

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Economic and Environmental

QUESTION OF: Illegal Poaching and the Illicit Trade of Wildlife

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Introduction & Background

The act of illegal poaching and the illicit trade of wildlife has become more popular in recent years. Within the past decade, more than 7,000 rhinos were killed across Africa as a continent. Illegal poaching primarily takes place in Africa, more specifically in Zimbabwe, due to the easy access to rare wildlife. A study conducted in 2014 showed that nearly 100 African elephants were poached daily. The Illicit wildlife trade has its roots in Asia, Africa, and South America which allows for access to the traded materials to spread to other surrounding countries easily. Illicit wildlife trade generates between \$7 billion and \$23 billion annually. The popularity of poaching and wildlife trade has led to numerous species either becoming endangered or treading very close to being endangered.

What is Illegal Poaching and The Illicit Wildlife Trade?

Illegal poaching and the illicit wildlife trade often go hand in hand. Animals are illegally poached and in turn are traded illegally for a high profit. Animal poaching is any act that is considered to be a danger to wildlife. Poaching typically occurs when a certain species contains

something that is valuable or highly sought after. Different animals are poached for different reasons including, but not limited to elephants for ivory or tigers for their skin and bones. In relation to poaching, the illicit wildlife trade is the act of harming wild populations of animals and plants for profit. Animals are typically the victims of illicit wildlife trade for their increasing value and their appeal to all.

What are the Causes of Poaching and Wildlife Trade?

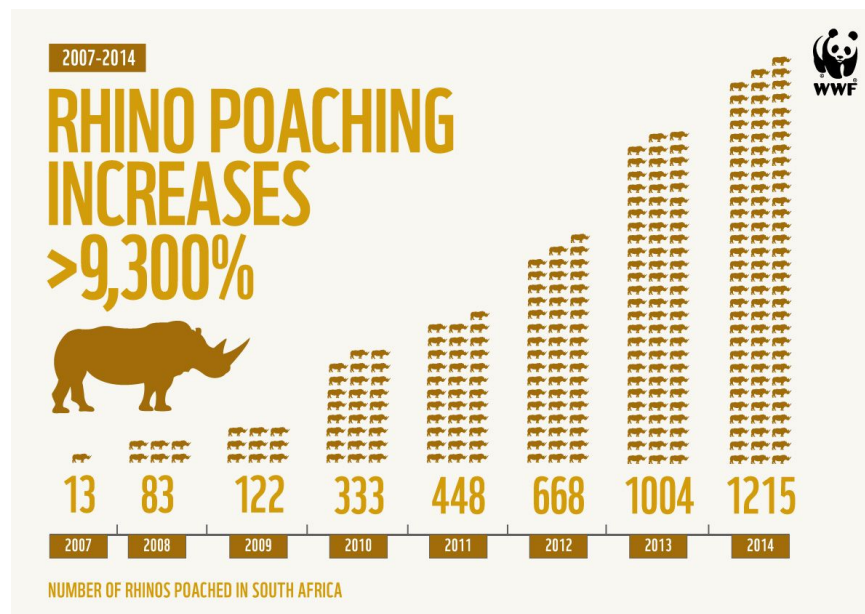
Animal poaching is caused by the growing demand of products that come from animals. Myths around the world are causing people to believe that parts of animals can cure diseases or grant someone a high-status symbol. Rhinoceros horns are seen as a sign of superiority which causes the drive for rhinoceros poaching. Wildlife trade occurs due to multiple reasons such as the demand for a rare house pet or the increase of need for timber. The wildlife trade is a lucrative business and its increasing popularity means that it will become more and more profitable:

“Increasing demand for rhino horn in Asia has fueled black market prices. Rhino horn is said to go for \$60,000 per kg (\$132,000/lb)”.

What are the Effects of Illegal Animal Poaching and Wildlife Trade?

Animal poaching and wildlife trade have caused drastic changes to species that were once flourishing in numbers. Animal poaching has lasting effects globally such as the extinction of valuable animals to certain ecosystems. Poaching and wildlife trade can lead to the extinction of animals that are vital to groups of people and other animals. The species that are reliant on poached animals are seeming to crumble under the quick and increasing extinction of the animals

that are being poached and traded. Below is an image released by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) that shows the number of rhinoceroses poached yearly. This graph was last updated in 2014 which was when the highest number was recorded for rhinoceros poaching in Southern Africa.



Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

At this point, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is taking every measure it can to prevent illegal poaching and illicit wildlife trade. They have introduced a program where a person can “adopt” an animal that is endangered for a monthly fee that contributes to critical care for the animal along with necessary steps to prevent its extinction. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is also taking preventative steps to eradicate illicit wildlife trade. CITES provides visible information on the effect of wildlife trade. More and more people are becoming aware of animal poaching and are hoping to take steps to eradicate it once and for all. Welgevonden Game Reserve in South Africa is home to over 50

animals, including ones that are on the endangered list. With its size reaching 139 square miles, the animals present are allowed to roam in peace and live out their lives fully. Welgevonden Game Reserve has a long-term goal of preserving ecological integrity, which supports the longtime life of animals as well as unique wildlife. Welgevonden is one of many animal reserves that are pushing towards the preservation of wildlife.

Possible Solutions

Illegal poaching and illicit wildlife trade must be eradicated because of the devastating effect they both have on the global society. Delegates must work to solidify the preservation of endangered species. Knowledge of the lasting effects of these actions is also critical to spread as it will raise awareness to those that do not know what is going on. Commercials and televised specials on endangered species have proven to be effective in raising awareness to the general public. Taking actions to disrupt the flow of illicitly traded animals would also be looked favorably upon; such as but not limited to setting up stops along known trading routes in order to inspect the vehicle in which the wildlife is being traded through. It is looked favorably upon to whittle down this issue in a timely manner do to the urgency and the severity of this problem. There is not enough time left for a “long-term” approach to be truly beneficial because of the pace that animals are getting illegally poached as well as illicitly traded.

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