

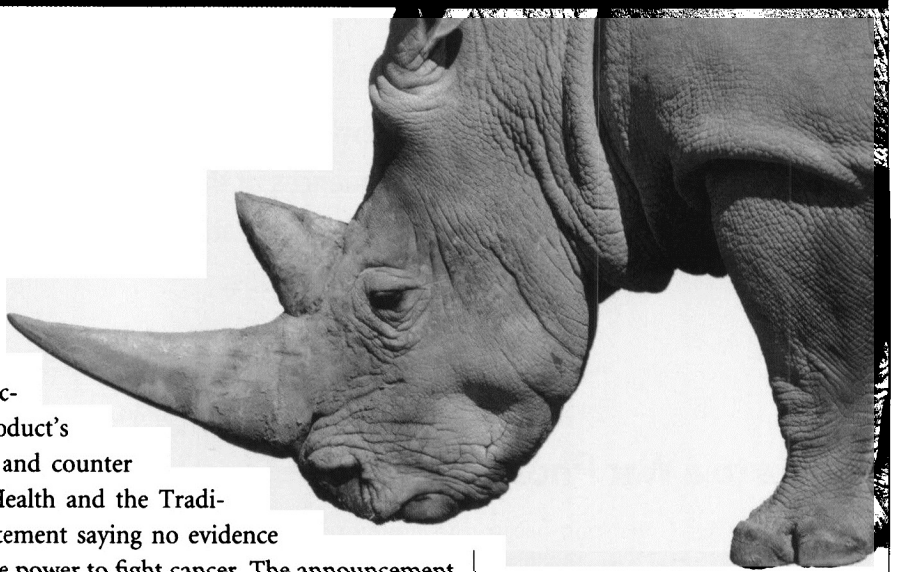


VIETNAM TODAY

Rx or R.I.P. for Rhinos?

The Asian thirst for the supposed healing powers of ground rhino horn is driving the animals to the brink of extinction, and Vietnam is reputed to be the product's biggest market. To preserve the species and counter medical myths, Vietnam's Ministry of Health and the Traditional Medicine Association issued a statement saying no evidence supports the belief that rhino horn has the power to fight cancer. The announcement was made at a workshop in Hanoi sponsored by the World Wildlife Federation, South Africa.

Rhino poaching in South Africa surged from 13 in 2007 to more than 1,000 in 2013, according to the African Wildlife Foundation. The most endangered rhinoceros species is the Javan rhino, which once inhabited Vietnam and Indonesia. The last Javan rhino in Vietnam was poached in 2010, and only a few dozen survive in Ujung Kulon National Park in Java, Indonesia.



DNA Results Challenge Identity Claim

He has claimed to be lost Army sergeant John Hartley Robertson, missing since his helicopter crashed over Laos in 1968, but a man living in Vietnam under the name of Dang Tan Ngoc is now confronted with DNA tests that don't back up his story that he was taken prisoner, escaped and created a false identity. A forensics laboratory compared a DNA sample from Robertson's nephew with one from a bloodstain obtained from Ngoc, according to a May 12 story in *Stars and Stripes*.



Flooding is a rising concern in Vietnam.

As a nation where 70 percent of the people live along the coast, Vietnam is especially vulnerable to rising sea levels related to climate change. The country has already taken steps, in collaborative aid projects valued at nearly half a billion dollars, to build flood-resilient sea dikes, roads and houses. The efforts also include planting mangrove trees as a buffer against rising water and to help absorb runoff. In a recent projection, 10 percent of Ho Chi Minh City will be flooded from rising sea levels by 2050 and 20 percent will be under water by 2100. The director of the Water Management and Climate Change Research Center in Ho Chi Minh City has said that an improved sewer system is critical for dealing with the increase in flooding.

Adapt or Drown

The mosquito-borne Dengue virus, which produces high fevers and aching bones, is being spread by insecticide-resistant mosquitoes. Dengue fever cases in Vietnam are up 28 percent over last year. Four of the 8,000 infected patients have died. The disease is colloquially known in the United States as breakbone fever because of the excruciating pain that victims suffer.

Dengue Fever on the Rise

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John Hartley Robertson