

## SOUTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS (*Ceratotherium simum simum*)



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**PROPOSAL:** CoP17 Prop. 7 Swaziland  
Alter the existing annotation on the Appendix II listing of Swaziland’s white rhino, adopted at the 13th Conference of Parties in 2004, so as to permit a limited and regulated trade in white rhino horn which has been collected in the past from natural deaths, or recovered from poached Swazi rhino, as well as horn to be harvested in a non-lethal way from a limited number of white rhino in the future in Swaziland.

### IFAW RECOMMENDATION: OPPOSE

#### Biology and Distribution

The southern white rhinoceros is a herbivorous grazer found in tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas and shrub-lands in several protected areas in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Kenya. White rhinos are the second largest land mammals after elephants. They have complex social structures in which females and sub-adults are generally social and males are territorial and typically solitary. White rhinos can live to be 50 years of age, have a gestation period of approximately 16 months and give birth to one calf every two to three years. There are approximately 20,000 white rhinos remaining in the wild.

#### Protection Status

By 1977, all African rhinoceros species were listed on CITES Appendix I and all international commercial trade in rhinos and their products were prohibited.

In 1994, the South African population of the southern white rhino was transferred to Appendix II, but only for trade in live animals to “approved and acceptable destinations” and for the (continued) export of hunting trophies. In 2004, Swaziland’s southern white rhinos were also transferred to CITES Appendix II but only for live export and for limited export of hunting trophies according to specified annual quotas.

#### Consequences of Trade

Rhino poaching has increased dramatically in recent years, notably in South Africa, but also in Zimbabwe and Kenya, in response to rapidly increasing black market prices for rhino horn. In 2007, 13 rhinos were recorded poached in South Africa. By 2011, 448 rhinos were poached and in 2014 poaching in South Africa had risen to 1,215 animals killed -- a 9,000% increase in poaching in less than ten years. In the 1990s, rhino horn sold for US\$250-\$500/kg. Today, rhino horn can fetch up to US\$60,000-\$100,000/kg.



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Rhinos are poached for their horn, demand for which is primarily to supply medicinal and luxury goods markets in Asia. Until recently, market dynamics were poorly understood but recent market surveys have shed some light on the variability of demand dynamics both in terms of geography and demographics. For example, in a recent survey of preferences for Chinese, Western, or a combination of medicines to treat a range of illnesses, there was significant variability in the use of Chinese medicines for presenting illnesses/conditions. Thus, stereotypical assumptions about the use of rhino horn in Chinese medicine, for example, have only complicated attempts in recent years to curb demand. There is a desperate need to better understand market dynamics in order to implement effective strategies to curb demand for horn. Until the time effective strategies can be implemented to curb demand, rhinos will continue to be poached.

Current poaching rates have effectively stalled growth in rhino population numbers at the continental

level. Illegal trade in rhino horn has also reached the highest levels since the early 1990s and in 2014 nearly 2,000 rhino horns are estimated to have gone into illegal trade. Comparatively speaking, the illegal supply of rhino horn out of Africa is now more than 30 times greater than what was observed in the early 2000s. The notion that demand could be furnished through legal sales is fallacious and cannot be substantiated. On the contrary, experts suggest that legal trade will increase demand, which could have serious ramifications for wild rhino populations. Swaziland's proposal flies in the face of global efforts to protect the last remaining wild rhino populations and IFAW urges Parties to oppose this proposal.

#### **IFAW Recommendation**

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IFAW OPPOSES CoP17 Prop. 7 from Swaziland to alter the existing annotation on the Appendix II listing of Swaziland's white rhinos so as to permit a limited and regulated trade in white rhino horn.