



## WWF Wildlife Crime Scorecard key findings & recommendations

WWF report *Wildlife Crime Scorecard: Assessing Compliance with and Enforcement of CITES Commitments for Tigers, Rhinos and Elephants* is strictly embargoed until 00:01 GMT Monday July 23, 2012. Excerpts from the report contained below are indicated with quotation marks.

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### Key findings

- International commercial trade of elephants, rhinos and tigers and their parts and products is almost universally prohibited by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), but the enforcement of this restriction remains weak. Illegal trade in ivory, rhino horn and tiger parts is of major conservation concern. WWF's report selects 23 range, transit and consumer countries from Asia and Africa facing the highest levels of illegal trade in elephant ivory, rhino horn and tiger parts. Countries are given scores of green, yellow or red depending on their progress towards compliance with and enforcement of CITES commitments for these three species groups.
- Illegal internal trade persists in virtually all countries reviewed, but the report seeks to differentiate between countries where it is actively being countered from those where current efforts are entirely inadequate.
- Worst performing countries which receive red scores for elephants are:
  - Central African countries where poaching rates are highest, including Cameroon, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as Mozambique and Zambia.
  - Consumer countries Thailand and Egypt
  - Asian origin and transit countries Laos and Myanmar
- Enforcement problems are evident in China, which receives a yellow score for elephants.
- Consumer country Viet Nam is identified as failing on rhinos, as is Mozambique, whose nationals have been repeatedly implicated in poaching in South Africa. Both receive red scores for rhinos.
- Viet Nam also receives a red for tigers, as does neighbouring Laos.
- Best performers are India and Nepal, which each receive green scores for all three species indicating good progress.

### Elephants

- The illegal killing of elephants in Africa is at the highest levels ever recorded, and the epicentre for poaching is Central Africa where elephant populations are experiencing localized extinctions. "Given the escalation of elephant poaching in Africa and the increased levels of organized crime involved in the trade, it is clear that the situation is now critical." Wildlife crime not only poses a threat to animals, but is a risk to people, territorial integrity, stability and rule of law.
- Most Central African countries face national crises of elephant poaching and also need to strengthen regional cooperation to counter illegal ivory flows across national borders. Earlier this year, heavily armed foreign poachers slaughtered hundreds of elephants in one of Cameroon's national parks. "In recent years, significant numbers of AK-47s have been confiscated in Central African Republic and Cameroon, and can be easily obtained in Congo for prices as low as US\$40." It is feared that this flow of arms could fuel local conflicts.
- In Central Africa, there has been a general lack of progress on enforcement, although "Central African Republic was able to protect successfully a critical population of elephants in Dzangha Sangha Protected Area, with no known cases of elephant poaching in 2011." Additionally, Cameroon recently imposed the stiffest penalties ever applied in the country for wildlife crime sentencing ivory poachers to 30 months in prison.
- China and Thailand are the biggest consumer countries for illegal ivory. "Thailand is unique in permitting legal trade in ivory from domesticated Asian elephants. In practice this has served as a major loophole giving rise to a large internal processing and retail market industry using smuggled ivory largely of African origin, as indicated by the relatively large volume and number of seizures Thailand has

made recently at ports of entry." While enforcement is improving at Thai entry points, the country has failed to stem illegal ivory trade at the retail level.

- China received a yellow score for elephants, as the report found that the country has failed to effectively police its legal ivory trade system and track the sale of legally-imported ivory.

#### Rhinos

- South Africa, the epicentre of the African rhino poaching crisis, received a yellow score for failing on key areas of enforcement. A record 448 rhinos were killed by poachers in the country last year. In the first half of 2012, South Africa lost 262 rhinos to poaching and made 165 arrests. Poachers are highly organized and are using sophisticated equipment like helicopters, night vision scopes and veterinary tranquilizers.
- Viet Nam is the top destination for South African rhino horn and received a red score for rhinos, failing on compliance and enforcement. Many Vietnamese have been arrested or implicated in South Africa for acquiring rhino horns illegally (including diplomats), but there has been little evident enforcement follow-up on information provided by the South African authorities. Penalties in Viet Nam are inadequate to serve as a deterrent for illegal trade or possession, and legal measures are insufficient to curtail illegal trade on the Internet. Despite numerous seizures elsewhere implicating Viet Nam, there has been no recorded seizure of rhino horn in the country since 2008.

#### Tigers

- Tigers have a much lower wild population than African elephants, Asian elephants and African rhinos and so are much more vulnerable to illegal trade. With as few as 3,200 tigers remaining in the wild, every tiger poaching death is a major concern.
- Although there are numerous green scores for tigers, indicating that significant progress has been made by governments, more than 200 carcasses are being seized from illegal trade each year. "Progress in enforcement is evident, and increasing seizures may be a reflection of this, but wild tigers remain under serious poaching threat and enforcement of trade controls must be further strengthened." Tiger range countries are urged to move to a situation of zero tolerance for poaching and illegal trade as a matter of urgency.

### WWF recommendations

- Central African governments are to be commended for the signing of a Central African Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Action Plan under the auspices of COMIFAC. They should now make its implementation their highest priority, and demonstrate this by allocating budget resources and by improving the efficacy of prosecutions for those implicated in poaching or illegal trade.
- As rhino poaching rates continue to increase, South Africa should refuse to allow persons indicted on rhino crimes to purchase rhinos and should ensure that rhino trophy hunting permits are not used to obtain horns for illegal trade.
- Viet Nam and South Africa are urged to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on collaborative law enforcement that has been languishing without action for months.
- Viet Nam needs urgently and dramatically to improve enforcement efforts to crack down on the illegal rhino horn trade. Viet Nam should also review its penalties for rhino horn trade and immediately curtail retail markets, including Internet advertising for horn.
- International wildlife crime is demand-driven, and it is recommended that Viet Nam and China, in particular, develop and implement well-researched demand reduction campaigns.
- The ongoing flow of large volumes of illegal ivory to China suggest that such ivory may be moving into legal ivory trade channels, and China is urged to dramatically improve its enforcement controls for ivory.
- In addition, it is recommended that China scale-up its efforts to communicate to Chinese nationals in Africa that the Chinese government has a 'zero tolerance' policy for illegal wildlife trade, and that anyone caught importing or attempting to import illegal wildlife products into China would be prosecuted, and if convicted, severely penalized.
- Transit countries, and indeed all countries, need to prioritize enhancement of the capacity of their customs and border control authorities to intercept smuggling of wildlife products. This includes training, awareness-raising and vigilance against corruption, as well as use of technology and tools such as sniffer dogs, which have been successfully deployed in Kenyan airports to detect ivory and are being extended to use in the port of Mombasa. Additionally, sniffer dogs are being used in DRC, India and Russia to track poachers and are being introduced in China.
- Thailand should immediately move forward legislation to ban all sale of ivory in the country.