

Transnational wildlife crime: The case for creating an international judicial process

Ecocide Workshop

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- Examples of transnational wildlife crime
- Why is this happening?
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- Why do we need an international judicial process?



2011: Annus horribilis for African

Elephants

Illegal ivory trade continues to grow

by Richard Thomas



AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

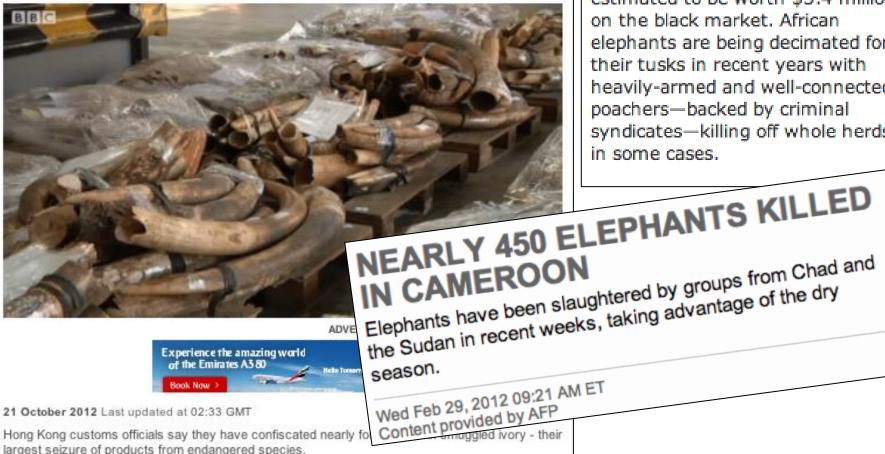
1989 CITES ban on ivory trade➢ Elephants were thriving

2007: around 470.000

2008: CITES agrees one off ivory sale to CN/JP ➤ Massacre ensued (10s of thousands killed p/y)



Hong Kong makes largest ivory seizure worth \$3.4m



Hong Kong authorities have confiscated two massive shipments of elephant tusks, totaling 1,209 tusks, stemming from Kenya and Tanzania. Representing over 600 poached elephants, the shipments are estimated to be worth \$3.4 million on the black market. African elephants are being decimated for their tusks in recent years with heavily-armed and well-connected poachers—backed by criminal syndicates—killing off whole herds in some cases.





The Ivory Wars: Heavily armed platoons of rangers at Garamba National Park in the Democratic Congo wage war against elephant poachers.

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN Published: September 3, 2012 | ₽ 566 Comments





AFRICAN RHINO

- 2008: 17.475 white, 4230 black rhinos
- 2012: nearly 500 rhinos killed
- 2011: 448 rhinos killed, 2007: 13 rhinos
- Value: \$ 60.000/kg (gold: \$ 55.000/kg)

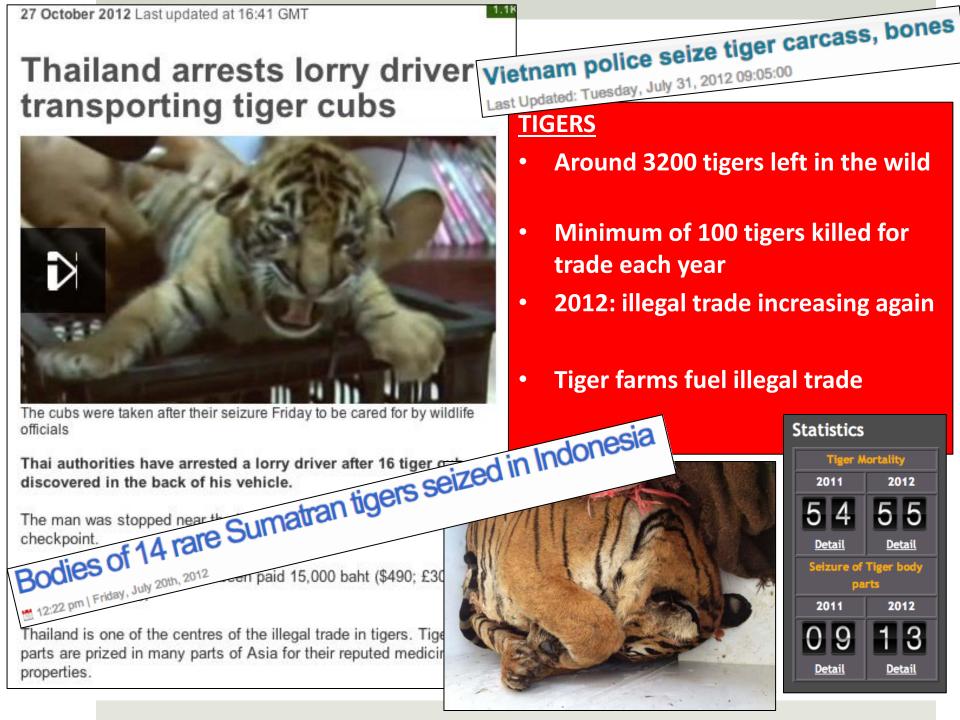


South Africa rhino poaching: More killed than ever

Poachers have already killed a record number of rhinos in South Africa this year, with 455 slaughtered so far, the government has said.

Only 13 rhinos were killed in 2007 but this rose sharply to 448 in 2011 - more than in any previous year.





Why is this happening?

Willingness to buy

Ability to buy



Los

Why is this a problem?

It's serious crime:

- Involvement organised crime networks
- Involves fraud, corruption, violence, money laundering
- Connection with other types of crime
- Funds terrorist movements
- High profits: \$ 5 billion per year globally
- Low risk: prosecutions rare and ineffective



Why is this a problem?

- Impact on species and ecosystems
- Impacts on society
 - Abuse of the poorest
 - Fuelling armed conflicts
 - Crimes against nature = crimes against humanity
- Impact on economy: black markets, revenue loss
- Affecting integrity of governments
- Dangers to human/animal health + wild populations



Why are we failing to tackle it?

- Lack of political will
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of collaboration & information exchange
- Local/national focus
- Corruption



Some noteworthy developments

INTERPOL and UNODC stepping up

Increased attention of international organisations

- Sept 2012: UN General Assembly: discussed wildlife poaching and trafficking for first time
- Sept. 2012: APEC declaration wildlife trafficking
- Oct. 2012: UN Convention against transnational organized crime: environmental crime = transnational organised crime
- April 2013: UN Commission on crime prevention and criminal justice



Why an international judicial process

- National criminal justice systems inadequate
 - Impunity of kingpins in national courts
 - Countries 'unable' and/or 'unwilling' (Rome Statute)
- Currently, individuals cannot be held accountable before an international court
- Wildlife crime = international crime
 > requires an international approach based on global jurisdiction
- International Criminal Court?



Only part of the puzzle

- Other interventions remain vital in short and middle term:
 - Changing consumer behaviour
 - Raising the profile of wildlife crime
 - Tackling corruption
 - Strengthening national criminal justice systems



Thank you!



