

# Wildlife Trafficking

It's Impact on Rhino  
Yesterday and Today



By

Wendy Sotos

Compliments of

*Nikela*

At times the stars line up just right.

A few months back Wendy reached out to us and asked,

*“The rhino is my favorite animal. How can I help?”*

Many thanks Wendy for this important contribution highlighting how the rhino has been impacted by humans yesterday and today, and how crucial it is that each of us do our part to save the species.

Please share this ebook via your social networks

Thank you.

*- Margrit, Founder of Nikela*

Nikela is not responsible or liable for any errors or misrepresentations of facts and data herein. The information is researched and presented in good faith by the author.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
The Comeback Kid Threatened... Again	6
Battle for Life: A Timeline	9
One Word Can Make a Difference	16
What is... Who is... Why Poaching?	17
How CITES Fits In	19
Where the Rhino Once Roamed	21
So, Who's to Blame	23
Travels of the Rhino Horn	24
The Rules	26
The Players	27
The Demand	29
Legal and Other Obstacles	35
How to Stop Rhino Poaching	39
Look Who's Helping Rhino	46
What Will You Say? (Conclusion)	48
About the Author	49
Other eBooks	50

## **Introduction: Why Rhinos?**

Friends and family always ask, *“Why rhinos?”*

*“Are you familiar with Croc shoes? Those funny foam plastic kind of sandals that always look big and round... like a donut on your feet? Well, I always say that baby rhinos look like they are wearing Croc shoes.*

*So there you find this little rhino standing in his Croc shoes, absolutely terrified... but so brave, defending his dead mother and desperately imploring her to get up.*

*The call is indescribable... it touches every nerve in your body. Only the most heartless of human could ever, once having witnessed it, be the cause of it being heard again.*

*In that moment you vow to yourself to do all you can to protect these beautiful innocent creatures.”*

- Peter Milton, Wildlife Conservationist and Protection Strategist

## Wildlife Trafficking: Its Impact on the Rhino Yesterday and Today

What do I say? *“Why not rhinos?”* What would you say?



*“If we cannot protect and save a species as iconic as the rhino, then what chance do the many other threatened and endangered species have?”*

Peter Milton, SPOTS

**FREE eBook**

By Wendy Sotos – Compliments of Nikela – [www.Nikela.org](http://www.Nikela.org) – 01/2014

5

## The Comeback Kid Threatened...Again

Until recently, rhino populations were on the rise, even labeled a “success story” in the wildlife conservation world, and considered a ‘comeback kid’.

*“Rhino poaching and illegal horn trade are at their highest levels in 20 years, threatening to reverse years of conservation efforts, particularly in Africa. There is no doubt that the rhino species are facing a serious crisis.”*

Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC

Times have changed for rhino... again.

*“Rhinos could die out in the next decade.”* –theguardian.com

*“946 rhinos killed by poachers in South Africa this year, surpassing the annual record of 668 set in 2012.”*

-Environmental Affairs Ministry Report (Dec. 19. 2013)

*“5000% increase in rhino poaching in South Africa between 2007 and 2012.”*

-World Wildlife

### FREE eBook

Crime against wildlife is a problem of global proportions. Run by dangerous international networks. Illegal wildlife trafficking, and its contraband are endangering not only current wild animal and bird populations, but also threaten to overturn decades of conservation gains. Before we go much further let's define what these terms mean.



# TERMS

## TERMS

**Illegal Wildlife Trafficking** involves *“the illicit procurement, transport, and distribution internationally and domestically – of animals, and animal parts and derivatives”*.

**Illegal Wildlife Trade** can range from *“single-item, local bartering (of an animal product) to multi-ton, commercial-sized consignments”* that are shipped all over the world.

**Wildlife Contraband** can include *“live pets, hunting trophies, fashion accessories, cultural artifacts, ingredients for traditional medicines, wild meat for human consumption (or bushmeat), and other products.”*

**Source:** Wyler, L.S., Sheikh, P.A. (2008). International Illegal Trade in Wildlife: Threats and U.S. Policy, Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress, Washington DC, 22 Aug 2008



## **Battle for Life: A Timeline**

Throughout their coexistence with man, rhinos have been struggling to survive. Mercilessly slaughtered by poachers for their horn.

With that said, there have also been many dedicated groups fighting for the rhinos' survival. [Source: Rhino Rescue by Garry Hamilton (2006)]

### **19<sup>th</sup> Century:**

Massive killing of the African white rhino by Europeans nearly wipes out the species, but early conservation efforts prevail. New hope for the rhino is born.

### **1895:**

The government of Natal (now Kwazulu-Natal) establishes a safety zone for white rhinos. Today the zone is known as the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park.

### **1908:**

To help save the Indian or Greater One-Horned rhino, India establishes Kaziranga Park.

**1961:**

Project Operation Rhino begins relocating white rhinos from the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park back to their “homelands” or where they formally once roamed. Operation Rhino successfully saves the Southern White Rhino from extinction.

**1967:**

Namibia gives private land owners control over the wildlife on which the wildlife are located. Zimbabwe and South Africa soon followed.

[Source: zunia.org]

**1968:**

For the next 30 years, South Africa permits limited sport hunting of white rhinos, a controversial move that raises \$24 million in U.S. funds for rhino conservation.

**1975-1977:**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), lists all five rhino species (Black, White, Indian, Javan, and Sumatran) as endangered. All are now considered protected. CITES bans international trade in animal parts such as horns.

**1984:**

In response to the slaughter of its black rhinos, Zimbabwe forms “Operation Stronghold” a shoot-to-kill policy that will lead to the deaths of 178 suspected poachers.

**1988:**

A second population of the rare Javan rhino is discovered in Vietnam.

**1989:**

To raise money for rhino conservation efforts, South African national parks begin auctioning off the white rhino at market value. The efforts pay off, raising millions of dollars for the rhinos.

**1990s:**

The government of Zimbabwe begins the controversial move of sawing horns off of rhinos to protect them from poachers.

**1996:**

The United States passes the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act which will provide yearly money for rhino conservation programs in Africa and Asia.

**1997:**

Yemen joins CITES and agrees to stop its trade in rhino horn. Later it is criticized for breaking the rules. Five years later, in 2002, the Prime Minister vows they will keep their promise.

**2001:**

Andalas, the first captive-bred Sumatran rhino in 112 years, is born at the Cincinnati Zoo.

**2002:**

“Operation Crash” is created to investigate and prosecute those involved in the black market trade of endangered rhinoceros horns.

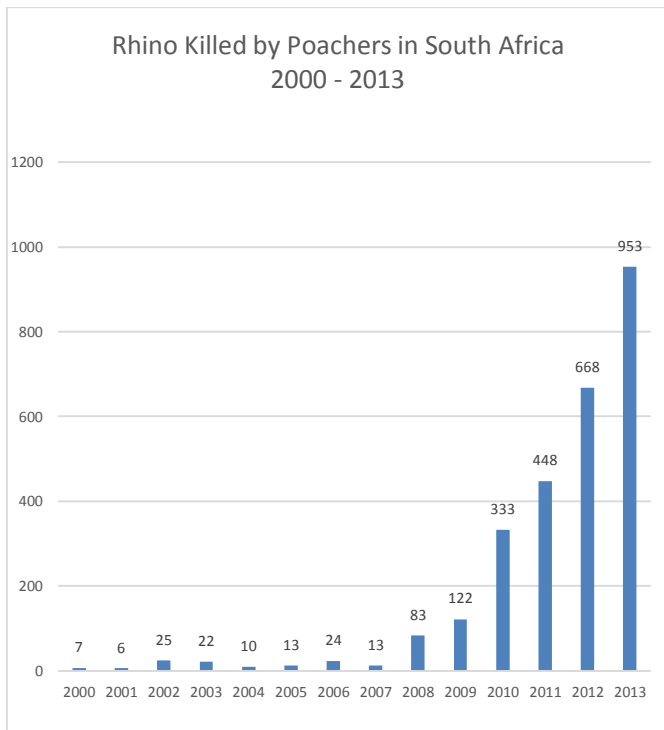
**2003:**

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in conjunction with national parks in South Africa, launch the Black Rhino Expansion Project. The aim of the project is to encourage the breeding of rhinos by private landowners.

**2005-2013:**

Rhino deaths due to poaching slowly begin to rise again because of renewed demand for their horn in China and Southeast Asia.

## Wildlife Trafficking: Its Impact on the Rhino Yesterday and Today



2013 Stats as of Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>

### FREE eBook

By Wendy Sotos – Compliments of Nikela – [www.Nikela.org](http://www.Nikela.org) – 01/2014

Trafficked much like illegal drugs or guns, the illegal poaching, and subsequent selling, of animal parts is a multibillion dollar business.

Recently ranked as second only to drug trafficking!

Worth more than gold or cocaine, rhino horn continues to command a high price tag in Asia and Vietnam. Always falsely linked to cure many ailments, the latest “medical remedy” links rhino horn to curing cancer in Asia. In Vietnam, the surge for rhino horn is for use as a recreational drug, such as “rhino wine”. In the Middle East, rhino horn continues to be coveted to make ornamental and ceremonial dagger handles. All these demands for the animal born with a unique horn on its head has led to the massive poaching of black and white rhino in South Africa in recent years.

The senseless poaching of rhino, for their horns for “medical purposes”, or the killing of elephants, for ivory tusks, are well known and documented. The loss of both these species is pushing them dangerously close to the brink of extinction.

In 2012, the Secretary General of CITES stressed the direness of the rhino situation if the illegal slaughter continues. The current rates of *“illegal (rhino) killing(s) could drive the species to extinction during the lifetime of our children.”*

*Extinction = never again to walk on this earth!*

*“Everyone contributes to the continued demand for illegal animal goods.*

*Wildlife might be targeted and killed across Asia and Africa, but their furs, tusks, bones, and horns are sold all over the world. Smuggled goods from poached animals find their way to Europe, Australia, China, and the United States.*

*I regret to say the United States is the second-largest destination market for illegally trafficked wildlife in the world.”*

Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

## One Word Can Make a Difference

Placing the word '*wildlife*' in front of '*crime*', leading conservationists agree, diminishes the seriousness of the act committed. The truth is, these acts are *criminal* acts, and those who perpetrate these crimes are *criminals*.

Sadly, the sentences and fines for these acts, hardly, if ever, fit the crime.

Weak laws and judicial systems, and light sentences for those convicted, enable this horrible practice to continue. With little or no regard for the species they slaughter and push closer to extinction, the promise of a huge payoff is more than worth the risk.

Rhino hunting is still legal in South Africa, and trophy hunting horns are legal for personal possession, complicating law enforcement immensely.



## What is... Who is... Why Poaching?

### > *What is 'Poaching'?*

The capture of wild animals illegally on public lands or while trespassing on private property.

### > *Who Poaches?*

**Local poachers** primarily kill wild animals and birds for bush meat, to feed their families or sell locally.

**External Poachers** infiltrate communities to obtain information on the whereabouts of rhino and other high value wildlife.

**Former Military Personnel** including police officers, game scouts and others with specialized training in tracking and shooting skills.

**Wildlife Industry Member** that may include ranch owners, professional hunters, game capture operators, pilots and wildlife veterinarians.

**Pseudo-hunters** used as a front to secure trophy hunting permits to gain accesses to rhino horns.

Source: Aljazeera.com

### > ***Why Poaching?***

There are various reasons for poaching, among the most common are:

- For family food
- To sell at the market
- For huge profits by crime syndicates

In the case of the latter the poacher is merely a pawn, usually a local hungry person easily lured by the promise of big money.

### > ***Where is it done?***

All over the world. However, Africa, home to 10% of the world's wildlife (and 90% of its rhino population) stands to lose much if the trends continue.

### > ***What is an Anti-Poaching Unit?***

A group or team of rangers who protect wildlife in a designated area. Their primary task is to patrol their area to *“maintain an assertive and highly visual presence against poaching activities. Typical duties while on patrol are to arrest and apprehend poachers, rescue trapped or injured wildlife, report on wildlife movements and to maintain both a covert and overt presence in the area.”*

Source: wildernessfoundation.co.za

## How CITES Fits In

CITES, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, with close to 200 countries as members, is the world's primary treaty to protect wildlife.

The treaty categorizes animals into three groups according to how endangered a species is perceived to be. Simply put, it goes like this:

### ***Appendix I***

Wild animals (like certain rhino species) are considered so close to extinction that their commercial trade is banned.

### ***Appendix II***

Wild animals that are considered less vulnerable may be traded under a permit system.

### ***Appendix III***

Wild animals are protected by national legislation of the country that added it to the list.

While CITES efforts to protect wildlife worldwide is notable, there is one glaring exception.

Species bred in captivity *do not* receive the same protection as those in the wild.

Source: cites.org

It is this loophole in the treaty that poachers exploit to their advantage.



Brent Stirton, National Geographic

This black bull was found wandering Zimbabwe Save Valley Conservancy after poachers shot him several times and hacked off both his horns. Veterinarians euthanized the animal because his shattered shoulder could no longer support his weight.

**FREE eBook**

## Where the Rhino Once Roamed

Home to 90% of the world's remaining black and white rhino in the wild, South Africa, has seen the bulk of the recent resurgence in rhino poaching. The resurgence not only threatens the return of the 'comeback kid' but leaves the survival of both species beyond the next decade in serious question.

Since 2007, poaching in South Africa is up by a staggering 3,000%. South Africa set a record number of rhino poached in 2012 with 668... nearly 50% increase over the year before. Compared to only four years earlier in 2008 when 83 rhinos were illegally killed.

From 1960-1995 the black rhino population in the wild plummeted dramatically by an estimated 97% according to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.) This drop prompted the IUCN, the world leader in assessing species vulnerability, to label the black rhino as critically endangered. In 1995 only 2,410 black rhino remained.

However, due to renewed interest in the rhino's plight and conservation efforts, by 2010 their numbers had increased to 4,880 earning the 'comeback kid' title. While still not what they once were, the numbers showed a sign of recovery in the species, and planted a seed of hope for the beleaguered animal and for its survival.

For its cousin the white rhino, the story is nearly the same. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the southern white rhino, one of two white rhinoceros subspecies, was hunted down and only a mere 20-50 individuals remained, all in South Africa. By 2010, thanks to aggressive conservation and a concerted reintroduction program helped boost the southern white rhino numbers in the wild to 20,160. Truly, a 'comeback kid' story if ever there was one. Outside South Africa most can be found in Kenya, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Sadly for the northern subspecies, in 2003 the wild population stood at a measly 30 individuals, all living in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Three years later in 2006, only four confirmed northern white rhino remained. Experts see little hope for the species survival and have already classified it as extinct.

**FREE eBook**

## **So, Who's to Blame?**

Naturally, one would think with one or two fairly large horns, a keen sense of smell and hearing, and of course their giant size, that the rhino would be no match against a foe.

You would be correct. Rhinos have no natural predator, except one.

### **Man.**

Rhinos have extremely poor eyesight. This weakness leaves them extremely vulnerable against heavily armed and experienced poachers who sneak up on them within only a few feet before firing.

From merely a stub to over five feet in length, the horn(s) of a rhino are made from keratin... the same substance found in our hair and fingernails.

How did something so abundant become so scarce?

## Travels of the Rhino Horn

*Smuggling*: the illegal transferring of goods in and out of a country.

Some cultures believe rhino horn has mystical and healing powers. More recently, the horn has become popular among Vietnams' nouveau riche and political elite as a party drug or a hangover cure.

For the rhino, that's a big problem.

Rhino horn is now worth more than cocaine or gold.

The illegal wildlife trade has exploded in recent years. According to the IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) wildlife trafficking has become a multibillion dollar a year business.

For the rhino, that's even a bigger problem.

Backed by Asia's nouveau riche and organized crime syndicates, African paramilitary groups, and a continued and growing demand for the exotic, is pushing many wild animals, reptiles and birds, including the rhino, closer to extinction.

### **FREE eBook**



In other words, the very thing that makes the rhino unique is the leading cause for its demise!

## Organized

The crime syndicate network is highly organized and has multiple transition points and people involved on a need-to-know basis.

Horn removed and passed onto national level courier who transports it to a middleman collection point.

It is believed rhinos are often “poached to order”.  
With couriers waiting to transport the horns and poachers demanding payment upon delivery.

Reports have indicated rhino horns have been found smuggled in carpets, furniture, and suitcases.

Source:  
Aljazeera.com

Demanding \$90,000 or more per kilogram, the horn sawed off from the head of (frequently a still living) rhino by a poacher working for a crime syndicate often sells for half a million dollars or more.

## FREE eBook

Once the horn is removed it is usually handed off to a smuggler who evades detection by hiding the illegal contraband in legal shipments. They are also known to bribe wildlife and customs officials. Few are ever caught. Even less are ever punished.

Due to the disparity of laws and penalties between countries, most are typically no more severe than a slap on the wrist.

### **The Rules**

The nature of wildlife crime has changed.

Helicopters and automatic weapons have now been added to hunting rifles and flatbed trucks as poachers become increasingly more sophisticated and military-like. Backing the gun men are suppliers and international crime networks like never before.

The tools of the trade include bribery and threats, to insure the delivery of wild animal and bird parts to any corner of the world.

What drives it?

Money and lots of it.

### **FREE eBook**

## **The Players**

The *good* guys and the *bad* guys.

### **> *The Lone Ranger(s)***

Courageous, but underpaid, most are government park rangers. Armed with sometimes little more than a stick they engage in deadly games of hide-and-seek with poachers on a daily basis. Fortunately many private reserves are protected by better trained, skilled and equipped independent anti-poaching teams.

These units are on the front line of the rhino wars, and they are essential if the rhino has any hope of survival.

### **> *Subsistence Poachers***

Driven by hunger and poverty, subsistence poachers – usually from communities nearby a game reserve – hunt for food and/or for use in local traditional medicine.

### **> *Commercial Poachers***

Responsible for the majority of incidents, commercial poachers are in it for one thing, and one thing only. Money.

Typically consisting of four to six heavily armed individuals with military backgrounds, these groups are well organized and funded.

### **> *Skilled Hunters***

In most cases where the poached, dead rhino is found, it has been killed by a single shot, or several well placed “kill” shots, the killing was done by a skilled or professional hunter. What separates these poachers from commercial poachers is logistical support... like a vehicle. Also, the horns may be removed with surgical precision.

### **> *Chopper Poachers***

Using helicopters and pilots with “connections” (i.e. linked with crime syndicates) rhinos are either shot or darted by the poacher using a lethal overdose of an immobilizing drug. This method can be thought of as the silent killer. For the poachers, the rhino goes down quickly and with no gunfire to draw attention. The few rhino that survive the drugging and dehorning usually die a few days later.

### **> *Trophy Hunters***

Driven by pure greed, trophy hunters may legally kill a rhino *and* legally export its horn home as a “hunting trophy”. Also prostitutes have been recruited to pose as hunters in order to secure hunting permits.

### **> *Organized Crime***

Better known by names such as cartel, mafia, the syndicate, these “businesses” operate on the regional, national and transnational levels. One of their more

### **FREE eBook**

popular “tools of the trade” is to create “credible” front organizations as a means to do their illegal dirty work.

### **The Demand**

The killing of rhino for their horn, like all international wildlife crimes, are demand driven.

The demand and use of rhino horn varies. In China it is mistakenly believed to reduce fever, improve sexual competency, and as protector against evil spirits. In Vietnam, it is wrongly believed to be a magical cure for cancer and is used as a preventive medicine for hangovers.

Scientific evidence repeatedly has proven rhino horn DOES NOT do any of the above.

## 48 Hours

It takes merely 48 hours for a horn attached to a living rhino in South Africa to being processed and for sale in a shop in Asia.



Often recruited by organized crime networks, the path to market typically starts with a poor local, farmer or hunter. Known as “subsistence poachers”, these are they who take high risks in exchange for very little reward.

### FREE eBook

These ‘high risk, low cost’ hit men are vital to the network.

*“The poaching syndicates are determined to carry on with their nefarious acts, using the poverty that is prevalent in Mozambique and South Africa to recruit poachers”,* said Ike Phaahla, with South Africa National Parks.

Source: theguardian.com

### **> Start the clock.**

Under the cover of darkness, and aided by the light of the “poacher’s moon” (full moon), the poacher enters the game reserve. Usually on foot, the hunter shoots the rhino with random fire to the head and chest area, before aiming for the legs to immobilize the animal. Once down, and with no time to waste, they work quickly and remove the horns very crudely using an axe.

It is worth noting that most, if any, check to see if the rhino is dead before hacking.

### **> 10 minutes.**

The whole process... shooting and dehorning... is about the same time it takes for a coffee break.

The rhino if still alive, is in shock, excruciating pain and missing half its face.

### **FREE eBook**

The horn(s) are then quickly passed off and transported as rapidly as possible, frequently moving along a chain of various people.

**> 12 hours.**

Generally within a matter of hours the horn(s) are trucked out of South Africa to Mozambique. Once out of the country, due to current laws, it become next to impossible to apprehend the poachers.

**> 24 hours.**

No more than a day after the brutal removal of the horn(s) they are on a plane and in route to Asia.

**> 36 hours.**

Once on the ground and smuggled through customs the horn(s) are passed off to a local dealer.

After that the horn(s) are processed.

**> 48 hours.**

The processed horn is available for sale on the streets and shops in Asia.

The main reason apprehending members along the chain is so difficult is that each person only has contact with the people directly above or below them. In other words,

**FREE eBook**



arrests of the hunters (direct poacher) rarely leads the authorities to the crime bosses.

On the flip side are the “professional poachers”.

**> *Hi-tech.***

What differentiates these poachers from the discussed “non-professionals”?

They are well-structured operations that use highly technological methods, including: tranquilizer guns, helicopters, veterinary drugs and high caliber weapons. It isn't only the high-tech gadgets these professionals use that separate them, but it is also the hunter himself. Most have military training and insider information as to the whereabouts of the rhino. Driven by financial gain and greed, most are members of a criminal gang and part of a larger and more organized crime network.

Professional rhino “kills” are usually “cleaner” with the animal being gunned down by a single well-placed shot to the head or body. In the case of aerial attacks, the rhino is darted from the air first with a powerful tranquilizer gun. In most cases it takes less than seven minutes for the poachers to get in and out.

If the dosage is sufficient the rhino may experience a quick death, however, some evidence shows that the animal often suffers from great stress before dying. If the dosage is too low the rhino is likely to waken and bleed to death.



## Legal and Other Obstacles

While poachers have been shot dead and suspects are arrested every year, rhino killings continue.

Why?

Parallel legal trade of wildlife, confusing wildlife trade laws, few convictions and weak punishment are the most commonly cited. However, the main culprit is recognition of and focus on the severity of the problem.

Until recently crimes against wildlife didn't receive the serious attention it warranted from local, national, and international law enforcement agencies. Whether due to ignorance, lack of personnel, funding or all the above, several endangered species (most notably the elephant, rhino and tiger) have been pushed to the edge of extinction.

*“Wildlife trade is considered a low-risk enterprise for the criminals involved, in large part because wildlife trafficking is treated as a low priority by many law enforcement agencies.”*

Source: Criminal Nature: The Global Security Implications of the Illegal Wildlife Trade, IFAW, June 2013

### **FREE eBook**

## **2011**

Almost 40 tons of smuggled elephant ivory were seized. In the past 10 years, 11,000 forest elephants were killed in Gabon's Minkebe National Park.

Currently the kill rate of elephants in Africa is exceeding the birth rate. If not stopped it could lead to the extinction of elephant species by the year 2020.

Source: care2.com

## **2012**

A record number of rhinos were poached in South Africa. A subspecies of the black rhino was declared extinct in the wild in West Africa (2011). Vietnam lost its last Javan rhino, which were killed by poachers (2011).

In April 2013 wildlife authorities in Mozambique's Limpopo National Park reported that the last 15 rhinos had been poached with the aid of park rangers sworn to protect them.

Source: timeslive.co.za

### **> *Contradictions***

South Africa, historically viewed as the "primary custodian" of Africa's rhinos, is the only country (along with Swaziland) that allows the rhino to be hunted legally.

### **FREE eBook**

### > ***The Loophole***

In South Africa it is legal to hunt rhinos for trophy purposes. The hunters, who must obtain a permit, agree not to sell the horn and are allowed to kill only one white rhino a year.

Thai prostitutes and strippers, with trophy hunting permits participated in sham rhino hunts. However, it was not the prostitutes or strippers pulling the trigger, but professional hunters along on the hunt.

Source: newsday.com

A dead rhino is still a dead rhino.

A dehorned rhino is still a dehorned rhino.

Dead rhinos and their horn(s) don't identify their killer as a trophy hunter or poacher.

### > ***Corruption***

Corruption runs rampant in South Africa. One can easily find story after story of those we rely on to protect the rhino being accused of helping those associated with poaching.

A Slap on the Wrist

Even if caught poachers are usually only fined and serve little if any time in jail.

### **FREE eBook**

The disparity between punishments in different countries also varies greatly.

In Zambia, a poacher in possession of rhino horn or convicted of poaching can receive a sentence of 20 years.

Meanwhile in Mozambique, the illegal act of poaching a rhino is a simple misdemeanor.

In Kenya, the penalty for poaching is only a fine.

However, times (finally) could be changing.

## How to Stop Rhino Poaching

From dehorning the rhino to legalizing the trade of rhino horn, there is not easy solution to this complex problem.

The following **solutions** are all in some stage of application in the effort to curb the poaching epidemic.

Source for this section courtesy of: [Africa-wildlife-detective.com](http://Africa-wildlife-detective.com)

### > *Dehorning*

Sedate the animal and saw off the horn several inches from the stump. However, the solution is not that simple. Besides the fact that the horn grows back, rhinos need horns to: protect their young, defend their turf, and for foraging.

### *Successes:*

Namibia was the first country to try dehorning. Between 1989 and the early 1990's, dehorning in addition to improved security and funding for anti-poaching efforts resulted in a significant reduction in rhino loss.

In this case study not a single dehorned rhino was subsequently poached, as the stub is supposedly the most 'valuable' part of the horn.

*Failures:*

In Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe during the early 1990's, the majority of dehorned rhinos were killed just 12-18 months after being dehorned. Rhinos with only stubs remaining continue to be targeted. Some experts say this is due to the constant increase in the price that can be secured for a rhino horn, while others think poachers may kill dehorned rhinos out of vengeance or to avoid tracking the same rhino again. Then of course it is also possible that poachers cannot determine if a rhino has a horn or not, at night and/or in thick bush.

**> *Legalizing the Trade in Rhino Horn***

This issue is highly controversial with wildlife advocates and activists, not to mention rhino owners, lining up on opposing sides.

*Some of the Challenges:*

- Turning a wild animal into a domestic one
- Predicting how legalizing rhino horn trade will affect the behavior of the end users in Asia
- Regulating and monitoring the trade
- Producing enough “product” to meet the demand
- Solving a criminal problem by making it legal



**> *Educating the End User***

Curbing the demand for rhino horn and other wildlife products via education campaigns. WildAid has seen some success in decreasing the consumption of shark fin soup as a menu choice in China.

**> *Horn Infusion***

Though expensive, injecting non-lethal poison into rhino horns is the solution of choice of some rhino owners. Infused horns may cause the consumer to become “seriously ill” and thus serve as a deterrent.

**> *Moratorium on Hunting Permits***

Some call for the South African government to close down access to hunting permits of rhino to individuals that come from countries with weak CITES control.

**> *Increase Protection***

Training, equipping and deploying more National Defense Force in key positions across South Africa to step up the level of protection against poachers on the ground.

Supporting independent anti-poaching ranger units so they can increase their presence, innovation and ability to protect rhino via UAVs, sniffer dogs and other called for sophisticated means.

### > ***DNA Database***

The taking of DNA samples and tagging rhino is in process and a way of tracking a rhino horn if confiscated anywhere along its route to Asia.

Although this is effective from a forensic point of view it doesn't keep rhino alive.

### > ***New Fence***

Erecting an electric fence between the Kruger National Park and Mozambique to prevent poachers from the latter crossing the border and killing rhino and other wildlife in the former.

### > ***Clean up the Courts***

Make the present courts system more functional so that errors like forgetting translators don't allow alleged poachers to go free. Update the laws and step up the punishments for wildlife crimes. Establish environmental courts to improve the rate of prosecution of couriers and buyers.

Source: Africa-wildlife-detective.com

### > ***Captive Breeding***

*“Proponents of captive breeding argue that it takes pressure off wildlife populations, decreases crime, satisfies international demand that will never go away, and puts money in the pockets of those willing to commit to*

### **FREE eBook**

*“farming” wildlife. But these benefits only hold in countries with enforcement policies strong enough to deter rule breakers. In practice, smugglers establish fake breeding facilities, then claim that animals and plants poached from the wild are captive bred. Fake captive breeding is just one of the techniques Anson Wong used in running a secret front operation for one of the world’s largest wildlife-smuggling syndicates.”*

Source: nationalgeographic.com

As reviewed, there are numerous proposals/solutions (each with its own set of pros and cons). Each brings with it heated debates and opinions, but with no agreed upon resolution to work together and move forward to end wildlife trafficking.

Ultimately, it comes down to banding together as one, united against those who commit these horrible acts.

Nations must create, and enforce, tougher penalties. Jail time must be served by those convicted of poaching and /or in possession of rhino horn and other illegal wildlife body parts.

## > **Kenya**

The Kenyan parliament recently proposed a wildlife bill that will “greatly increase jail terms and fines” for those convicted.

*The proposed bill calls for a “minimum fine of nearly \$115,000, or minimum prison term of 15 years – or both – for a person who commits crimes related to endangered or threatened species. Those in possession of wildlife trophies face a minimum fine of nearly \$15,000 or five years in prison or both. Sport hunters also face harsher penalties.”*

Source: northjersey.com

## > **May 2013**

United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice calls on the nations of the world to “recognize wildlife and forest crimes as a serious form of organized crime and strengthen penalties against criminal syndicates and networks profiting from such illegal trade.”

Source: IPS NEWS

## > **July 2013**

President Obama’s campaign to fight wildlife trafficking. The campaign will focus on helping affected countries establish and enforce better trafficking laws; support regional cooperation; train their police and rangers; and beef up their law enforcement and intelligence-gathering

## **FREE eBook**

capacities. It will also use a new “Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program” to offer bounties for poachers and push for more modern technologies to identify and capture them. Source: [fightforrhinos.com](http://fightforrhinos.com)

### > ***September 2013***

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists the southern white rhino as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. By doing this, the species is given greater protection from poaching. The listing now means that all five rhino species are under the protection of United States law. This will also make it easier for law enforcement officials to bring rhino horn smugglers to justice.

However, time is running out for the rhino.

Should the current trends continue, the rhino will be poached to extinction by the year 2025.

Source: [Africa-wildlife-detective.com](http://Africa-wildlife-detective.com)

## Look Who's Helping Rhinos

Lucky for the rhinos (and some of their other animal friends) their plight is now not only a global concern, but a royal one as well.

### > **Prince William**

Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, recently vowed to save Africa's endangered wildlife.

*"It makes me very angry, it's a waste,"* William shared and added it is his goal to ensure that his new son, George, see a live rhino.

The heir to England's throne went further by stating that education is crucial.

*"It's a message about educating people and understanding that when you buy that rhino horn, or when you buy that ivory, you are taking this from an animal that has been slaughtered for this decorative ornament you have on your mantelpiece at home – is that really what you desire and what you feel is right in the world?"*

Source: [mirror.co.uk](http://mirror.co.uk)

**> Leonardo DiCaprio**

*“If we don’t do something about them (the rhinos and elephants) it is going to be a tragic loss for everyone.”*

In 2013, Leonardo DiCaprio, announced his commitment to saving those endangered animals currently at risk because of their desired body parts by humans.

Teaming up with WWF (World Wildlife Fund) DiCaprio launched *“Hands Off My Parts”* a new animal rights campaign. The campaign’s goal is to *“bring awareness to the rhinos, tigers and elephants that are being killed for their skins, bones, tusks, horns and other body parts.”*

*“Illegal wildlife trade is the most urgent threat facing species like tigers, rhinos and elephants. These animals are being killed every day to feed an escalating demand for their body parts.”* DiCaprio said. *“Whole populations are at risk of being wiped out if we don’t take immediate action to shut down this illicit trade.”*

Source: pagesix.com

You don’t have  
to be heir to the  
throne  
Or a movie star  
to save rhino.

The rhino needs you more than ever.

All you need is a bit of compassion  
and desire...

To stand up and be their voice!

**FREE eBook**


## What Will You Say?

Rhino conservation is in its eleventh hour.

If things don't change – and the time is now – rhinos will be extinct in 11 more years!

Will you remember what they looked like?

What will you say when you're asked,



*“What did YOU do to save the rhino?”*

Get involved:

**Volunteer**

<http://www.nikela.org/nikela-volunteer>

**Donate**

<http://www.nikela.org/portfolio/stop-rhino-poaching>

**FREE eBook**



## About the Author

Wendy J Sotos is an animal lover (especially rhinos) and is currently seeking a full time position in the animal welfare field where she can continue to put her writing and newfound graphic/web design skills to good use (by saving animals locally and around the world). She donates her free time to three animal welfare groups (including Nikela).

Please stop by and visit her website:

[www.lonerhino.org](http://www.lonerhino.org)

## Other eBooks

You may want to take a look at these other titles published by Nikela... they're free.

**Wildlife Ranger: A Journey of Courage and Conviction**

- By Peter Milton, Founder of SPOTS

**Capitalism Gone Wrong aka Wildlife Trafficking**

- By Anthony Wanguru Stevenson Ruoro

**7 Most Wanted Wildlife Criminals**

- Via INTERPOL

**POACHED!**

- By Dr. William Fowlds

**China and the Rhino**

- By Dr. Zhang

And more, all available at [www.Nikela.org/ebooks](http://www.Nikela.org/ebooks)

## Wildlife Trafficking: Its Impact on the Rhino Yesterday and Today