

FACTS AND FICTION:



DANGEROUS MYTHS

In Vietnam, rhino horn is a recreational (party) drug and used by affluent people as a detoxifying beverage and body-rejuvenating tonic. In China, rhino horn is used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to treat fever, pain, rheumatism, convulsions and other disorders (but is not, as commonly believed, prescribed as an aphrodisiac). The value of horns on the black market has escalated dramatically to US\$60,000/kg.

Scientific studies proved that rhino horn has no medicinal value. Rhino horn is comprised of keratin, the same material as our hair and fingernails – and the hoofs and horns of many animals.

RHINO POACHING

Rhino poaching, in South Africa alone, now accounts for 1.6% of the country's GDP. This comes down to 1 rhino poached every 15 minutes. More than 550 rhinos will die annually if current poaching rates continue. Rhino poaching has increased with 4000% in South Africa between 2007 and 2012.



BRUTAL METHODS

Brutal rhino poaching methods have escalated in South Africa. Poachers are often using modern equipment such as GPS, night vision goggles, AK-47s and sometimes even helicopters. In the past 10 years, rhinos were simply shot and killed by poachers and their horns removed. In recent years, poachers use darting guns and veterinary drugs to immobilise the rhinos. Darting guns are silent and prevent detection by anti-poaching patrols. The poachers hack off the horns very roughly using an axe, panga or chainsaw, often removing half of the rhino's face, and leave them to die a horrible death.

RHINO HORN SUPPLY & DEMAND

Rhino horn consumer countries in Asia include Vietnam, China and Thailand. A growing body of evidence indicates that Vietnam currently is the world's leading destination and consumer of rhino horn. This situation is unlikely to change soon unless Vietnam demonstrates a strong political will to make rhino horn crime a national priority. South Africa has been strongest hit by poachers due to its sizeable rhino population, however poaching is increasing and causing alarm in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, and Tanzania. The only people benefiting from the current rhino poaching crisis are those running the criminal networks.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

There are currently five species and 11 subspecies of rhinoceros surviving on earth. Two species (Black and White) occur in Africa. Three species (Greater One-horned rhino, Javan, and Sumatran) occur in Asia. Rhinos have suffered a 90% population decline in the last 40 years.

