How big is our threat?", that's less common.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Tell me about green militarization. What is that?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Green militarization is this idea that in the last decade or two decades, the effort to address the, "war on animals", the Rhino Wars for example, that people have been investing more in militarizing law enforcement. Sometimes even bringing in the military, but in essence, reaching into a toolbox that only has one tool, which is use of force and arrest and using that to increasingly alienate communities from the solving of the problem.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, to sort of intimidate them into not hunting wildlife?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. Either through threat of arrest, increased use of different types of weapons or tactics or intelligence gathering. And in many ways, it's used to say what's bad. And of course, there's been human rights abuses that arise

out of improper law enforcement, that happens everywhere unfortunately. Nobody wants human rights abuses. Everybody would like communities to be benefiting. And I've, over the years, ended up at focus problem solving, or at least looking at different ways to approach a problem as the solution to that. Because you're never going to patrol your way out of a problem.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

No. I mean, some of the parks that we're talking about, I don't think until people have been to places like Africa and some of the other countries and you can't understand the scale and just the inaccessibility of some of these places, you can't fortify something that large.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

No, you can't. And especially when you have an increasing amount of communities living on the border, isn't a fence border, some countries are fenced, most are not.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The fence, that well-known barrier that stops absolutely everything. A small chain mail fence 100 miles from the nearest ranger station. "Well, there's a small fence that I could climb or hop over or climb through. But no, it's a fence."

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It just doesn't work.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

No. And especially in many places, they were put to keep the animals in, and now they've been used the other way.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

To some degree, I get it. Because you do want to protect the community from the animals because that prevents that retaliation.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

For sure.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But it's just [inaudible 00:29:10].

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. And it's a lot of money. And again, the point being is, trying to get away from that to finding a solution that could be employing community members or not. I don't know, 'cause it depends on the problem, but it was more just being open to that. The other unfortunate thing is most national wildlife authorities, they only have one tool in their toolbox.



For the most part, they've got the mandate to arrest, and that limits them as well. And similar to policing, and where a lot of policing organizations will struggle because they say, "Okay, but I'm not a homeless outreach counselor.", or something like that, "And we don't have a substance abuse program, I wish we did." And that's kind of where we are as well.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. And it's that problem of, you have this tool, so once you have a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

I open almost all of my presentations with that exact quote.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But of course, different types of carpentry don't need nails, but you can still be a good carpenter.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I can't believe I just use a calm you reference when here's you looking like Jesus.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. You know me so well. It's finding the right approach and being sustainable. Right? Wildlife is a natural resource, that if you protected it, it takes care of itself.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It sounds like you've been through looking at these other models like fortress conservation and green militarization before settling on this notion of problem solving. And it makes sense to me because, given the environment that you're in, we're not talking about wealthy countries.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Mm-hmm.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I always say, how do you approach thinking about problem solving, is how would you solve this problem if you had no police?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

If we had no law enforcement? But there's a really important role in police and law enforcement in better understanding the problem.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah, they're doing the patrolling out in the parks, they're finding the snares, they're finding the traps, they're sometimes doing arrests. They can develop an understanding of the problem, but with them, we have to come up with non-law enforcement solutions because they'll last into the long term.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yep, exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And we're not talking about root cause stuff either.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

No. But that's exactly it. And it's a combination of a change in appetite for people wanting to do the hammer approach, because it's been tried for about a decade, but most recently of, "improving it." and-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And that's one area where we do have some evidence base that this just doesn't work.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

... Yeah, exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

We continue to see a deterioration in wildlife numbers.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. Exactly. And then people also really recognizing that communities play a much bigger role in, both prevention and benefits. They should. And we're underfunded, so how can we find ways to solve this without patrolling our way out of it? It's impossible. And patrolling is a difficult job, especially in the wildlife context. You might be out there for seven days in a row sleeping on the ground. And I think for me, a big part of the evidence base is, if you're going to put rangers in harm's way, tell me that it's working, show me that it's working. Because if you're not, and that ranger-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

We should never have recorded this in a juggling school.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

... Yeah, good luck. But if that ranger could have had the same amount of impact by having cups of coffee with people or providing other sorts of information, education, whatever, do that. Because the goal is the wildlife. The golden metric is healthy ecosystems. How you get there, doesn't have to be law enforcement at all.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I've patrolled with rangers in places, and I know you've done much more than I have, but rangers who are hoping they don't run into poachers, because the poachers are often more heavily armed than they are.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. Or if something goes wrong, it can become very serious.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And it could be hours or worse from help.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. For sure, if you're lucky. And again, depends on the countries. But I've worked in areas where there was no such thing as a helicopter dedicated to that national park. So, if something went wrong, you hope one of the three vehicles could be there in time, and then you still had hours to a hospital. And whether it's a snake bite or a fall or a gunshot, it's really, again, for me, if you're asking people to do that and paying them very little, show me that it's working.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Where are you going to be working this coming year?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

This year is going to be nice. It's going to be a combination of Southeast Asia, Southern Africa. And I've already got mentorship programs going with teens in Cambodia and Kenya at the moment. And slowly we're going to be growing that more and more. But yeah, largely Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Southeast Asia this year.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Fantastic, you have a few air miles.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The Lead Ranger program is expanding.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Lead Ranger since its beginning has really been about ranger operations. So training instructors, training leadership, how to teach their staff skills without hiring external consultants. A lot of it's based around lifesaving, Coach, Ranger

Lifesavers, one of our biggest modules. But they've brought me on now that Lead Ranger's five years old to add in this problem-solving component, which is in essence trying to link up now analysis and strategy to those field operations on how to patrol and how to be safe.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

What's it like training people in this particular scenario? Because it's a very, very different kind of skill set, and it's a very different way of thinking.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

The one thing I've learned, thanks to COVID, is that when we can use a virtual setting, it enables us to really drip feed information and ideas. Instead of a 10-day course with me, you'll get a day for 10 weeks. And then we can talk about a concept, do a bit of thinking about it, come back. So, most of the success I've had with some of the teams that are really doing problem solving well, it's because it's long-term engagement.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Do you find you actually have to spend some time breaking down and debunking their existing ideas that enforcement is the only way?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

For sure.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I think this is commonly a problem in policing and law enforcement, to accept the notion that you can actually do the job you want to do, crime prevention, without necessarily making arrests?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, a hundred percent. And this is where conservation's interesting because of the NGO involvement. Because NGOs won't have the power of arrest, yet they're supporting teams that do. But they're also looking for solutions that don't involve law enforcement sometimes, because they can't do it. Problem solving's great for that. Or if you're supporting people who do have law enforcement, teaching them how to better think about using information. So when you deploy a ranger, it's where you want them to be based on other things or it's about a specific problem. And what we're also looking at this year is management focus, because we've done a lot of training analysts, only to watch them go back into a department that didn't know how to use them and wither away.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That sounds so much like policing. You get analysts and, "Oh, how do we use an analyst? Can you print this poster for me?" It's like, "No, we need to also train the leadership". That sounds so horribly familiar.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah. This year we're making a big push to make management level materials that some may even be online asynchronous courses because you can't get them in a room for five days in a row or even for one day. Very much recognizing that when I had this group of problem solvers come to Kenya in September, and one of the problems with problem solving, management, management, management, that was the number one thing that we noticed on all different failure points in our systems. So that's a big one.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And you said the evidence base was still really light in this area, pretty shallow.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But are there any case studies kicking around where we can go away from this podcast feeling a little optimistic that something's worked?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, yeah. There's a really nice one of a team I've been working with in Southeast Asia. It's at a national park there. They had a sneering problem that for over a decade they'd tried to deal with it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Snaring what animals?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Basically smaller antelope and deer species for meat. And for 10 years they'd seen this, they'd tried different things, couldn't get it to go away. And we entered a problem-solving cycle with them and watched them figure out, not only who was involved, but of the 17 people involved, who the facilitators were. They then took a very different approach and approached these individuals saying, "Look, what would it get you to stop hunting?" They found that there was an alternative livelihood they could use. And by, again, analyzing, figuring out who was there, they got these gentlemen involved in a duck farming program and snaring dropped 95% and has stayed down at basically levels that they'd never seen before for \$300.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You set these guys up in alternative employment for \$300 and solved a problem that'd been around for a decade?

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Exactly. And it's a lot of credit to the team on the ground.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's fantastic.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Unless you're a duck.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Unless you're a duck. Yes, indeed. And the duck farms weren't even necessarily making them more money, but what was interesting was the social benefits these individuals told us about, that now they could talk to their neighbors because they weren't hunting illegally. So, when your neighbor asked you, "Hey, what did you do on Thursday?", you couldn't talk to your neighbors. So, they had gained acceptance in their communities. Again, also that is spatially explicit where we knew where they were hunting, and those areas no longer have it. And the control groups, it's still continuing. The snaring continues over there. So, it's a really, really great example of a very humanistic approach to it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Well, as somebody who spent a lot of time, fortunately my life in wildlife parks and traveling in a lot of the places you're talking about, been to Cambodia and Borneo and the parks in Africa, these are incredibly important places in the world. So man, I appreciate what you're doing.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, thanks man. And again, I'm just merely a coach, it's the people playing the game on the front lines that I really like supporting. But it's a fantastic passion of mine.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Good for you. And you pointing them in the direction. Hey, I really appreciate it. Thanks for spending some time with me, mate.

**Andrew Lemieux:**

Yeah, thanks.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That was Episode 60 of Reducing Crime recorded in Amsterdam in February 2023.

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Be safe and best of luck.