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# SSN Rhino Newsletter

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Species Survival Network

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## Rhino poaching

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### **Last rhinos in Mozambique killed by poachers**

30 April 2013

The last known rhinoceroses in Mozambique have been wiped out by poachers apparently working in cahoots with the game rangers responsible for protecting them.

The 15 rhinos were shot dead for their horns in March 2013 in the Mozambican part of Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which is shared with South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The rhinos were thought to be the last of an estimated 300 that roamed through the special conservation area when it was established as "the world's greatest animal kingdom" in 2002.

The latest deaths, and Mozambique's failure to tackle poaching, have prompted threats by South Africa to re-erect fences between their reserves.

Wildlife authorities believe the poachers were able to track the rhinoceroses with the help of game rangers working in the Limpopo National Park, as the Mozambican side of the reserve is known.

A total of 30 rangers were reported to be due to appear in court in the coming weeks, charged with collusion in the poaching.

*Last rhinos in Mozambique killed by poachers, Daily Telegraph UK, 30 April 2013.*

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/mozambique/10028738/Last-rhinos-in-Mozambique-killed-by-poachers.html>

### **17 rhinos killed in 4 months in Kaziranga**

21 May 2013

The Indian press reported in May that India's best known National Park, Kaziranga, still remains vulnerable to poaching. Around 17 rhinos had been killed in the previous four months.

The Park Director pointed the finger at organised poaching gangs, lured by the high price of rhino horn, who were hiring sharpshooters to kill rhinos with sophisticated weapons.

There are 2,329 rhinos in the 430 square kilometer area. Kaziranga has 152 anti-poaching camps and its staff was reportedly set to be increased by a further 500 from the Assam Protection Force.

*Assam: Kaziranga faces crisis as 17 rhinos killed in 4 months. IBN Live, 21 May 2013.*

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/assam-kaziranga-faces-crisis-as-17-rhinos-killed-in-4-months/392966-3.html>

### **Dehorned rhinos "butchered" in South Africa**

28 May 2013

It was reported in May that poachers had slaughtered three rhino bulls at a sanctuary in the North West Province of South Africa, despite the fact that the animals had already been dehorned.

A fourth bull survived being shot at the sanctuary, which is owned by the world's biggest rhino farmers, John and Albina Hume.

It was the first time in the sanctuary's five-year history that animals have been targeted by poachers although another farm owned by the couple had previously been targeted by poachers who killed nine of their rhinos.

<http://www.iol.co.za/scitech/science/environment/dehorned-but-rhino-still-butchered-1.1522863#.UaSZd5y-ihE>

### **Kenya Wildlife Service Launches Countrywide Hunt for Poachers**

28 May 2013

In May, the Kenya Wildlife Service launched a major operation in pursuit of poachers who killed four rhinos in one week across the country. Security teams were reported to be following crucial leads to poachers who killed rhinos at Lake Nakuru National Park, Solio Ranch (Nyeri), Ngulia Sanctuary (Tsavo West National Park) and Meru National Park.

The poachers made off with the rhino horns. The article reported that, since the beginning of the year, Kenya had lost 21 rhinos and 117 elephants to poachers. Out of these, 37 elephants were killed in protected areas while 80 were outside protected areas. Last year, Kenya lost 384 elephants and 30 rhinos to poachers.

*KWS Service Launches Countrywide Hunt for Poachers, The Star, 28 May 2013.*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201305281459.html>

### **Seven rhinos killed by poachers in one week – Kenya**

3 June 2013

Seven rhinos are reported to have been poached in one week in Kenya, some in private reserves and some in National Parks.

It was reported that, although the authorities heard the gunshots in every case, and in one case actually saw the poachers cutting off the rhino's horns, no arrests had yet been made.

These incidents bring Kenya's rhino death toll to 24 so far this year (June).

*Seven rhinos killed by poachers in Kenya's bloodiest week. The Guardian, UK. 3 June 2013.*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/africa-wild/2013/jun/03/rhinos-killed-kenyas-bloodiest-week>

## **Indian conservation volunteer prime suspect in Manas rhino poaching**

Aug 13, 2013

IRV 2020, a joint project of the Assam forest department, WWF-India and International Rhino Foundation, was launched in 2008 to repopulate Manas National Park with one-horned rhinos, as the species was almost wiped out in the park in the 1990s.

A conservation volunteer engaged in the project was allegedly found to be involved in the poaching of a rhino at Manas in August 2013.

A police officer reported that a man named Hongalla (alias Munindra Basumatary) was the prime suspect in the August 6 rhino poaching case and that the police were searching for him.

His elder brother, Lakshman Basumatary, was arrested for possessing rhino meat, bones, teeth and hide.

"The involvement of the local volunteer in the August 6 poaching incident is a matter of serious concern and has forced us to reflect seriously on engagement of volunteers under the IRV," the officer added.

Since 2011 Manas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has lost five rhinos to poachers, including three in 2013.

*Indian Rhino Vision volunteer prime suspect in August 6 rhino poaching. Times of India, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2013.*  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Indian-Rhino-Vision-volunteer-prime-suspect-in-August-6-rhino-poaching/articleshow/21792627.cms>

## **Seizures, arrests and court cases**

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### **Rhino killers in court in Botswana**

5 May 2013

Four men accused of killing a rhinoceros have appeared briefly before a Magistrate in Maun, Botswana.

The four men are facing a single count of unlawful killing of a rhinoceros. The Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) told the court that investigations were still ongoing. The accused were reported to be out on bail.

*Rhino killers appear for mention. Botswana Daily News 5 Ma<sup>y</sup> 2013.* <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=2623>

### **7.28 kg of rhino horns seized at Ho Chi Minh Airport**

6 May 2013

Vietnamese customs officers and police at Tan Son Nhat airport seized 7.28 kg of rhino horns hidden in the suitcase of a Vietnamese passenger arriving from Qatar.

After finding suspicious signs on the man's suitcase, customs officers examined it and discovered the horns packed in silver wrapping and hidden among other items in the suitcase.

HCMC Customs Department handed the man and the rhino horns over to the Ministry of Public Security's Department for Investigation of Economic Management and Position-Related Crimes for investigation.

*7.28 kg of rhino horns seized at HCMC airport. Tuoitrenews 6 May 2013.* <http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/9333/728-kg-of-rhino-horns-seized-at-hcmc-airport>

## **Rhino horn smuggling ring sentenced in USA**

7 May 2103

Two men have been sentenced to prison terms of 42 and 46 months respectively in Los Angeles for crimes related to illegal international trafficking of rhinoceros horn.

In addition to the prison sentences, the two defendants were ordered to pay a total of \$20,000 in criminal fines and pay a \$185,000 tax fraud penalty and assessment. Jimmy Kha's Win Lee Corporation was further ordered to pay a \$100,000 fine.

Jimmy and Felix Kha, along with Win Lee Corporation, were also ordered to pay a total of \$800,000 in restitution to the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, a statutorily created fund managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to support international efforts to protect and conserve rhinos and other critically endangered species around the world.

Over the course of at least two years from January 2010 through February 2012, Jimmy and Felix Kha conspired with individuals throughout the United States to purchase white and black rhinoceros horn. The defendants admitted that they had purchased the horns in order to export them overseas to be sold and made into libation cups or used for traditional medicine. They had made illegal payments to Vietnamese customs officials to ensure clearance of horn shipments to Vietnam.

*Smuggling ring sentenced in Los Angeles for Criminal Trafficking of Endangered Rhinoceros Horn. US Department of Justice, 7 May 2013.*

[http://7thspace.com/headlines/437930/usdoj\\_smuggling\\_ring\\_sentenced\\_in\\_los\\_angeles\\_for\\_criminal\\_trafficking\\_of\\_endangered\\_rhinoceros\\_horn.html](http://7thspace.com/headlines/437930/usdoj_smuggling_ring_sentenced_in_los_angeles_for_criminal_trafficking_of_endangered_rhinoceros_horn.html)

## **Over 5 kg of rhino horns seized at Ho Chi Minh Airport**

21 May 2013

Ho Chi Minh City customs officers at Tan Son Nhat airport seized more than six sections of rhino horn hidden in the suitcase of a Vietnamese passenger who arrived from "a European country" on 20 May 2013.

The total weight of the rhino horn parts was more than 5 kg. The city Customs Department seized the goods for investigation.

Recently, the Vietnamese Government issued a directive banning specimens of rhino and several other wild animals from being traded, exported or imported.

Exemptions exist for rhino horn items that serve diplomatic or scientific research purposes; are to be used for biodiversity conservation, to be displayed at a zoo, or exchanged amongst CITES authorities and their national members.

Exempted specimens must be non-commercial products that meet the import requirements set by the CITES authorities and, finally, specimens that acquired CITES permission for import prior to the release of the directive may have the right to be taken into the country.

*Over 5 kg of rhino horns seized at Vietnamese airport, Tuoitrenews 21 May 2013.*

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/9827/over-5-kg-of-rhino-horns-seized-at-airport>

## **Seven year sentence for smuggling rhino horn and ivory - China**

18 June, 2013

In June 2013, an antique store owner was sentenced to seven years in prison for smuggling 2.98 million yuan (USD486,150) worth of items made of ivory and rhinoceros horn into China.

Dong Fengrong was carrying 14 ivory figures, four white rhinoceros horns and three items made of rhinoceros horn in his luggage when he arrived in Shanghai on January 23.

Dong testified that he had purchased the items in France for about 180,000 yuan in total, but could not provide evidence to show that he had bought them from licensed dealers. The prosecutor stated that Dong had told police during the investigation that he had bought the items to sell.

*Local man convicted of smuggling ivory figures. Global Times, China, 18 June 2013.*  
<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/789786.shtml>

### **Nepal sentences twelve people for rhino poaching**

19 June 2013

In Nepal, twelve people were sentenced to prison terms for killing rhinos and selling the rhino horn. A division bench headed by Chief of Chitwan National Park, Kamal Juing Kunwar, handed down the sentence.

The prison sentences ranged from 10 years to 15 years and fines in the range of 50 thousand to 100 thousand rupees (USD 530 - 1060), according to a CNP press release.

*12 sentenced for rhino poaching. My Republica, 19 June 2013.*  
[http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=56456](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=56456)

### **Guinean caught with rhino horns, Thailand**

23 June 2013

A Guinean man was arrested by customs officers at Suvarnabhumi airport after he was found with rhinoceros horns worth more than 10 million baht (USD 320,000).

Officials found eight rhinoceros horns weighing a total of 9.6 kilogrammes hidden in the suspect's luggage. The man had flown from Entebbe, Uganda to Addis Ababa. The suspect told investigators that the luggage was not his and that it belonged to his Guinean friend who had arrived in Thailand before him.

According to the suspect, his friend had forgotten to take the luggage with him and asked him to bring it to Thailand and promised to pay all the expenses.

*Guinean caught with rhino horns. The Bangkok Post, 23 June 2013.*  
<http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/356538/guinean-caught-with-rhino-horns>

### **Hanoi police seize 2.1 kg of suspected rhino horns**

5 July 2013

Police in Hanoi have temporarily seized 2.15 kg of animal horns from three passengers from Doha after suspecting the horns were from rhinos.

Customs officers in Hanoi discovered a total of 19 pieces of animal horn, which they handed over to the police for investigation.

In May, 7.28 kg of rhino horns had been discovered in Ho Chi Minh City, hidden in the suitcase of a Vietnamese passenger arriving from Qatar.

A similar case had occurred in January when police caught a smuggler transporting six rhino horns from Mozambique to Vietnam.

*Hanoi police seize 2.1 kg of suspected rhino horns. Tuoitrenews, 5 July 2013.* <http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/9377/hanoi-police-seize-21-kg-of-suspected-rhino-horns>

## **Czechs bust rhino smuggling ring**

23 July 13

In July, it was reported by Czech Customs officials that twenty-four rhino horns worth 4 million euros (USD 5.3 million) on the black market were seized at Prague airport in the course of a two-year investigation.

The authorities said they had arrested 15 people in connection with the criminal ring that was allegedly smuggling rhino horns to Asian markets.

The group is accused of having paid hunters from the Czech Republic and other countries to visit South Africa and pose as hunters in order to take the horns back home as a personal trophy.

*Czechs bust rhino smuggling ring. SAPA 23 July 2013. <http://www.thepost.co.za/czechs-bust-rhino-smuggling-ring-1.1551524#.Ue7VPG37ZN8>*

## **Rhino-horn theft gang is smashed in raids by Criminal Assets Bureau - Ireland**

11 September 2013

The operations of an international rhino-horn smuggling gang known as the 'Rathkeale Rovers' was reported to have been smashed after a major operation involving the Irish Gardai and UK police forces.

The Irish Traveller gang, which has made millions of Euros across the globe, is understood to be "in tatters" after a massive international three-year Europol investigation.

Paintings, documents and large amounts of cash and artefacts were seized by the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), backed up by armed police. Two solicitor's offices – in Limerick and Cork, Ireland – were also raided.

Nineteen suspected gang members were arrested in dawn raids in Northern Ireland and England.

The Rathkeale Rovers are involved in labour exploitation, counterfeiting, tarmac scams, tobacco smuggling and the theft of rhino horn and rare Chinese cultural artefacts, Europol has said.

They are the chief suspects in the theft of rhino horns from a National Museum storage facility in Swords, North, Co Dublin last April, in which eight horns with a black market value of €500,000 (USD 680, 800), were stolen. Over the past three years, there have been more than 60 recorded thefts of rhino horns and Asian art across Europe.

For the past two years, Europol has been tracking the Irish gang, which it said was one of the most significant players in the illegal global trade in rhino horns.

CAB officers in Ireland have been involved in the Europol initiative to target the international crime gang. Agencies in the UK, including the Serious Organised Crime Agency and local police forces, have carried out more than 30 searches, including some in Northern Ireland, as part of the investigation.

After the raids, 17 men and two women were taken into custody in England and Northern Ireland.

*Rhino-horn theft gang is smashed in raids by CAB, The Herald, 11 September 2013. <http://www.herald.ie/news/rhinohorn-theft-gang-is-smashed-in-raids-by-cab-29571772.html>*

## **Vietnamese man arrested smuggling five rhino horns at Nairobi Airport**

18 September 2013

A 29-year-old Vietnamese national was arrested at Jomo Kenyatta airport while trying to smuggle five rhino horns out of Kenya. The passenger was in transit from Maputo, Mozambique, en-route to Hong Kong via Doha, Qatar.

Le Manh Cuong was seized by a joint security team comprising the Kenya Airports Police Unit, Customs

officials, Kenya Airport Authority officials, Kenya Airways officials and Kenya Wildlife Service staff.

He was found in possession of five pieces of rhino horn weighing 20.1kgs and packed in a suitcase stuffed with mattress cuttings to disguise the contraband.

A total of 39 foreigners, including nine Vietnamese and 19 Chinese nationals, are reported to have been arrested smuggling illegal wildlife products out of Kenya in 2013.

*Vietnamese arrested smuggling five rhino horns at Nairobi Airport, Coastweek, 18 September 2013.*  
<http://www.coastweek.com/3637-latest-news-vietnamese-arrested-smuggling-rhino-horns-nairobi-airport.htm>

### **Nepal arrests 14 over rhino poaching**

7 October 2013

At least fourteen alleged members of a gang of rhino poachers were arrested in Nepal in October 2013, in a joint operation by the Nepalese army and the special police.

One of the individuals arrested was Buddhi Bahadur Praja, a man accused of killing more than 12 rhinos in Nepal in the past six years.

Nepal's protected forests were estimated by a census in 2011 to be home to more than 500 rhinos, most of them in Chitwan National Park, about 120km (75 miles) south-west of the capital Kathmandu.

Nepal faced a serious problem of rhino poaching a decade ago, when the country was affected by civil war between government forces and Maoist rebels. In 2002, around 37 rhinos were killed by poachers, triggering grave concern over the future of one-horned rhinos.

Their population dropped from an estimated 612 in 2000 to fewer than 375 in 2005. Since then, numbers have increased to more than 500 after a series of anti-poaching measures. Officials say there are more than 1,000 Nepalese soldiers in the Chitwan national park involved in anti-poaching activities.

A senior official with Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation said that only one rhino had been killed by poachers in Chitwan Park this year.

*BBC news Asia-Pacific, 7 October 2013.* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-24435110>

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## **Illegal trade**

### **British criminals trading rhino horn online**

28 May 2013

Criminals from Britain and beyond are reported to be openly buying and selling rhino horn online.

Middlemen in South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea and in the UK are said to be illegally touting the horns of the endangered species for up to £160,000 to buyers in the US, Thailand and the UAE.

Some of those posting their contraband on discussion site *topix.net* claim to be poachers or to have connections with those doing the poaching.

One person based in Equatorial Guinea wrote: 'I am in direct contacts with Guinean hunters and they have advised to help them for selling skin animals and rhino horns' (*sic*).

Another contributor from Pretoria, South Africa, writes: 'We are rhinoceros hunters and we currently have three horns available for sale. We are good smugglers of these products and we have shipped it to many countries in Asia.'

*Revealed: The British criminals flagrantly touting illegal rhino horn online. Metro, 28 May 2013.*  
<http://metro.co.uk/2013/05/28/revealed-the-british-criminals-flagrantly-touting-illegal-rhino-horn-online-3810522/>

## **How Rhino Horns end up in Asian Jewellery shops**

2 August 2013

*The Star* reports that rhino horn is being made into prayer bracelets and bangles in Vietnam.

In 2011 researchers were offered a rhino horn prayer bead bracelet and also witnessed a group of Chinese customers buying the lower half of a large rhino horn. The customers were instructed on how to cut the horn in order to maximise the number of bangles to be made from it.

The rhino horn was claimed to be of Mozambican origin, leading the researchers to conclude that, since Mozambique had lost its last rhino earlier this year, the horn probably came from the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

The carvers are reported to have told customers where it would be easy to cross back into China with their illegal merchandise.

On another occasion, the researchers were told that the shop uses "several horns a week" and that the owners could not keep up with the demand for bangles. They claimed to be selling hundreds of them at about USD 10,000 to USD15,000 each. Chinese buyers were reported to be buying up to ten of these bracelets at one time and then reselling them back home.

*How Rhino Horns end up in Asian Jewellery shops. The Star, Kenya, 2 August 2013.*  
<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-130563/how-rhino-horns-end-asian-jewellery-shops#sthash.lb5TvVAG.dpuf>

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## **Legal trade**

### **Fears for African rhino in China rainforest**

7 June 2013

In June, seven savannah-dwelling African rhinos were reported to be awaiting release into a Chinese rainforest, raising fears for their welfare in a country with a booming rhino horn trade.

The animals arrived in March at Pu'er National Forest Park in Yunnan province. Critics say that African rhinos – more than 150 of which have been transported to China in recent years – will struggle to survive in the forest environment, raising doubts about the project's true purpose.

The Mekong Group is turning the 23 800 hectares (58 000 acres) of untouched forest in the park into a tourist destination. Sketches on the company's walls show visitors strolling within yards of the rhino. An employee referred to the plan as a scientific research project and that it was hoped that the rhinos would breed.

China's own rhinos were hunted to extinction around a century ago.

The article states that China imported more than 150 live white rhinos from South Africa between 2007 and 2012 and that these Yunnan rhinos, aged between six and eight, were imported from South Africa in 2010 and kept at a city wildlife park before being moved to the forest.

Zhang Li, Professor of ecology at Beijing Normal University, said that the plan was "a commercially-operated rhino husbandry project rather than an academic endeavour." Others have drawn parallels between the project and a previous Chinese effort to import South African rhinos to a wildlife park which was "exposed as a secret multimillion-dollar plan to harvest rhino horn", according to the article.

The Mekong Group declined repeated requests for comment.

The introduction of rhinos to Yunnan "might be closely related to the Hainan programme<sup>1</sup>", China Newsweek magazine reported, adding that South Africa's restrictions on live exports have stalled a plan to bring a further 30 rhinos to the park.

*Fears for African rhino in China rainforest, SAPA-AFP. 7 June 2013.*  
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2013/06/08/fears-for-african-rhino-in-china-rainforest>

### **Record price for rhino horn in New Zealand auction**

18 October, 2013

A rare carved pair of antique rhinoceros horns has sold for five times the estimated price after a heated bidding war at an auction in Auckland on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

The 19th century Chinese carved horns "exceeded all expectations" when they fetched \$797,300 (USD 660,000). They had been expected to sell for between \$120,000 and \$150,000 (USD 99,000 – 124,000).

"This is one of the highest prices ever achieved for antique carved rhinoceros horns globally and is the highest price ever achieved across the New Zealand antique market," a spokesman for the auction house said.

The "richly intricate decorations" on the horns represent the Chinese symbols of beauty, perseverance, healing and longevity.

The auction house said global demand and the scarcity of carved rhinoceros horns had driven up prices globally. The price per kilogram is now reported to exceed that of gold, platinum and cocaine and to have fuelled a black market for the horns.

*Rhino horns sold for \$800k, Fairfax NZ News, 18 October 2013.* <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/9300406/Rhino-horns-sold-for-800k>

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## **Policy**

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### **South African Cabinet approves rhino trade proposal for CoP17**

3 July 2013

In July 2013, South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Edna Molewa, announced that Cabinet had approved "the development and submission of a proposal to the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to CITES, scheduled to take place in 2016 in South Africa, to introduce regulated international trade in rhino horn".

The Minister stated that "South Africa is committed to further enhance its role as a global conservation leader and strengthen its role in influencing decisions and decision making processes of CITES Parties to ensure that this trade convention fulfils all its objectives".

The Minister added South Africa had the ability to "make this scarce resource available without impacting on the species".

*DEA media briefing, 3 July 2013.* [https://www.environment.gov.za/ednamolewa\\_briefsmedia\\_onrhinotraderproposal](https://www.environment.gov.za/ednamolewa_briefsmedia_onrhinotraderproposal)

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<sup>1</sup> SSN comment: this refers to the 2011 revelation that South Africa had exported live rhinos to a facility in Hainan province, China, where Longhui Pharmaceutical company planned to breed rhinos and harvest their horns for commercial purposes. See, e.g. [http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk\\_news/Environment/article652243.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Environment/article652243.ece)

## Plan to trade rhino horns on Johannesburg Stock Exchange

26 July 2013

In July, South Africa released the recommendations of the Rhino Issues Management report, which included the suggestion that South Africa could open a rhino trading stock market, possibly linked to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

The market could be run by a board of directors, or a Trust comprising individuals from the public and/or private sector and civil society, generating income to offset the costs of keeping and protecting rhinos.

The report set aside the possibility of mass dehorning of rhinos for now on the grounds that it would be extremely expensive, but acknowledged that some dehorning may be possible in smaller reserves.

It has also emerged that South Africa may apply for special permission to hold two rhino horn auctions within the next year, instead of waiting another three years for the next Conference of the Parties to CITES.

The author of the report, Mavuso Msimang, said that although such proposals were normally considered at CITES CoPs held every three years, there was a special provision under article 27 of the Convention that allowed for interim applications to be made between CoPs.

The Rhino Issues Management report also recommends that the government lift the moratorium on domestic rhino horn sales because it has had the unintended consequence of pushing up poaching levels by starving the illegal black market of horns.

*Plan to trade rhino horn on JSE, The Mercury, South Africa, 26 July 2013.*

<http://www.iol.co.za/scitech/science/environment/plan-to-trade-rhino-horns-on-jse-1.1553103#.UfZfFm37ZN->

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## Miscellany

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### Ezemvelo KZN begins horn infusion

12 September 2013

In South Africa, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife announced that it had become the first state conservation agency in Africa to trial the poisoning of rhino horn in an attempt to deter the rampant poaching of rhinos. The 'toxic infusion' of the horn and the injection of an indelible dye into the horn was the brainchild of the Rhino Rescue Project.

It was announced that both the toxin and dye would be injected into the horns of rhinos in Tembe Elephant Park and Ndumo Game Reserve.

It was reported that the injection of ectoparasiticides could be injected safely and relatively quickly into the base of the horn, from where it would spread throughout the horn, making it "extremely toxic" in the event of human consumption. The indestructible dye acts as a warning to end-users that a horn has been contaminated and should not be consumed, in addition to reducing its aesthetic appeal: This dye is reported to be visible on an x-ray scanner, even when the horn is ground to a fine powder.

*Rhino Horn Infusion Launch, Ezemvelo KZN, 12 September*

2013. <https://www.facebook.com/EzemveloKZNWildlife/posts/627049060648945>

### Kenya to microchip all rhinos' horns

17 October 2013

The Kenya Wildlife Service said that it would place microchips in the horn of every rhino in the country in a bid to stamp out a surge in poaching the threatened animals.

The World Wildlife Fund donated the chips, as well as five scanners, at a cost of \$US15,000, although

tracking the rhinos and darting them to fit the device will cost considerably more.

It was reported that this move would boost the ability of police to prosecute poachers or traffickers, allowing for all animals to be traced and providing potentially vital information on poaching and smuggling chains.

'Investigators will be able to link any poaching case to a recovered or confiscated horn, and this forms crucial evidence in court, contributing towards the prosecution's ability to push for sentencing of a suspected rhino criminal,' KWS said in a statement.

*Kenya to microchip all rhinos' horns, Sky News 17 October 2013. <http://www.skynews.com.au/eco/article.aspx?id=915786>*



*The SSN Rhino Newsletter is produced by the SSN Rhino Working Group as a service to CITES Parties. If you have news that you would like included in a future issue, please do not hesitate to contact us, Mark Jones and Susie Watts, Co-chairs, SSN Rhino Working Group. [mjones@hsi.org](mailto:mjones@hsi.org)*