

# RHINO HORN DEMAND



**WILDAID**



# ABOUT WILDAID

WildAid's mission is to end the illegal wildlife trade in our lifetimes by reducing demand through public awareness campaigns and providing comprehensive marine protection.

The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion (USD) per year and has drastically reduced many wildlife populations around the world. Just like the drug trade, law and enforcement efforts have not been able to resolve the problem. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent protecting animals in the wild, yet virtually nothing is spent on stemming the demand for wildlife parts and products. WildAid is the only organization focused on reducing the demand for these products, with the strong and simple message: when the buying stops, the killing can too.

Via public service announcements and short form documentary pieces, WildAid is partnering with African Wildlife Foundation and The Yao Ming Foundation to educate consumers and reduce the demand for rhino horn worldwide. Through our highly leveraged pro-bono media distribution outlets, our message reaches one billion people per week in China alone.

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

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### WILDAID

744 Montgomery St #300  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
Tel: 415.834.3174

### WILDLIFE CAMPAIGNER

Zach Weismann  
[weismann@wildaids.org](mailto:weismann@wildaids.org)

## PARTNERS

African Wildlife Foundation  
Beijing Horizonkey Information & Consulting Co., Ltd.  
Virgin Unite  
Yao Ming Foundation

### EDITOR

Zach Weismann

### PHOTOGRAPHER

Kristian Schmidt

### DESIGNER

Hugo Ugaz

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to the following supporters & partners  
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AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®



IN 2012 APPROXIMATELY



**668 RHINOS**  
WERE KILLED IN SOUTH AFRICA  
FOR THEIR HORNS

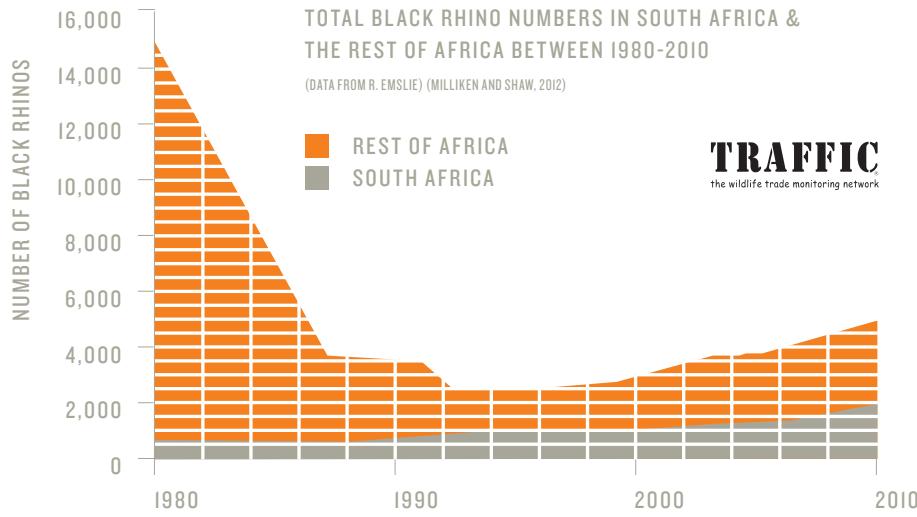




# THREATS TO RHINOS

Rhinos have existed on earth for over 50 million years, and modern rhino species have been in existence for over 15 million years.<sup>1</sup> Many rhino species have historically gone extinct, and only five species remain today.

As many as several hundred thousand rhinoceroses once roamed throughout Africa. However, the global rhino population fell from an estimated 75,000 in the early 1970s to around 30,000 today.<sup>2</sup> Between 1970 and 1995, the black rhino was reduced from 65,000 to 2,410.<sup>3</sup> Today, all rhino species are critically endangered, except the Southern White Rhino subspecies, which has recovered from around 50 to 20,000 individuals since the 1960s.<sup>4</sup>



**African Wildlife Foundation, Rhino horns.**

1. 1993. Prothero, D. *Fifty Million Years of Rhinoceros Evolution*. *Proceedings of the International Rhino Conference*, San Diego Zoological Society, San Diego.
2. 2002. Leader-Williams, N. *Regulation and Protection: Successes and Failures of Rhinoceros Conservation*. Rhino Resource Center.
3. 1999. Emslie, R. and Brooks, M. *African Rhino. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*. IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group.
4. 2013. TRAFFIC's Engagement on African Rhinoceros Conservation and the Global Trade in Rhinoceros Horn. TRAFFIC.

## CURRENT POPULATION OF ALL FIVE RHINO SPECIES

### JAVAN RHINO

(*Rhinoceros sondaicus*)

Fewer than 50

### SUMATRAN RHINO

(*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*)

Fewer than 200

### INDIAN OR ASIAN ONE-HORNED RHINO

(*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

Fewer than 3,000

### BLACK RHINO

(*Diceros bicornis*)

Fewer than 5,000

### WHITE RHINO

(*Ceratotherium simum*)

estimated 20,150 (northern and southern subspecies combined)<sup>5</sup>

## THREATS

While most endangered species of animals are threatened by habitat loss due to encroaching human development, African rhinos have ample suitable habitat and face only one major threat: poaching specifically for their horns. Their horn is made of compressed hair and composed primarily of keratin, the same material as human fingernails.

### TRADE IN VIETNAM AND CHINA

Rhino horn has traditionally been used in Asian medicine for reducing fevers and other ailments, but relatively infrequently due to its high price. In response to an international trade ban to protect wild rhinos, the Chinese government banned the use of rhino horn in traditional Chinese medicine in 1993, removing rhino horn from the Chinese pharmacopoeia administered by the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China. Yet rhino horn is still in demand for use within Traditional Chinese Medicine across China and Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup> Western pharmaceutical studies concluded that, while in high dosage, rhino horn might slightly reduce fever, it is not worth pursuing as a medicine.<sup>7</sup> However, demand for use as carvings and cups, traditional medicines, and as a speculative asset in Asia appears to have grown in recent years. People that use rhino horn medicine believe it helps relieve fever, improve sexual competency, protect from evil spirits, and in recent years in Vietnam, serve as a magical cancer cure and a preventative medicine for hangovers, with no conclusive medical scientific evidence.<sup>8</sup>

### LEGAL PROTECTION

In response to rhino poaching, the first international ban on the commercial trade in rhino products was enacted in 1975 by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). However, some countries were still allowed to trade live rhinos and trophy hunt. The Sumatran, Javan, Indian, and Northern White subspecies were placed on Appendix I of CITES listings in 1997. Appendix I species are prohibited from being traded internationally for commercial purposes. The Black rhino species and the

Southern White subspecies were placed on CITES Appendix II listing. Species placed on Appendix II are identified as not currently threatened by extinction, but may become threatened if trade is not strictly regulated.<sup>9</sup>

While the ban prohibited international trade in theory, sales within Asian countries remained legal and rhino horn remained widely available through traditional medicine outlets. Growing economies also meant a larger quantity of people could now afford rhino horn. Rhino populations continued to decline in the face of heavy poaching for their horn into the early 1990s. Rhino horn also remained in high demand in the Middle East, especially Yemen, for the production of dagger handles.<sup>10</sup>

However, in 1993, CITES and the international community took actions to prohibit sales of rhino horn and, in China, the State Council of China issued the 'Notice on Prohibiting the Trade of Rhino Horns and Tiger Bones' as well as publicizing the prosecution of illegal rhino horn dealers. The ban in China, Hong



White Rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*)



Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, combined with increased public awareness campaigns, reduced demand for rhino horn, and helped black rhino populations begin to recover. Reports of poaching greatly decreased.

For 15 years, rhino populations in Africa were recovering, but in 2008, poaching started to rise again.<sup>11</sup> Previously, South Africa remained relatively untouched from poaching and had been successful in rebuilding the Southern White Rhino population from around 50 in the 1960s to over 20,000.<sup>12</sup> However, it now has become the center of the poaching crisis with most of the rhinos being poached in its flagship Kruger National Park. This has been attributed to increased trade links, growing resident populations in Africa from consuming nations, such as

Vietnam and China, increased affluence in these consuming economies, and the emergence of Vietnam as a new major importer, where rhino horn is being used as a preventative for hangovers and aphrodisiac, as well as medicine.<sup>13</sup>

In 2010, CITES increased protection for rhinos, as member countries committed to increased law enforcement, anti-poaching initiatives, and trade controls. Yet according to the South African National Parks, in 2011, a total of 448 rhinoceros were poached, compared to only 13 in 2006. In 2012, the number of rhinos killed for their horn in South Africa rose to 668.<sup>14</sup> As an indicator of the worsening situation, in the last few years, approximately fifteen museums in Europe have been subject to

*Kristian Schmidt, Yao Ming with poached rhino, South Africa 2012.*

theft or attempted theft of rhino horn from museum exhibits.<sup>15</sup>

In 2013, CITES member governments directed Vietnam to make progress in the development and implementation of rhino regulations and enforcement efforts in South Africa, agreeing on a Joint Action Plan between 2012 and 2017. The plan is set to help strengthen management of imported rhino horn trophies, and improve investigations and prosecutions of Vietnamese nationals suspected of illegally trading in rhino horn.<sup>16</sup>

5. *Ibid.*

6. *The Journal of Chinese Medicine.* <http://www.jcm.co.uk/endangered-species-campaign/rhinoceros/use-in-traditional-medicine/>

7. 2011. Beech, H. *Killing Fields: Africa's Rhinos Under Threat.* TIME Magazine. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2075283-2,00.html>

8. 2012. Miliken, T. and Shaw, J. *The South Africa–Vietnam Rhino Horn Trade Nexus.* TRAFFIC.

9. 1992. Williams-Leader, Nigel. *The World Trade in Rhino Horn: A Review.* TRAFFIC.

10. 2013. TRAFFIC's engagement on African rhinoceros conservation and the global trade in rhinoceros horn. TRAFFIC.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. 2012. Miliken, T. and Shaw, J. *The South Africa–Vietnam Rhino Horn Trade Nexus.* TRAFFIC.

14. 2013. *Rhinos in Crisis—poaching and illegal trade reach highest levels in over 20 years.* TRAFFIC.

15. 2011. Abend, Lisa. *In Europe's Museums, Rhino Horns Are Easy Pickings.* TIME Magazine.

16. 2013. *Governments Shield Rhinos, Elephants From Illegal Trade.* Environment News Service.

# 2012 CHINA RHINO HORN AWARENESS AND ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

In November 2012, WildAid and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) worked with Horizonkey Research Consultancy Group to interview 963 urban residents in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to better understand awareness of rhino conservation status, the consumption of rhino horn in China, and what might be done to deter consumption.

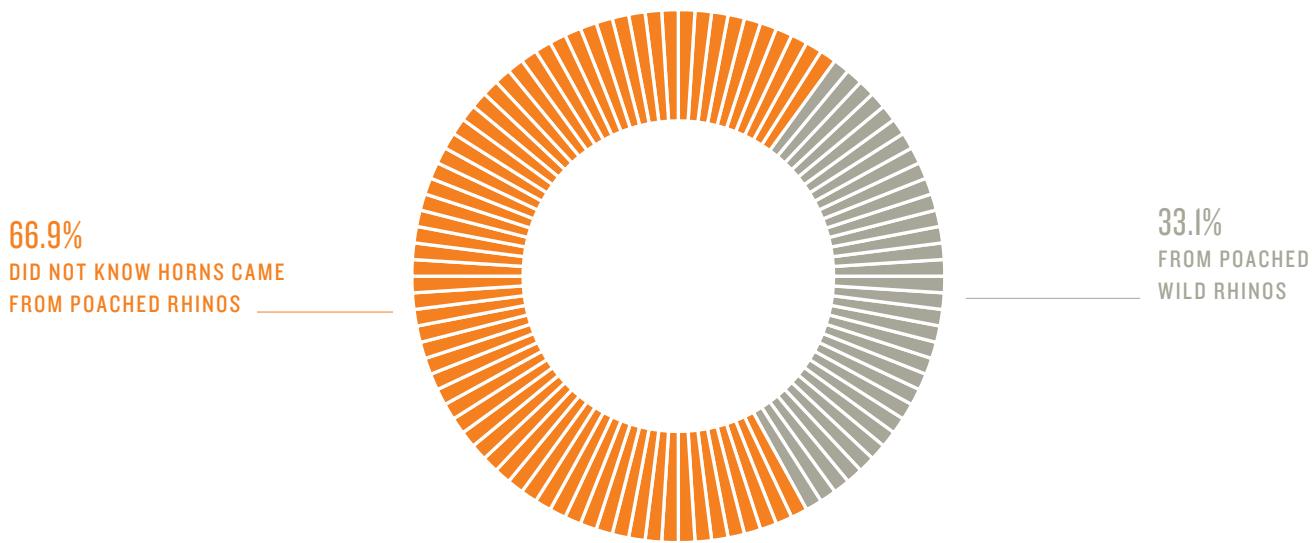
WildAid, AWF, and HorizonKey also conducted in-depth interviews with select focus group members to learn more about pre-existing attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions on rhino horn and its trade. The focus group participants included media professionals, government officials of deputy department director level and above, customs officials responsible for law

enforcement and legal action, and a high-income group with annual household income above 2 million RMB.

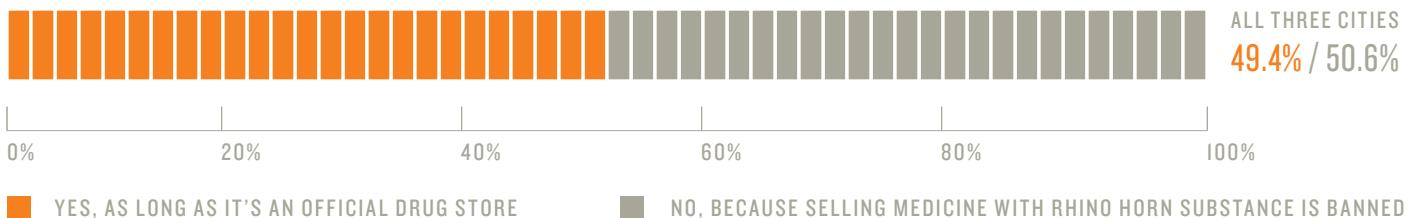
## SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

1. ***Two thirds of those interviewed were not aware that horns come from poached rhinos, while 27% believed horns came from natural mortality and 40% believed they were from farmed rhinos that either were killed, died or don't know.***

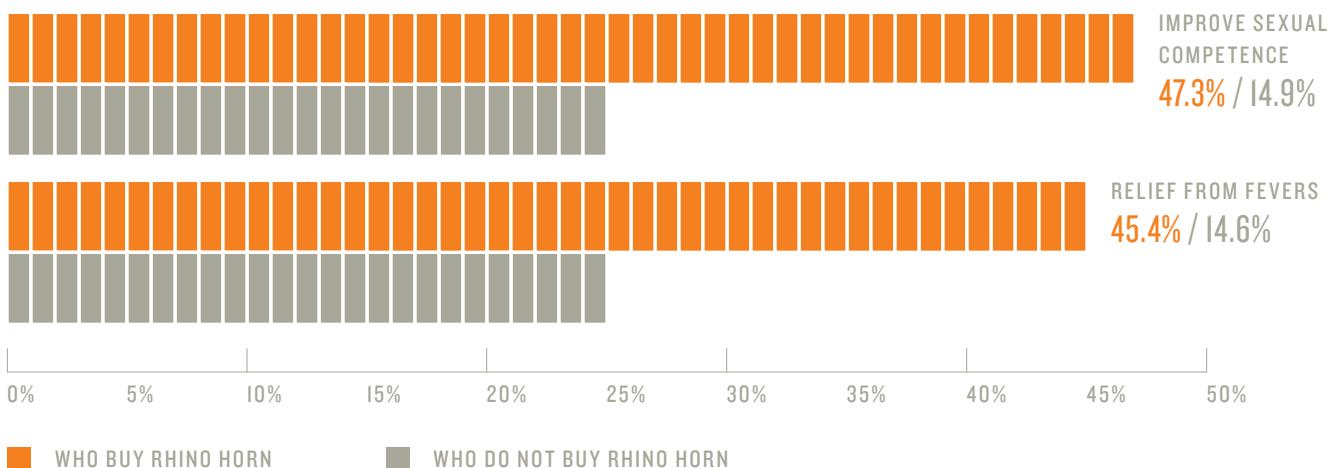
How are rhino horns acquired?



2. **Approximately fifty (49.4%) percent believed that rhino horn could be legally purchased from official stores.**



3. **A high percentage of residents who buy and consume rhino horn believe in its alleged aphrodisiac and medicinal value. Aphrodisiac use of rhino horn was believed to be an urban myth, but recent surveys indicate that people in China believe in these properties.**

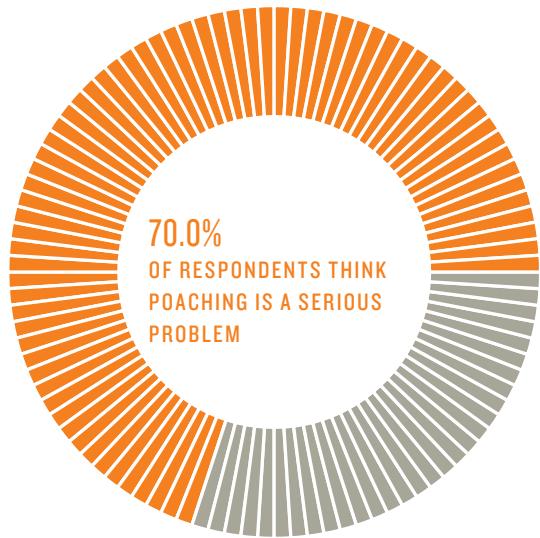


4. **Out of the participants who do not buy rhino horn, 95% of participants said the Chinese government should take stricter action to prevent the use of rhino horns. Even 72% of those who purchase rhino horns agree with stricter restrictions.**



5. **Over 70% of respondents think poaching is a serious problem. If current trends continue, all rhinoceroses will be extinct in less than 10 years.**

How serious is the rhino poaching problem?



6. **Nearly 90% of all respondents believe that trade in rhino horn is illegal. In 1977, China signed CITES, which banned all international trade in rhino horns. In 1993, the State Council banned rhino horn sales within China.**



Baby Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)

# FOCUS GROUP MAJOR FINDINGS

1. More than half of the participants did not know the material composition of rhino horn. Upon learning its material, perceptions around its medicinal value seemed to change.

*"I thought rhino horns have some medicinal effects. But after I heard that there is no difference between a rhino horn and a human fingernail in nature, I think it might have no especially great medicinal value."*

—Female, Media Member, Beijing

*"You can find a person of great authority to tell the public that a rhino horn is the same as a fingernail. If you want to use a rhino horn, why not just bite your own fingernails?"*

—Male, Media Member, Beijing

2. Respondents were very wary of rumored claims in Vietnam that rhino horn can cure cancer.

*"I don't think rhino horns can treat cancer. Nothing has been verified yet. I think it is mainly because some sellers are fabricating rumors to increase rhino horn prices. If it has been verified, the authority would publish the news."*

—Male, Government Official, Guangzhou

*"This is sheer nonsense. If rhino horns can treat cancer, how could Anita Mui die of cancer? Didn't she have the money for a rhino horn? If rhino horns can treat cancer, cancer would have been conquered earlier."*

—Male, Rhino Horn Consumer, Shanghai

3. To the Chinese public, there is no doubt that rhinos are endangered wild animals under protection. All interviewees believed that although no wild rhinos live within the territory of China, the Chinese government should ensure the survival of rhinos and increase punishment for offenders.

*"I think we need to tell the public the destructive impact on the ecological environment after the extinction of animals. Because your children and future generations will continue to live on the earth, they might be revenged by the nature. The nature would in turn attack and retaliate against human beings."*

—Female, Media Member, Shanghai

*"Although rhinos come from South Africa rather than China, it is within the scope of protected endangered animals in China, and is also a rare protected animal. Some non-Chinese animals are also covered in the Chinese laws concerning endangered animals, most of which are world-class protected animals. Therefore, the laws also have great impact on the protection of such animals."*

—Male, Government Official, Shanghai

*"China has made more efforts in the protection of tigers and pandas, since their quantity is less than that of rhinos. In addition, pandas are peculiar in China, and regarded as our national treasure, so we make great efforts in the protection of pandas. But rhinos have become extinct in China."*

—Male, Government Official, Shanghai

*"The punishment on personal collection or transaction of rhino horns should be strengthened. Those with gross violations can be investigated for criminal punishment properly, and should not be simply fined. Such punishment should be listed into the criminal law."*

—Male, Government Official, Shanghai

# WILDAID



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