

## **Green Criminology: Averting The Environmental Apocalypse**

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Criminologists have increasingly become involved and interested in environmental issues to the extent that the term 'Green Criminology' is now recognised as a distinct subgenre of the field. Within this unique area of scholarly activity, researchers consider not just harms to the environment, but also the links between green crimes and other forms of crime, including organised crime's movement into the illegal trade in wildlife or the links between domestic animal abuse, domestic violence and more 'serious' forms of offending such as serial killing. In essence, green criminology allows for the study of environmental and criminal laws, environmental criminality which includes widespread environmental harm, and the abuse and exploitation of nonhuman animals. Green criminology thus provides a mechanism for rethinking the study of criminal laws, ethics, crime and criminal behaviour (Situ and Emmons, 2000; Lynch and Stretesky, 2003).

This paper argues that within the context of environmental disasters such as the Gulf Oil Spill, problems caused by climate change and associated pollution events, and the widespread illegal killing of wildlife, we are heading for an environmental apocalypse. Yet many environmental crimes are not the core focus of criminal justice systems and public concern about crime and safety despite having the potential to cause far wider social harm and a large number of deaths. As White (2007, 2012a) observes, given the potential for environmental harms to extend far beyond the impact on individual victims that are the norm with 'traditional' crimes of interpersonal violence and property crime, green crimes should be given importance if not priority within justice systems. This paper argues that eco-global crimes such as the illegal trade in wildlife, pollution crimes and environmental harm are of significance not just because they are crimes that have a global reach and impact on both existing communities and future generations, but also because they affect and involve a range of nation states and different justice systems. By considering these issues, green criminology examines complex issues in criminological enquiry that extend beyond the narrow confines of individualistic crime which dominate criminological discourse and are the main focus of criminal justice policy. Simply put, green criminology thinks bigger.