

# AFRICAN INDABA

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Dedicated to the People and Wildlife of Africa

## Deputy Minister Mabudafhasi Is Committed to the Professional Hunting Industry of South Africa

Extracts from the Address of Her Excellency, SA Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi to PHASA Delegates

The hunting industry makes a valuable contribution to the economy of our country and according to a report compiled by the Department, based on information provided by the provincial conservation authorities, the revenue generated directly through hunting, during 2009, amounts to R650 million. Owing to the forward and backward linkages of the hunting industry, the impact of the industry, both direct and indirect, is far larger than the aforementioned amount. I was informed that the study conducted by the North West University in 2007, indicated that the total contribution of your industry amounted to approximately R7.7 billion and this is quite significant.

I further value your active participation in government initiatives and processes. To mention but a few; your involvement in the Wildlife Forum; participation in the Round Table that my Department convened in May 2010, and the Minister's Rhino Summit in October 2010; the NGO Summit of two weeks ago, and in particular, in the legislative development processes. Your contribution to skills development and job creation within the environmental sector deserves to be mentioned. I am not sure how many other organizations can say that they have donated more than R2 million this year for the training of previously disadvantaged conservationists! I would urge you to continue with these initiatives, but to also focus on other initiatives to transform not only the hunting industry, but also the broader wildlife industry. Continued collaboration and cooperation between the Department and the industry can facilitate the development of such initiatives.

Acknowledging that you have concerns with regards to government processes that may impact on your industry, please allow me a few minutes to reflect on the progress made in terms of a number of issues:

1. The Hunting Norms and Standards is in the process of being finalized and I should mention that due to the amendment to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, that now provides the Minister with the

mandate to make regulations relating to the hunting industry; the final Norms and Standards will not include regulatory provisions.

2. The Department has just initiated the process to amend the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations as well as the Threatened or Protected Species lists. Where until now a permit has been required to carry out any restricted activity involving a listed threatened or protected species, I am positive that the upcoming amendment process will provide for much more effective implementation of the regulations, as we will now be able to exempt a person from many of the impractical provisions.
3. Although a complete proposal has not been developed yet, discussions are taking place to identify and explore possible areas for self-administration. I understand that this is an important aspect for the industry.

New government initiatives that have been given effect to during the past year include:

1. The development of a National Strategy for the Safety and Security of Rhinoceros populations in South Africa, which was necessitated by the increase in rhino poaching and illegal international trade in rhino horn. The purpose of the strategy is to reduce the effect of rhino poaching, ensure the successful prosecution of offenders and to improve the

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Frequently Asked Questions: Rhino Dehorning

the South African Veterinary Council and may lose their license.

**Q Will a dehorned rhino still appeal to eco-tourists?**

It has been proposed that tourists would not be happy to see horn-less rhinos, however there have been no studies to date that have investigated the effect of dehorning on tourist preferences. If the reasons for dehorning are properly communicated it is possible that concerns about dehorned rhinos could be overcome.

**Q What effect will dehorning have on the trophy hunting of rhino?**

Trophy hunters are usually after the most prestigious trophy – the biggest or longest horn. Wide-spread and large-scale dehorning might therefore have negative impacts on the hunting industry which has been one of the incentives for the private sector to become involved in rhino conservation.

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## Rhino Horn: Facts and Myths

Extracted from: *Tiger Bone & Rhino Horn: The Destruction of Wildlife for Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Richard Ellis 2005 Island Press, Hardcover: 312 pages, ISBN-10: 1559635320

Try this: Ask the person next to you what he or she thinks rhino horn might be used for in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Chances are, they'll tell you it is used as an aphrodisiac. It is not. In certain Asian countries, ground rhino horn is used to cure almost everything *but* impotence and sexual inadequacy. In Bernard Read's translation of the 1597 Chinese materia medica "Pen Ts'ao Kang Mu", the complete section on rhinoceros horn ("the best is from a freshly killed male animal") reads as follows, with no mention of any aphrodisiac qualities:

"It should not be taken by pregnant women; it will kill the foetus. As an antidote to poisons (in Europe it was said to fall to pieces if poison were poured into it). To cure devil possession and keep away all evil spirits and miasmas. For gelsemium [jasmine] and snake poisoning. To remove hallucinations and bewitching nightmares. Continuous administration lightens the body and makes one very robust. For typhoid, headache, and feverish colds. For carbuncles and boils full of pus. For intermittent fevers with delirium. To expel fear and anxiety, to calm the liver and clear the vision. It is a sedative to the viscera, a tonic, antipyretic. It dissolves phlegm. It is an antidote to the evil miasma of hill streams. For infantile convulsions and dysentery. Ashed and taken with water to treat violent vomiting, food poisoning, and overdosage of poisonous drugs. For arthritis, me-

lancholia, loss of the voice. Ground up into a paste with water it is given for hematemesis [throat hemorrhage], epistaxis [nose-bleeds], rectal bleeding, heavy smallpox, etc."

Because it was believed to provide such a pharmacological bounty, it is perhaps superfluous for rhino horn also to serve as a love potion. How then did rhino horn acquire its aphrodisiacal reputation? Probably from Western writers who had only a passing acquaintance with Chinese traditional medicine. One such was J.A. Hunter, (who was reputed to have shot more than a thousand rhinos) who, in 1952, wrote: "The horns are worth thirty shillings a pound or more – ten shillings more than the finest grade of ivory. These horns are used for a curious purpose. Orientals consider them a powerful aphrodisiac and there is an unlimited demand for them in India and Arabia. No doubt any man who has a harem of thirty or more beautiful women occasionally feels the need for a little artificial stimulant."

Hunter tried it himself, but perhaps because he was alone, it did not work. "I closely followed the recipe given me by an Indian trader," he wrote. "Take about one square inch of rhino horn, file it into a powder form, put it in a muslin bag like a tea bag, and boil it in a cup of water until the water turns dark brown. I took several doses of the concoction but regret to report that I felt no effects. Possibly I lacked faith. It is also possible that a man in the bush, surrounded by nothing but rhinos and native scouts, does not receive the proper inspiration to make the dose effective."

In his 1962 study of the animals of East Africa, C.A. Spingarn seemed to share the belief that Asians were interested in the horn as an aphrodisiac and were willing to pay handsomely for it: "On account of mysterious aphrodisiac properties attributed to the horn by certain Asiatic peoples, the Rhino has been sorely persecuted... With its horn fetching the present high price the prospects of its continued survival in the face of the poachers' onslaught are not very bright." The anthropologist Louis Leakey also shared this misunderstanding. In his 1969 book on African wildlife, he commented that rhinos were "in grave danger from poachers because rhino horn commands a high price in the Far East, where it is rated as an aphrodisiac." And in *S.O.S. Rhino*, C.A.W. Guggisberg asserted that: "The superstition that has done more harm to the rhinoceros family than all others is undoubtedly the Chinese belief in the powerful aphrodisiac properties of the horns. Through the centuries untold generations of aged gentlemen have been imbibing powdered rhino horn in some appropriate drink, hoping to feel like a twenty-year-old when next entering the harem!"

Even without aphrodisiacal properties, however, rhino horn is one of the mainstays of TCM, and its collection has been responsible for the death of tens of thousands of rhinos around the world. Make no mistake: those people who use rhino horn to cure medical ailments really believe it works. That's what drives up the demand on which the poachers thrive. As Ann and Steve Toon commented in 2002, "For practitioners of traditional Asian medicine, rhino horn is not perceived as a frivolous love potion, but as an irreplaceable pharmaceutical necessity." And Eric Dinerstein (2003), concurs: "In fact, traditional Chinese medicine never has used rhinoceros horn as an aphrodisiac: this is a myth of the Western media and in some parts of Asia is viewed as a kind of anti-Chinese hysteria."

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For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and the sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources. The publication and distribution of African Indaba is supported by the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation CIC [www.cic-wildlife.org](http://www.cic-wildlife.org)



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Rhino horn has been an integral component of TCM for thousands of years. It matters little where the rhinos come from; the horn of a rhinoceros from any continent may be used for medical purposes. In East Africa – primarily Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania – statistics on rhino horn harvesting have been kept since 1926. Over this period, most of the rhinos killed were black rhinos, although the “harvesters” would not pass up a white rhino if it appeared in their gun sights. During the 1930s, according to Nigel Leader-Williams (1992), declared exports from East Africa (then under British rule) averaged about 1,600 kilograms (3,520 pounds) per year, which meant the death of some 555 black rhinos annually. During World War II, the numbers soared to 2,500 kilograms (5,500 pounds), for which approximately 860 rhinos died each year. During the 1950s and 1960s, the auction houses reported about 1,800 kilograms (3,960 pounds) per year; which would have entailed the death of about 600 rhinos every year in that period. In the 1970s, the numbers skyrocketed again, to 3,400 kilograms (7,480 pounds), and every year in that decade, 1,180 rhinos died. Leader-Williams (now Professor of Biodiversity Management of the Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent) identifies the Far East’s primary consuming nations as Hong Kong (which was separate from the People’s Republic of China until 1997), mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah Malaysia, Brunei, Macau, and Thailand, while the major Asian importers of African rhino horn were, not surprisingly, the first three on this list – mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Hong Kong was the world’s largest importer of rhino horn. Although the government officially banned all imports in 1979, rhino horn was smuggled in from Macao, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Taiwan, and South Africa. At the 1987 CITES meeting in Ottawa, participating parties agreed to abate the rhino crisis by closing down the trade in rhino products completely. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher promised the ban would take effect later that year. This never happened in an effective way, of course, but there were suggestions that substitutes for actual rhino parts might suffice for TCM. Scientists at the China Pharmacological Institute proposed using buffalo horn (made of keratin, as are rhino horns), and the manager of China’s National Health Medicines Products said that all their new medicines now used buffalo horn instead of rhino horn. In the section on “Heat-clearing, blood-cooling medicinals” in Wiseman and Ellis’s 1996 “Fundamentals of Traditional Chinese

Medicine”, we find the admission that all those rhinos didn’t have to be killed at all. After a list of all the symptoms that rhinoceros horn can alleviate, there is this note: “The rhinoceros is an endangered species. Please use water buffalo horn as a substitute.”

Taiwanese self-made millionaires are notorious for their conspicuous consumption of rare and exotic wildlife, and the Chinese traditional adage that animals exist primarily for exploitation is nowhere more pronounced than on Taiwan. Most of the rhino horn for sale there comes from South Africa. The demand for Asian horn in particular is increasing and wealthy Taiwanese, aware that prices will rise even higher as rhinoceros numbers decline, are buying it as an investment. In those regions where

rhino horn products are dispensed – legally or illegally – the most popular medicines are used for tranquilizers, for relieving dizziness, building energy, nourishing the blood, curing laryngitis, or simply, as the old snake-oil salesmen would have it, “Curing whatever ails you.” Keratin – the major protein components of hair, wool, nails, horn, hoofs and the quills of feathers – in rhinoceros horn is chemically complex and contains large quantities of sulphur containing amino acids, particularly cysteine, but also tyrosine, histidine, lysine, and arginine, and the salts calcium carbonate and calcium phosphate. Rhino horns are composed primarily of keratin, but so too are rhino nails. Three to a foot, for a grand total of twelve per rhino, the nails can also be shaved or powdered for pharmaceuticals. You cannot carve a *jambiya* handle from a toenail, but shaved or powdered rhinoceros keratin, with all its believed powers, might be beneficial regardless of which part of the rhino it comes from.

The scarcity of rhinos today, and the corresponding intermittent availability of rhino horn only drives the price higher, and intensifies the pressure on the declining rhino populations. For people whose annual income is often far below the subsistence level, the opportunity to change one’s life by killing a large, ungainly, and otherwise seemingly “useless” animal must be overwhelming. How much is rhino horn worth? In Nowak’s revision of “Walker’s Mammals of the World”, we read:

“*R. unicornis* is jeopardized by loss of habitat to the expanding human population and illegal killing, especially in response to the astonishing rise in the value of the horn. The wholesale value of Asian rhino horn increased from US \$35 per kg [2.2 pounds] in 1972 to \$9,000 per kilogram in the mid-1980s. The retail price, after the horn has been shaved or powdered for sale, has at times in certain East Asian markets reached \$20,000-\$30,000 per kilo. In contrast, in May 1990, pure gold was worth about \$13,000 per kilo.”

Throughout those markets, the trade in rhino horn for medicinal purposes is a very big business, but because much of it is conducted through various black markets, its true magnitude may never be known. The Taiwanese make up much of the market for horn imported to Asia from South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe – wherever black rhinos can still be found.

Like the Taiwanese, many Koreans are devoted practitioners of traditional medical arts, and are prepared to import substantial amounts of substances not naturally found in their country. Korean traditional medicine is based on the Chinese version, which is said to have come to Korea during the sixth century. “Rhinoceros horn,” wrote Judy Mills in 1993, “is an ingredient in five... medicines still popular among doctors of Oriental medicine in Korea today. These rhinoceros horn derivatives are used to treat maladies including stroke, nosebleeds, dermatitis, headache, facial paralysis, high blood pressure, and coma. The most popular of these medicines is Woo Hwang Chang Shim Won, a medicine ball made from rhinoceros horn, musk, cow gallstones, and a number of herbs.” In 1992, after the US government threatened to impose sanctions via the Pelly Amendment on South Korea for failure to police the trade in rhino horn, the price of rhino horn in South Korea doubled. Among the some 7,000 doctors licensed to practice Korean medicine in South Korea (no figures are available for North Ko-

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rea), there was little diminution of prescriptions written for Woo Hwang Chang Shim Won after 1992. In fact, it is not clear that the use of rhino horn for medicinal purposes has decreased at all.

Indeed, it is not clear that rhino horn serves any medicinal purpose whatsoever, but it is a testimony to the power of tradition that millions of people believe that it does. Of course, if people want to believe in prayer, acupuncture or voodoo as a cure for what ails them, there is no reason why they shouldn't, but if animals are being killed to provide nostrums that have been shown to be useless, then there is a very good reason to curtail the use of rhino horn.

There are five species of rhinoceros, and with the exception of one subspecies of the African white rhino, all are in danger of being hunted to extinction for their horns. Rhinos as we know them have been around for millions of years, but Dr H. Sapiens has created a predicament from which they might never recover. It is heartbreaking to realize that the world's rhinos are being eliminated from the face of the earth in the name of medications that probably don't work.



Let's find out more and separate myths from reality! I invite you to get to know my "second home" Cameroon. We start our journey in the vast savannahs of the north, where Mayo Oldiri Safaris, the company I manage, has five hunting concessions (ZIC 10, 11, 20, 23 & 25), of which two are bordering Boubandjida National Park. Working there, with and for people and wildlife, we can draw from almost fifteen years of experience. Very clearly, the menaces to wildlife can be described as:

- Forest loggers and crop farmers destroy the vegetation and fauna. In addition, they often use fire to get hold of the animals although knowing the consequences.
- Cattle and other livestock compromise the vegetative cover and often destroy it; they furthermore compete with wildlife for forage resources. Roaming cattle herds and the herders often cause disturbance to wildlife. Encroachment of cattle herders in formerly pristine areas is one of the main reasons for increasing human-lion conflicts. It's the lion that kills the cows – but it's also the lion that loses in the end! Thus lions get killed as retaliation and precaution in order to prevent future losses.
- Gold prospectors erect small settlements inside the hunting areas and national parks and kill use wildlife for subsistence – in other words, they poach.
- Fishermen often, poison the water to catch fish; local clerics and medical doctors are raising awareness among villagers about the dangerous consequences for the fish fauna as well as a variety of other animals drinking from the poisoned rivers, predators and scavengers feeding on poisoned animals, and last not least humans eating the poisoned fish and meat that is sold on local markets.
- Loggers, illegal settlers, gold prospectors need meat to survive in the bush. Towns and villages crave for bush meat. We are not talking about the single poacher that is seeking to supply his family with meat. We talk about organized poachers that supply local and regional markets. One example, even though from the rainforest area, may illustrate the impact of organized poachers on the population of the prime target species: a few years ago, we got a hunting area in the rainforest of Southern Cameroon, which was known for its abundance of sitatunga. In that area, we were given a quota of five male sitatunga per year. One year after we took over the area, we couldn't find any evidence of sitatunga any longer. After investigating the reasons, local

## United Against Poaching – A Success Story From Northern Cameroon

Raquel Reguera

2010 is the Global Year of Biodiversity. The world's achievements in halting the loss of biodiversity are under scrutiny. Those of you that travelled and hunted the savannahs or rainforests of Cameroon had a chance to witness the richness of wildlife, vegetation and natural resources...– a global heritage and foundation for the survival of Cameroon's people! Yet, this heritage is under threat. According to WWF<sup>1</sup>, some of the driving forces behind the loss of biodiversity are *inter alia* "unsustainable trophy hunting and poaching". Are hunters really part of the problem?



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