



RHINO WATCH

news • views • updates • debates

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ESSENTIAL READING

TRAFFIC's wide-ranging and detailed report *The South Africa-Viet Nam Rhino Horn Trade Nexus* is a comprehensive overview of the rhino poaching crisis. It documents how poor compliance over rhino horn stockpile management, loopholes in sport hunting policy and surging demand for horn in Vietnam have created ideal conditions for the involvement of sophisticated criminal networks, leading to a dramatic escalation in poaching in southern Africa. The report identifies Vietnam as the largest market for rhino



WWF GREATER MERKONG

ABOVE TRAFFIC's new report lays bare the 'perfect storm' of circumstances driving the rhino poaching crisis.

BELOW The fate of South Africa's rhinos is tied to market forces in Vietnam, a country that recently witnessed its own Javan rhino population slip into extinction.

horn, with four main user groups recognised, of which the principal one comprises people who believe that rhino horn contains detoxification properties. Affluent users routinely grind up horn and mix the powder with water or alcohol as a hangover cure and general health tonic. Serrated rhino horn grinding bowls are widely available for sale.

'The surge in rhino horn demand from Vietnam has nothing to do with meeting traditional medicine needs, it's [mainly] to supply a recreational drug to party-goers,' said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC rhino expert and a co-author of the report.

'Ultimately the only long-term solution to stamping out rhino poaching in Africa and Asia lies in curbing demand for horn. The fact that the Vietnamese government has not played a greater role in ensuring such an outcome is problematic, but presents an opportunity for decisive action beginning now,' he said.

Access the full report at www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_mammals66.pdf, or the 16-page executive summary at www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_mammals67.pdf

Ed's choice
'TRAFFIC's new report is required reading for anyone involved in the fight against rhino poaching. We cannot combat what we don't understand, so download and read it today.'

RHINO WATCH IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY





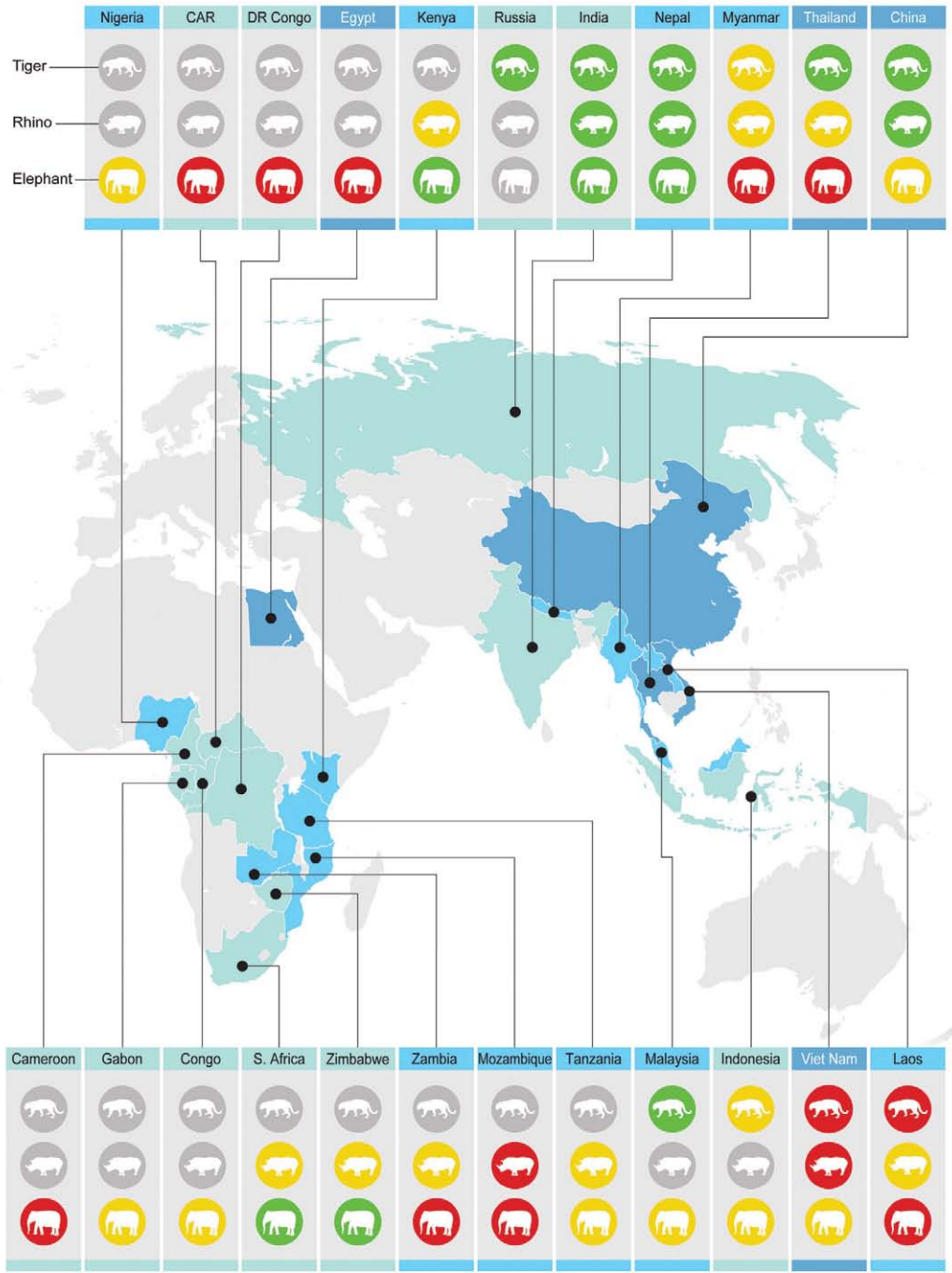
Wildlife Crime Scorecard

GRADING COUNTRIES COMMITMENTS TO FIGHTING ILLEGAL TRADE OF ELEPHANT IVORY, RHINO HORN AND TIGER PARTS

Scores were based on country compliance during the period between June 2010–June 2012

● Some progress in key aspects of compliance and enforcement
 ● Failing on key aspects of compliance or enforcement
 ● Failing on key aspects of compliance and enforcement
 ● Insufficient data or not applicable

TRADE PARTICIPATION: ■ PRIMARILY ORIGIN ■ TRANSIT AND ORIGIN ■ PRIMARILY DESTINATION



GRAPHIC BY STANFORD KAY STUDIO

VIETNAM RATES POORLY ON WWF WILDLIFE CRIME SCORECARD

Vietnam is not the only primary end-user destination for rhino horn, but its official response to the poaching crisis leaves much to be desired. WWF's *Wildlife Crime Scorecard: Assessing Compliance with and Enforcement of CITES Commitments for Tigers, Rhinos and Elephants* analysed 23 African and Asian nations with a view to sorting those that are actively countering illegal trade from those that are not. The scorecard (see infographic on right) found that Vietnam was one of the worst performers, with the South-east Asian nation receiving two red scores, for rhinos and tigers.

'It is time for Vietnam to face the fact that its illegal consumption of rhino horn is driving the widespread poaching of endangered rhinos in Africa, and that it must crack down on the trade. Vietnam should review its penalties and immediately curtail retail markets, including Internet advertising, for horn,' said Elisabeth McLellan, Global Species Programme manager at WWF.

FACTS & FIGURES

(as at 12 September 2012)

381 rhinos killed in South Africa in 2012. (↑ 59 from 10 August 2012)

199 arrests have been made in connection with rhino poaching. (↑ 12 from 10 August 2012). Of the arrests made, 176 are poachers, 10 are receivers and 13 are couriers.

0800 205 005

The number to call to report tip-offs or incidents of rhino poaching

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs

Fighting fire with fire

Traditional health practitioners must work with anti-poaching units to try to catch poachers, the Kruger National Park has said. The park's executive manager Abe Sibiya reported that most of the poachers arrested said they had used *muti* (traditional medicine) to avoid detection by rangers and dangerous animals. Some 500 traditional health practitioners from Limpopo and Mpumalanga gathered at Skukuza Stadium in the Kruger Park to declare their stand against rhino poaching. Representing the traditional practitioners, Sylvester Hlati urged his peers to use muti to contribute instead to the fight against rhino poaching. SAPA



SANPARKS (2)

The rhinos of South Africa's Kruger Park - both black (seen here) and white - continue to bear the brunt of poaching. Traditional medical practitioners working adjacent to the park met recently to discuss their role in combatting the crisis.



TIM JACKSON

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KONICA MINOLTA
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KRISTIAN SCHMIDT FOR WILDAID (2)

CHINESE SPORTS STAR VISITS AFRICA

Yao Ming, a basketball player who recently retired from a successful career in the Chinese Basketball Association and National Basketball Association (NBA) in the US, travelled to Africa for the first time in August this year. Serving as an ambassador for the wildlife charity WildAid, the superstar visited Kenya and South Africa to document the rise in elephant and rhino poaching. He met with Iain Douglas-Hamilton from Save the Elephants, Daphne Sheldrick, Kenya Wildlife Services director Julius Kipng'etich, Pelham Jones from the Private Rhino Owners' Association and vet William Fowlds, among others. He visited Thandi, a rhino that survived a horrific poaching attempt, and encountered the carcasses of rhinos and elephants that were not so lucky, recording his reactions meticulously on his blog.

'From my trip it's clear that South Africans feel the same way about their rhinos as we Chinese do about our pandas,' wrote Yao. 'We would be outraged if people were killing our pandas, we should be just as upset with what's happening to rhinos and elephants in Africa.'

One of China's best-known athletes, Yao's journey generated huge interest in his native country. His blog has been posted on Chinese social media sites where it has garnered almost one million views. 'Many people in China who purchase ivory and rhino horn appear to be unaware of the effect of their buying on the elephants and rhinos of Africa,' commented Iain Douglas-Hamilton. 'This is what made Yao Ming's personal mission so important, given the respect he enjoys in China and worldwide.'



Yao has reiterated his commitment to raising awareness to reduce markets. 'Myself and other prominent Asians will be working with WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation and other organisations to this end,' he writes. 'We hope you will join us.'

Read Yao Ming's blog at yaomingblog.com, and find out more about WildAid at www.wildaid.org



ABOVE Basketball star Yao Ming comes face-to-horn with a Critically Endangered northern white rhino at OI Pejeta in Kenya.

TOP Yao meets Kenyan schoolchildren, whose education is made possible by revenue from ecotourism - revenue that is threatened by poaching.

Africa Geographic reader events **CAPE TOWN**

TRACKS OF GIANTS

with Ian McCallum and Ian Michler



CLIFFORD TOOP

Back from their 5 000-kilometre journey across southern Africa, Ian Michler and Ian McCallum share their insights and experiences from their five-month epic. Neither man needs much introduction to *Africa Geographic* readers – Michler, through his monthly diary, is known to us as a passionate and fearless investigative journalist; McCallum is a medical doctor, psychiatrist, poet and the author of *Ecological Intelligence*. He is also the co-founder of the Wilderness Leadership School and serves as a director of the Wilderness Foundation. For many South Africans, however, he is still known as a former Springbok rugby fullback.

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WHEN 31 October 2012, 18h00 for 18h30.
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RSVP www.capeunionmart.co.za/events

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