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# RHINO HORN DEMAND

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**WILDAID**

  
AMERICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®

# 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 partners 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 hundreds of millions of people each year in China alone.

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

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IN 2013, APPROXIMATELY



**1,004 RHINOS**  
WERE KILLED IN SOUTH AFRICA  
FOR THEIR HORNS

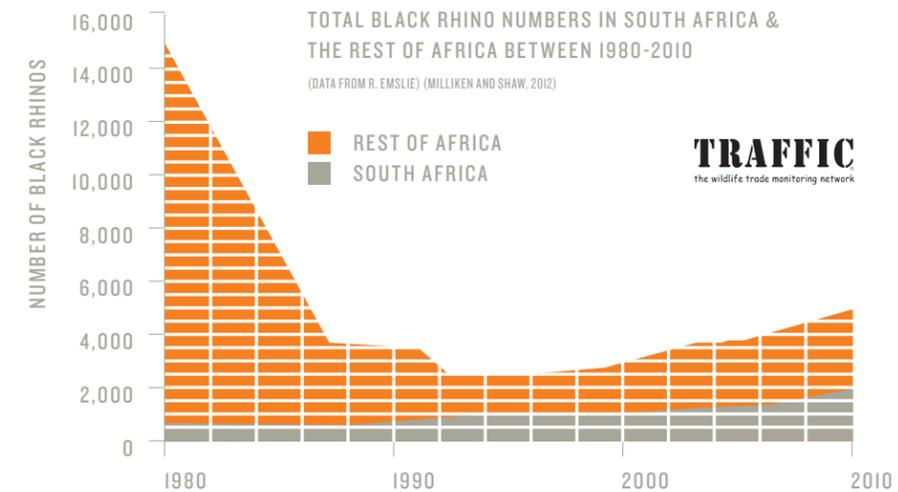
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# THREATS TO RHINOS

The rhinoceros has existed for over 50 million years, and modern rhino species have been in existence for over 15 million years.<sup>1</sup> Many rhino species are extinct, and only five species remain today. Today, the global rhino population has fallen from an estimated 75,000 in the early 1970s to less than 30,000.<sup>2</sup>

Several hundred thousand rhinos once roamed across Africa. Between 1970 and 1995, the black rhino population declined from 65,000 to 2,410.<sup>3</sup> All rhino species are critically endangered, except the Southern White Rhino subspecies, which recovered from less than 100 in the early 1900s to 20,400 individuals today.<sup>4</sup>



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

## 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*)  
Approximately 3,000

### BLACK RHINO

(*Diceros bicornis*)  
Fewer than 5,000

### WHITE RHINO

(*Ceratotherium simum*)  
Estimated 20,405 (northern & southern subspecies combined)<sup>5</sup>

## THREATS

While most endangered species are under threat from habitat loss due to encroaching human development, African rhinos face only one major threat: poaching, specifically for their horns. Rhino horns are actually compressed hair and composed primarily of keratin, the same material as human fingernails.

### TRADE IN VIETNAM AND CHINA

In 1993, as a response to an international trade ban to protect wild rhinos, the Chinese government banned the use of rhino horn in traditional Chinese medicine, 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, particularly because acetaminophen works more effectively.<sup>7,8</sup> However, demand for its use as a traditional medicine and a speculative asset in Asia appears to have grown in recent years. People that use rhino horn believe it helps relieve fever, improve sexual competency, detoxify the body, and, in recent years, serve as a magical cure for cancer and hangovers in Vietnam, with no conclusive medical scientific evidence.<sup>9</sup> Rhino horn is also used to demonstrate affluence and social status both as a party drug and as a gift to important political officials.<sup>10</sup>

The need for a magical cancer cure is likely the result of the 150,000 new cases diagnosed in Vietnam annually, combined with a shortage of radiotherapy machines in the country. The long waitlist for radiotherapy means many people die before they can be treated.<sup>11</sup>

Vietnam has been identified as “the principal end-use market” for rhino horn by the IUCN, TRAFFIC, and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups.<sup>12</sup> A survey by World Wildlife Fund and TRAFFIC in 2013 found that “educated, successful and powerful individuals are the main market for horns.” Of those surveyed who are not currently using rhino horn, “16% are ‘intenders’: individuals who said they wanted to buy or consume rhino horn in the future.”<sup>13</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 allowed to trade live rhinos and trophy hunt. All remaining rhino species were placed on Appendix I of CITES listings by 1977. Appendix I species are prohibited from being traded internationally for commercial purposes. In 1994, after their population improved, the South African Southern White rhino was down-listed to Appendix II. Species placed on Appendix II are identified as not currently threatened by extinction, but may become threatened if trade is not strictly regulated.<sup>14</sup>

While the ban prohibited international trade in theory, domestic sales in Asia were still legal and continued with rhino horn remaining widely available through traditional medicine outlets. Major consumers in the 1980s included China, Taiwan and South Korea for its use in medicine, and the Middle



Yao Ming with poached rhino, South Africa 2012  
Kristian Schmidt

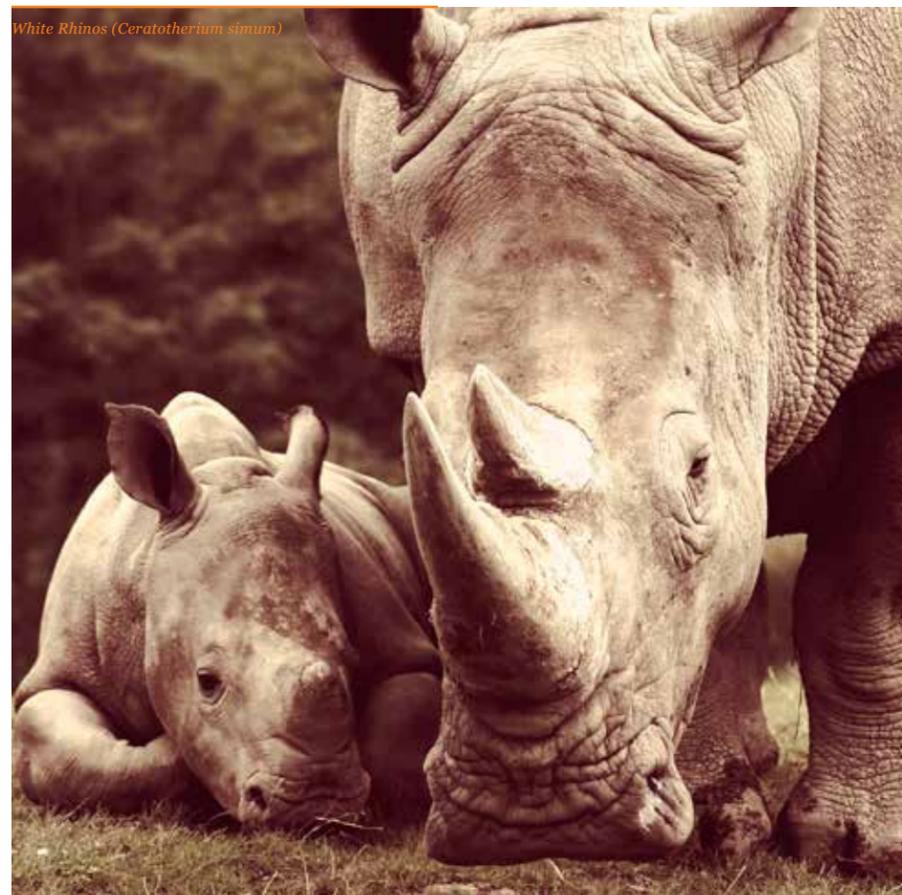
East, particularly Yemen, for the production of dagger handles.<sup>15</sup> Growing economies ensured that more consumers could afford rhino horn. Rhino populations declined as poaching for their horns increased into the early 1990s.

In 1993, CITES and the international community took action to prohibit sales of rhino horn. The State Council of China also issued the ‘Notice on Prohibiting the Trade of Rhino Horns and Tiger Bones’ and publicized the prosecution of illegal rhino horn dealers. The ban in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, combined with increased public awareness campaigns, reduced demand for rhino horn and reports of poaching greatly decreased.

For 15 years, rhino populations in Africa began to recover, but in 2008 poaching rose again.<sup>16</sup> South Africa had remained relatively untouched by poaching and was successful in rebuilding the Southern White rhino population from around 100 individuals in 1895 to over 20,400 today.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, it has now become the center of the poaching crisis. Despite efforts by CITES in 2010 to increase protection for rhinos—as member countries committed to increased law enforcement, anti-poaching initiatives, and trade controls—448 rhinos were poached in South Africa in 2011, compared with just 13 in 2007. In 2012, the number of rhinos killed for their horns in South Africa rose to 668 and in 2013 South Africa lost a record 1,004 rhinos to poaching, 60% of which were killed in Kruger National Park.<sup>18</sup> The

rise in poaching has been attributed to increased trade links, increased affluence in Asian countries, consuming nations’ growing presence in Africa, involvement of organized crime, and the emergence of Vietnam as a new major importer.

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>19</sup>



White Rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*)

5. “African rhinos won’t hold out for much longer, IUCN experts warn.” IUCN, 2013.

6. “The Journal of Chinese Medicine.” jcm.co.uk, 2014.

7. Beech, H. “Killing Fields: Africa’s Rhinos Under Threat.” TIME Magazine, 2011.

8. Nowell, Kristin. “Species trade and conservation, Rhinoceroses: Assessment of Rhino Horn as a Medicine.” CITES, 2012.

9. Miliken, T. and Shaw, J. “The South Africa–Vietnam Rhino Horn Trade Nexus.” TRAFFIC, 2012.

10. “Supply and demand: the illegal rhino horn trade.” Save the Rhino, 2011.

11. Potterton, Louise. “Access to Affordable Radiation Therapy Saves Lives.” IAEA Bulletin 51–1, 2010.

12. Julian Rademeyer. “Vietnam denies rhino horn charges.” Mail & Guardian, 2013.

13. “Rhino Horn Consumers. Who Are They?” TRAFFIC, 2013.

14. “IUCN Red List.” IUCN, 2014.

15. Gwin, Peter. “Rhino Wars: Rivaling the price of gold on the black market, rhino horn is at the center of a bloody poaching battle.” National Geographic, 2012.

16. “TRAFFIC’s Engagement on African Rhinoceros Conservation and the Global Trade in Rhinoceros Horn.” TRAFFIC, 2013.

17. Ibid.

18. “Update on rhino poaching statistics.” Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 2014.

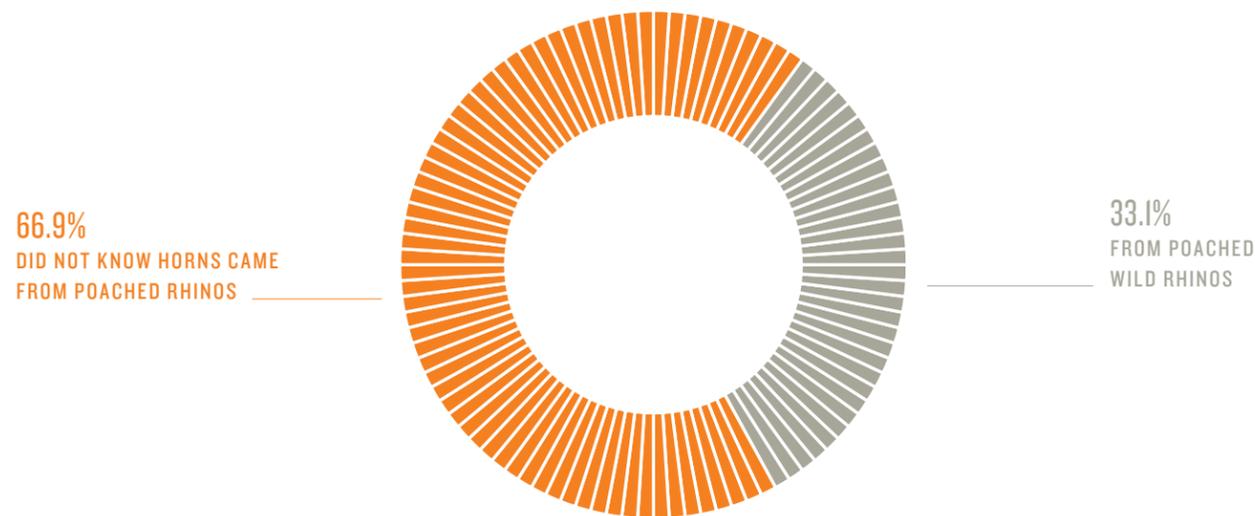
19. “Governments Shield Rhinos, Elephants From Illegal Trade.” Environment News Service, 2013.

# 2012 CHINA RHINO HORN AWARENESS & ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

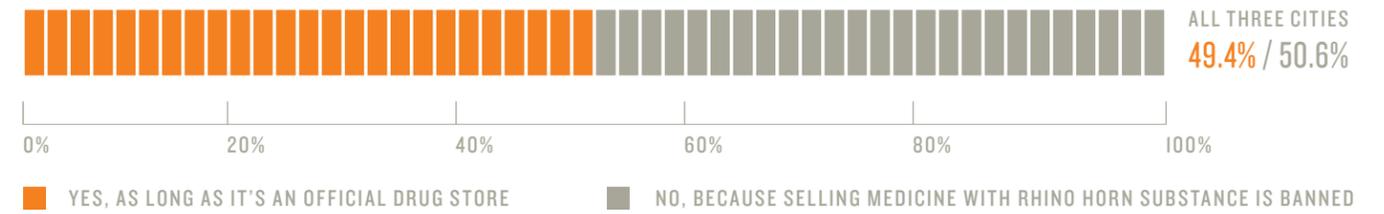
In November 2012, WildAid, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), and Horizonkey Research Consultancy Group interviewed 963 residents in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to better understand awareness of rhino conservation status, China's rhino horn customers, and possibilities to deter consumption.

## SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

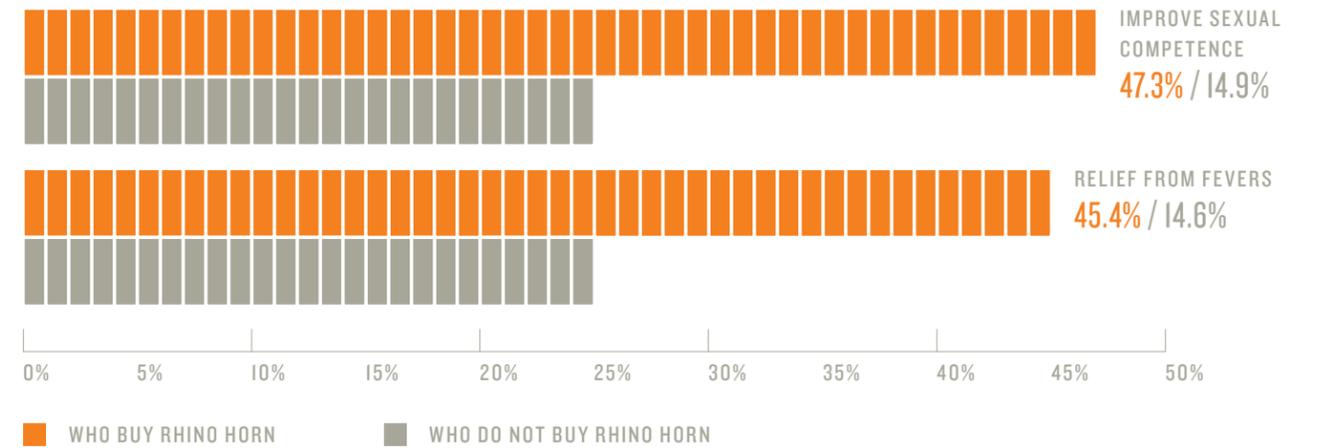
1. *Two thirds of participants were unaware that horns come from poached rhinos: 27% believed horns came from natural mortality and 40% believed they were from farmed rhinos that either were killed, died, or did not know.*



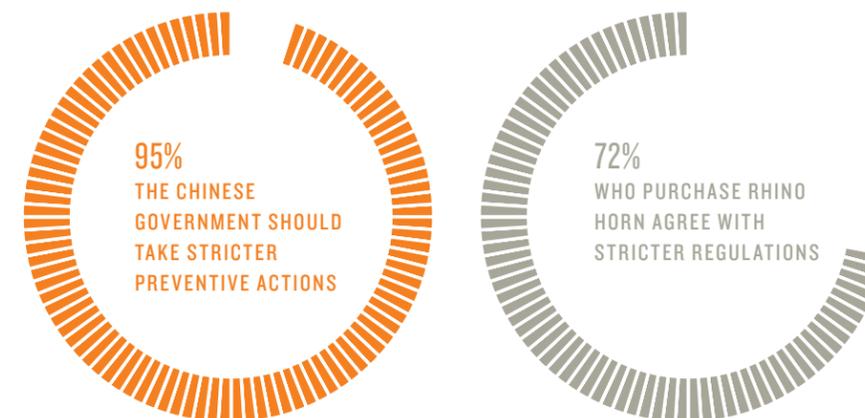
2. *Nearly half (49.4%) believed that rhino horn could be legally purchased from official stores.*



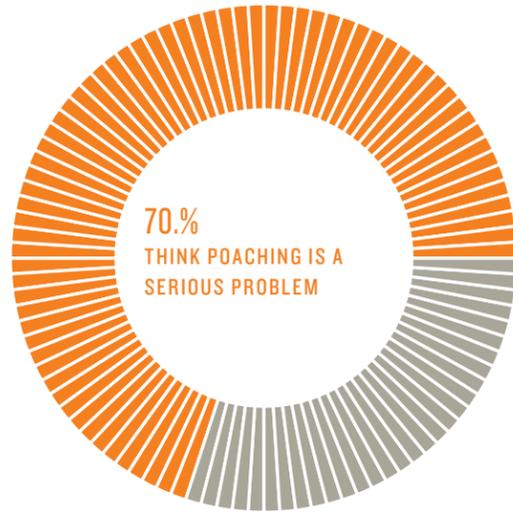
3. *A high percentage of residents who buy and consume rhino horn believed in its alleged aphrodisiac and medicinal value. Use of rhino horn as an aphrodisiac was believed to be an urban myth, but recent surveys indicate that people in China believe in these properties.*



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



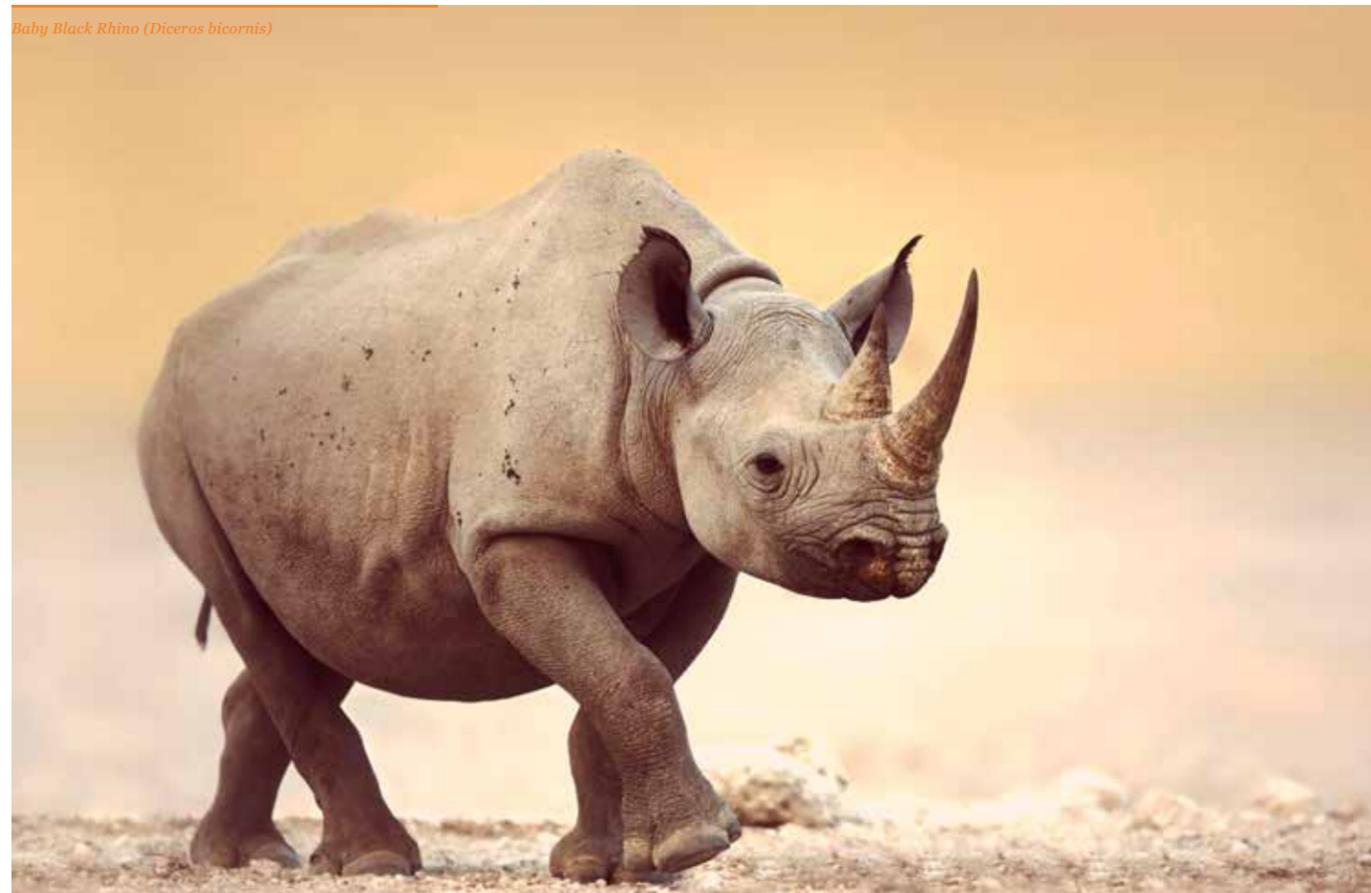
5. **Over 70% of respondents think poaching is a serious problem. If current trends continue, all rhinoceroses will be extinct in less than 10 years.**



6. **Nearly 90% of all respondents believe that trade in rhino horn is illegal. In 1977, China signed CITES and 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

WildAid, AWF, and HorizonKey also conducted in-depth interviews with select focus group members to understand pre-existing attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions on rhino horn and its trade. 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 an annual household income above two million RMB.

More than half of 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

Respondents were 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

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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