



THE NATURE OF POACHERS & SOLUTIONS FOR WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

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1. Introduction

African wildlife reserves have become war zones, particularly Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Illicit wildlife trade

- Is the fourth largest illegal activity worldwide
- Is worth \$23 billion US dollars per year
- Rhino horns and elephant tusks can fetch up to \$65,000-\$100,000 per kg.
 - High demands from Vietnam and China

Vietnamese markets: detox., recreational drug use, décor, jewelry.

Chinese markets: décor, jewelry, 'cures' for convulsions, cancers, strokes, nosebleeds, fevers, etc.

- Belief that rhino horns cure medical ailments is still the driving force behind the demand in China

1,215 rhinos were poached in 2014 in South Africa alone; approx. 100 African elephants are poached daily continent-wide.



Graph via

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/extinction-countdown/2015/01/23/record-number-rhinos-poached/> 2015

Photo: www.sanparks.co.za

2. Poaching Reasons

Illicit trade is a dangerous occupation and difficult to leave.

- Easy, substantial money
- Prestige/status from peers, community
- Religion & Tradition
 - Belief in man's right over 'lesser' beings
 - Passed down from generations
- Men from impoverished, farming communities seeking work
 - Necessary to support self/ family
 - Lack of: steady income, means of transport, education/skill set, support from local gov'ts



Anti-poaching team guards a Northern White Rhino. Kenya. Photo: Reuters

3. What We've Learned from Communities

A. More/Alternative Job Opportunities

"It's a lucrative business and addictive like any other crime. Just that with the strict government and international legislation people are shying away from it, but poverty will not let them keep off it, they have to make money for their living even if it is illegal. If only employment and alternative sources of livelihood can be given to forest adjacent communities and the potential poachers, then things can get on well."

Nancy Oduor, Environmental Services, Kenya 2014

B. Education for Communities

"Organizations ought to begin by educating the communities that conservation can pay back provided the resources are sustainably managed and poachers discouraged by way of flushing them out and not buying from them. And, "...provide the communities with more meaningful, worthy methods and information. For example some studies have also shown that those with other means of survival are less inclined to poach."

Simba Sandram, Wildlife Law Officer, Zimbabwe 2014

C. Support from Authority

"Provide education to communities on the importance of the wild animals to the local communities. Also the government has to find alternative ways of raising the rural economy for rural people not left behind economically that mostly lead to poverty hence poaching as the alternative means of life."

Ex-poacher, MNR-The Wildlife Division, Tanzania 2014

When asked how Gerard felt about conservationists and authority figures trying to end poaching... *"I respect their job, but the only problem I have with them is if only they had an alternative for us, because all we have ever known, and earned a living from, is poaching. I was among the lucky ones, to get something to do, and stop poaching. Now I want this for my friends, and brothers."*

Gerard Iradukunda (ex-poacher), Amahoro Tours, Rwanda, 2014

4. Enforcement Solutions

• Kashmir Robotics, wcuAVC, Counter Poaching Games

- In response to the President's Executive Order on Combatting Wildlife Trafficking
- 140 teams from 6 continents building technologically advanced, fully autonomous aircraft
 - 3D Printing
 - Smart phone, TCP/IP, 4G networks
- 'Drone Olympics'
 - South Africa 2015
- Provide effective, sustainable solution to poaching/trafficking



5. Community Based Solutions

• The DaVinci Challenge-Build a Drone Workshop

- STEAM education
- For local communities
 - Learned/applied skill sets
 - Crops/livestock management
 - Monitor wildlife/land



DaVinci Challenge Quadcopter, KwF 2015

6. Citations/Acknowledgements

- Aliyah Pandolfi www.kashmirworldfoundation.org and www.wcuavc.com
- The MNR: Wildlife Division Tanzania <http://www.mnrt.go.tz/sectors>
- Amahoro Tours Rwanda and DRC <http://amahoro-tours.com/>
- Scientific American www.scientificamerican.com
- SANparks www.sanparks.co.za