



The of the • Scene CRIME

The illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products is estimated at \$20 billion per year, second only to arms and drugs smuggling in terms of the amount of money it generates. Unfortunately there are enough cases of rhino poaching specifically to sustain multiple series of CSI: Rhino.

Cathy Dean
Director

A s a report (CoP15 Doc. 45.1 Annex) by the IUCN's African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC for the next CITES meeting, in March 2010 in Doha, Qatar made clear, rhino poaching is at a 15-year high. The report identifies several characteristics:

- A decline in rhino poaching in East Africa but a rise in southern Africa, especially Zimbabwe and South Africa
- Abuses of the trophy hunting permit system in South Africa, particularly involving Vietnamese internationals
- Inconsistencies between export and import records of rhino horn trophies from South Africa to China
- Changes in poaching methods. Rather than being opportunistic, rhino poaching is sometimes now carried out by "hit squads" using helicopters and tranquillisers
- Lack of understanding / enforcement of the laws on wildlife crimes by the judiciary e.g. in Zimbabwe

It's a very detailed, thorough report and I encourage you to read it:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/
cop15_rhino_report__clean_version.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/cop15_rhino_report__clean_version.pdf)

Several of the articles in this issue of *The Horn* especially those from the Chyulus, North Luangwa, the Lowveld and Hluhluwe-iMfolozi - focus on the poaching threat, and what they're doing in response.

So far, Save the Rhino's grants for anti-poaching and monitoring work have been targeted at individual field programmes, in an effort to give them the best level of protection that we can. We have never tried to address the demand for rhino horn in Asia (apart from small grants for investigative work in the Yemen) and I doubt that our budget would stretch to making much of an impact.

But it may be that we should consider putting funds into broader efforts to understand the trade, or to implement practical measures that might help prosecutions. One field programme manager has talked about having an

international DNA processing unit set up, with full recognition by Interpol (thereby giving NGOs a legal process to follow, and confirming the local Interpol desk as being approved automatically under CITES for sample exportation, to an equally accredited institution), that would allow a bloodied axe retrieved from a suspected poacher, for example, to be linked to a specific rhino carcass. We'll need new sources of funding for such work.

As I write (1 March), a couple in West Yorkshire have just been arrested for trafficking in the skins and skulls of endangered species. On 28 January, a consignment of one tonne of live coral from South East Asia was seized at Manchester Airport. Wildlife crime isn't something that just happens thousands of miles away, where we do a bit of tutting and then conveniently forget about it.



Events Schedule:

Virgin London Marathon
The Comrades Marathon
Clay Pigeon Shoot
Go Wild for Wildlife!
Elephant Parade
Rhino Trek South Africa
Pecha Kucha Africa
The Rhino Defender: 4x4 Bushcraft Namibia
Hornucopia
3 Peaks 3 Weeks Challenge Africa
Around the Horn: Comedy Night
9th Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture
Virgin London Marathon
Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro

Sunday 25 April 2010
Sunday 30 May 2010
Sunday 20 June 2010
Sunday 20 June 2010
May - June 2010
21-28 August 2010
October 2010
13-20 November 2010
November 2010
January 2011
Monday 17 January 2011
Thursday 10 March 2011
April 2011
Dates to suit

For more information about any of these, please email events@savetherhino.org or alternatively call + 44 (0)20 7357 7474.