



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE CAMPAIGN



JULY 2012 – DEC 2013



WWF / TRAFFIC

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE CAMPAIGN - SUMMARY

Overview of the campaign

The world's wildlife is in crisis. Poaching for international trade has escalated dramatically in recent years and is now the greatest threat to many of WWF's flagship species, jeopardizing decades of conservation investment and threatening the survival of some of our flagship species.

- Rhino poaching in South Africa increased by more than 3,000% between 2007 and 2011
- At least 12,000 elephants are killed each year for their ivory, most in Central Africa
- There are as few as 3,200 tigers left in the wild and illegal trade is one of the greatest factors in their decline

Demand from Asia

The current demand for endangered species products in Asia is unprecedented and largely driven by demand for medicinal products, such as rhino horn and tiger parts, or as a demonstration of economic and social status, through products like ivory and rhino horn carvings or tiger bone wine. Growing wealth in Asia, particularly in China, has resulted in an increase in the number of consumers with the means to purchase such products. In addition, a dramatic spike in demand for rhino horn in Vietnam has been driven by a recent myth that rhino horn can cure some terminal illnesses, and renewed interest in other non-traditional medicinal¹ uses.

More than a species issue

The poaching crisis around elephants, rhinos and tigers is an example of the much broader escalation in wildlife trafficking, which includes a wide range of endangered animals and plants. Experts' best estimate of the global value of this illegal trade is between \$7.8 and \$10 billion per year, making it the fifth largest illicit transnational activity worldwide², and it is widely recognised to involve well-organized international criminal networks.

Illegal wildlife trade is not just a niche issue of concern to environmentalists. Rather, it has become a critical governance issue that compromises national security. Left unaddressed, illegal wildlife trade can destabilize societies by facilitating the growth of organized crime, undermine governments' efforts to halt other illicit trades such as counterfeiting and drugs, help fund regional conflicts, and lead to human injury and death.

The time for action

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, illegal wildlife trade is a low risk, high profit business. Illegal wildlife trade has escalated not due to a lack of laws, but because of the failure to implement them in the face of limited political will for action in many countries.

¹ Traditional Vietnamese Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine

² <http://transcrime.gfintegrity.org>

Long-term goal

Governments and international institutions treat illegal wildlife trade as a serious crime, enact effective deterrents, and lead efforts to reduce demand for endangered species.

The campaign will spur governments and international institutions to treat illegal wildlife trade as a serious crime.

Treating wildlife crime as a serious crime would constitute the following:

- A global increase in wildlife law enforcement effectiveness and resourcing, including prevention (such as smuggling route trend detection) and enhanced international collaboration
- Illegal wildlife trade middlemen and kingpins are prosecuted when arrested and adequately punished when convicted
- Illegal wildlife trade is addressed by ministries and agencies beyond the environment sector
- The international community holds governments to account for failing to implement their commitments under CITES³, including imposing sanctions where necessary
- Government aid agencies commit to funding wildlife law enforcement, and donors apply pressure on recipient governments to improve governance and the rule of law
- Demand for endangered species products is reduced significantly in consumer countries

Campaign launch date

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Campaign launches publicly on Aug 30, 2012 and will run until July 2013. An additional six month period is scheduled from July 2013 until December 2013 to transition into programmatic work.

Call to action

The universal call to action is *kill the trade that kills*.

- People in both developed and developing countries stand-up and give voice to species in need. As part of the campaign, WWF and TRAFFIC offices worldwide will be mobilizing the public through social media, petitions and other innovative communications tools
- Media in both the developed and developing countries will continue to shine a light on organized criminals willing to kill people and animals out of greed. Throughout the campaign period, WWF and TRAFFIC will be providing the media with the latest information, research and analysis on illegal wildlife trade and updates on what is happening on the field.
- Political leaders in both developed and developing countries will take concrete action to protect wildlife, people and enforce the rule of law. WWF and TRAFFIC will be actively lobbying key governments, at all levels, and working in partnership with the relevant inter-governmental organisations such as CITES and Interpol towards our mutual objective of elevating illegal wildlife trade as a serious crime.

³ The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora