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SHUTTING DOWN THE RHINO HORN TRADE

DID YOU KNOW?

Rhinos once roamed many places throughout Eurasia and Africa and were known to early Europeans who depicted them in cave paintings.

In almost all rhino conservation areas, there are other valuable plants and animals. The protection of rhinos helps protect other species. Rhinos contribute to economic growth and sustainable development through the tourism industry, which creates job opportunities and provides tangible benefits to local communities living alongside rhinos.

The white rhino is particularly vulnerable to poaching because it is relatively unaggressive and lives in herds.

The survival of the rhino is hanging by a thread. Increasing demand from Asia, and especially Viet Nam, is driving a poaching crisis on the African continent with poaching levels in South Africa having risen by a staggering 5000% just between 2007 and 2011. WWF and TRAFFIC, as part of the global Illegal Wildlife Trade Campaign, are working in Viet Nam to help save the rhino from extinction.

Although there are laws already in place to protect the rhino, governments are not doing enough to tackle the illegal trade in rhino horn from Africa to Viet Nam. Despite its severity, illegal wildlife trade is not accorded the priority it deserves. In many jurisdictions offenders are secure in the belief that they can operate with near impunity, or if caught, will face derisory penalties. In short, the illegal wildlife trade is a low risk, high profit business.

Criminals involved in illegal wildlife trade are distributing guns, intimidating communities, and bribing officials in order to get what they want.

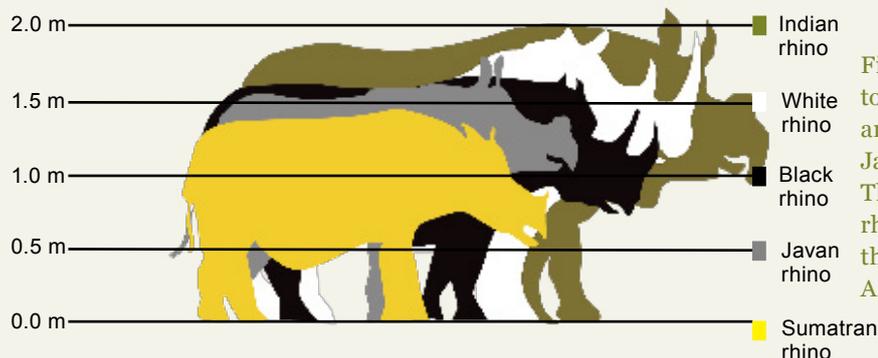
Governments have the power to stop this and WWF and TRAFFIC want to help them. Through a national campaign in Viet Nam WWF-Viet Nam and TRAFFIC aim to secure a high level, public commitment and action plan from the government that will; shut down the illegal rhino horn trade in Viet Nam; reduce consumption of rhino horn through public awareness raising and secure a commitment of the Viet Nam Government to lead a demand reduction programme, and boost enforcement activities, including seizures and prosecutions.

Viet Nam's role?

The current poaching crisis for African rhinos is driven almost entirely by demand in Viet Nam, where it is valued as an ingredient in traditional medicine to treat a variety of ailments from fever to hallucination and headaches, as well as, as a status symbol of wealth and power.

A number of Vietnamese citizens have been caught attempting to smuggle rhino horns, for example, in January 2013, two Vietnamese men were detained on the same day in Ho Chi Minh City and Bangkok for trafficking rhino horns weighing 16.5 kg and 10.6 kg, respectively.

RHINOS AROUND THE WORLD



Five rhino species survive in the world today. In Africa, there are both black and white rhinos while in Asia live Javan, Sumatran, and Indian rhinos. The combined population of African rhino species is just over 25,000, while there are less than 4,000 rhinos left in Asia.

Laws and regulations

All rhino species are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which prohibits all commercial international trade in rhinos and their products and derivatives. The only exceptions are the white rhino populations of South Africa and Swaziland, which are listed in Appendix II, for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations and hunting trophies.

Viet Nam has been a signatory to CITES since 1994. Decree 82/2006/ND-CP – states that all international trade in Appendix I species, including rhinos, is prohibited unless accompanied by a valid CITES permit.

Decree 32/2006/ND-CP stipulates that the Javan rhino is strictly prohibited from trade, use and exploitation.

Illegal trade in rhino horns can lead to sentences of up to 7 years imprisonment in Viet Nam. Depending on the case, the offenders may also have to pay a fine of between two million and twenty million Vietnamese dong, and be banned from holding certain posts, practicing certain occupations or doing certain jobs for one to five years.



WWF-CANON / JAMES MORGAN



WWF-CANON / GREEN RENAISSANCE

Conservation on the ground

To secure critically endangered black rhinos from poaching and encourage rapid breeding, WWF flew 13 to new homes in 2012. Since 2003, WWF's Black Rhino Range Expansion Project (BRREP) has helped create eight new populations in an effort to increase the number of rhinos in South Africa. These populations reside in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo on land totaling over 160,000 hectares.

Watch: 'Flying rhinos' http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTWPg_8sK78

A global illegal wildlife trade campaign

In 2012, WWF and TRAFFIC embarked on a global campaign to raise the issue of the seriousness of illegal wildlife trade at high political level.

WWF - Viet Nam and TRAFFIC are working to reduce demand for rhino horn and advocating for action after the signing of the MoU between South Africa and the Vietnamese Government, where both parties agreed to work together to curb rhino poaching.

WWF - China and TRAFFIC are campaigning against the trade in tiger parts and ivory.

Thailand - Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra pledged in March to end ivory trade in Thailand, seizing a key opportunity to stem global wildlife trafficking. Her statement came after the call of nearly 1.5 million WWF and Avaaz supporters.

For more information

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