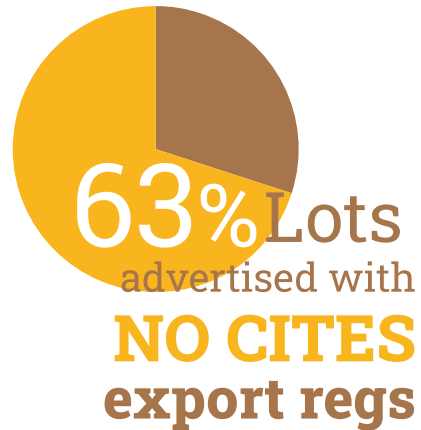


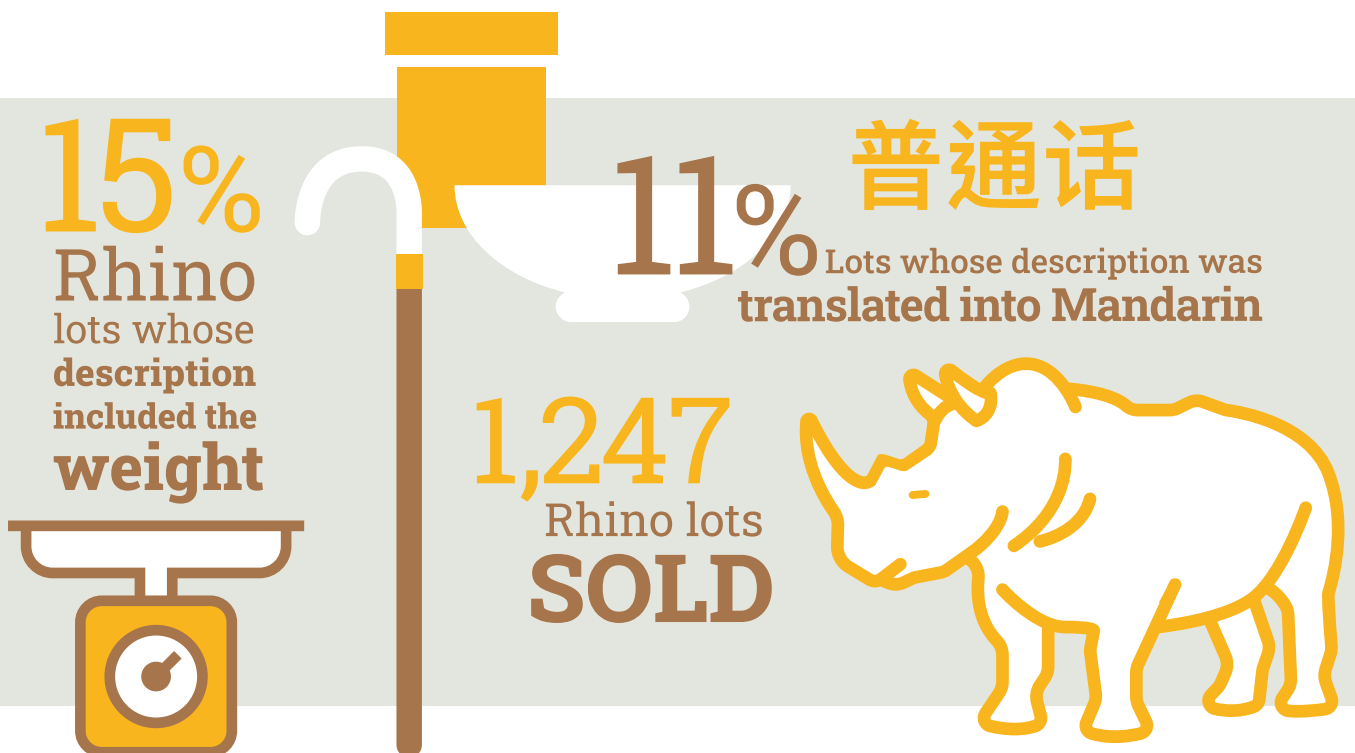
# Rhino horn at risk of being **LAUNDERED** in the UK



The sale and export of rhino horn are strictly controlled through EU and CITES Regulations, enforceable in UK law. It is illegal to sell rhino horn dating from post-1947, while pre-1947 rhino horn must be 'worked', i.e., altered from their original state. It is illegal to sell 'unworked' rhino horn, except as part of a trophy (i.e. taxidermy) rhino head, which is defined as a 'worked' object.

All exports from the UK need a CITES permit, only granted exceptionally. Export for commercial gain is rarely allowed, according to the UK CITES Management Authority. However, there is a growing body of evidence that some modern rhino horn is being carved and passed off as 'antique'.

To understand more about this illegal trade, we analysed rhino horn described as "definitely", "probably" or "possibly" rhino horn, offered for sale during the three full calendar years 2017-19 at auctions in the UK.



## 2017–19 Marked increases in lot numbers in

**Taxidermy 178%**

**Jewellery 389%**

**Miscellaneous 385%**



### Sounding the Horn

In our Survey, Sounding The Horn, we analysed 1,571 rhino horn antique items offered for sale in 2017, 2018 and 2019 through UK auction houses, seeking to understand if all these items were legal and if international laws were accurately and appropriately highlighted.

### Ultimately, could the UK antique trade be being used to launder modern rhino horn?

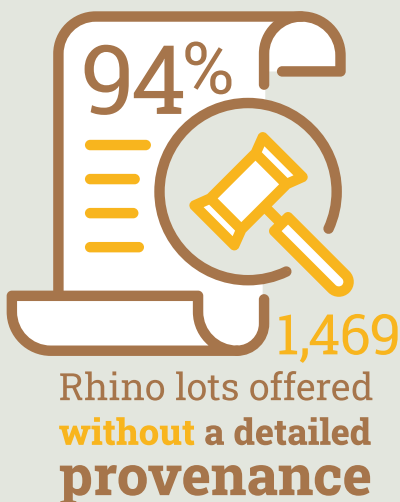
We found that unusual-looking lots appeared on a reasonably regular basis. However, whilst we considered (based on catalogue photographs) that all could be defined as “worked”, in some cases the working appeared minimal or inexperienced. Other items stood out as unusual in their category, for example, in 2019, a number of strikingly similar, modern-looking lots started appearing in a small number of auction houses. Some of these items became the subject of ongoing police investigations.

### Worrying loopholes

Our Survey has revealed worrying loopholes and worsening trends, and there is no doubt that these lay the trade open to exploitation by those trafficking modern rhino horn and/or re-carved horn, or seeking cheap, older, horn for illegal grind-down and onward use or sale.

We call on UK politicians and regulators to ensure that the sale of rhino horn through the UK antique trade cannot be exploited and to implement effective new controls to close the current serious, systemic loopholes once and for all.

Read the full report:  
[www.savetherhino.org/sounding-the-horn](http://www.savetherhino.org/sounding-the-horn)



**25%**  
Rhino lots offered **without** an **age assessment**

