



AFRICAN WILDLIFE NEWS

FALL 2019



DEATH BY HANGOVER

Read story on page 6

Page 3
*A Success Story for the
'Bleeding-heart' Baboon*

Page 4
*Pressuring Hold-out Countries
to Ban Domestic Ivory Trades*

Page 5
*Dramatizing Life
on the Serengeti*

YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK ACROSS AFRICA'S LANDSCAPES



Our mission is to ensure wildlife and wild lands thrive in modern Africa.

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TACKLING THE INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE



Dear AWF Friends,

Although we've made progress in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade (IWT), trafficking networks remain active and could wipe out not only elephants but other iconic species including the rhino, lion, and giraffe.

Look no further than recent headlines for evidence of the continuing threat. There have been too many reports of authorities seizing contraband caches at airports and seaports — record hauls of ivory, rhino horn, and more.

AWF supports African governments and local communities in their fights against IWT. Our investments help protect critical wildlife populations and their habitats through training in capacities such as ecological monitoring and anti-poaching surveillance within protected areas. Our Canines for Conservation program places skilled dog-and-handler units at airports and other trafficking hotspots in partnership with authorities. AWF also is training of a growing cadre of prosecutorial professionals in skills and knowledge needed to effectively prosecute offenders.

Key to the fight is ending consumer demand. Take some time to read about how false beliefs fuel a bloody trade — centuries old — that threatens to wipe out rhinos (Pages 6-7). We must all spread the message that individual choices matter, now more than ever.

Change on the policy front is critical, too. Recently, members of the Conference of the Parties to the U.N. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) voted to regulate giraffe trade for the first time. They also refused to allow one-off sales of ivory stocks, as some governments had requested. The CITES participants made the best decisions — and not only for wildlife. AWF knows from decades of experience on the continent that what is best for wildlife and habitats is what's best for people.

Today with Africa on the brink of explosive change, we promote conservation as integral to Africa's exciting future. We strive to link the conservation agenda to the aspirations and mindsets driving progress on the continent. Our (proven) position is that African governments don't have to choose conservation over development, or vice versa. The real challenge is how to embrace change while positioning wildlife and wildlands as a centerpiece of sustainable development.

We thank you for joining us in this quest. You are helping to ensure that our magnificent wildlife thrive in modern Africa.

Sincerely,

Kaddu Sebunya
Chief Executive Officer



A Success Story for the 'BLEEDING-HEART' BABOON

In northern Ethiopia, the last species of grass-eating primates roam the rugged landscape of the Ethiopian Plateau. The gelada — also known as the “bleeding heart” monkey because of vivid red patches on its chest — is especially numerous in Simien Mountains National Park, a World Heritage Site.

Despite multiple threats, the geladas here have thrived. According to a recent census, geladas in the park number 18,851, a 27 percent increase over 10 years. The increase is especially impressive when considering the challenges they face, even in the park's protected space. As geladas

became more habituated to humans, their altered behavior increases exposure to a fatal parasite, the tapeworm *T. serialis*. How so? The troops scavenge from rubbish pits or other waste and consume *T. serialis* eggs. Research has shown that infants born to mothers with *T. serialis* infections have significantly lower survival rates.

The geladas also must contend with human impacts — encroachment, soil erosion, and deforestation linked to agriculture all threaten their ecosystems. Another problem is that farmers kill geladas that raid their crops.

AWF works with park scouts to protect the habitat and mitigate human-wildlife conflict through alternative livelihoods such as community-owned tourism. We also aim to enhance sustainable agriculture and food security by focusing on sustainable land-use planning.

The World Heritage Site status of the Simien Mountains National Park means that conservation success benefits not only the nation but communities across the globe. The good news about these grazing primates is genuinely a global success.

SNIFFER DOGS HELP CLOSE OFF TRAFFICKING ZONE IN TANZANIA

Despite losing more than half of its elephants over the past two decades, Tanzania still boasts Africa's third-highest population of these land giants. More than 16,000 elephants make their home in the country's northern region alone.

These northern landscapes are vulnerable because they're on the Kenyan border and not far from ports in Dar es Salaam and Mombasa, where traffickers can smuggle out illegal wildlife products such as ivory, rhino horn, lion pelts and bones, and pangolin scales.

To cut off traffickers' access to the northern region, the Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) will soon deploy a specialized anti-trafficking unit — made up of AWF's elite detection dog-and-handler teams — to key points along the Tanzania-Kenya border.

An AWF technical advisor will support the unit to help ensure successful implementation. By deploying the detection teams to trafficking hotspots, TAWA is increasing the geographical scope of its anti-trafficking operations. The teams will act upon intelligence and respond to threats. And because the TAWA unit



will have portable kennels (see photo), teams can perform random road checks and searches near borders. Perhaps most importantly, the dog-and-handler teams act as deterrents for criminals who monitor the trafficking routes.

The TAWA dog handlers will undergo wildlife law enforcement training. This AWF-led program, supported by the Holtzman Wildlife Foundation, seeks to ensure that apprehended poachers and smugglers are prosecuted adequately in accordance with the law. Specifically, the program trains detection-dog handlers, rangers, and other law enforcers in skills such as proper handling of evidence and testifying effectively in court.

AWF will also engage communities in northern Tanzania through canine and handler visits to local schools. Teaching children about conservation instills values that are critical to the long-term fight against wildlife crime.

30,000

Approximate pounds of food that AWF-trained detection dogs (Canines for Conservation) eat per year.

AS NATURE'S 'FIRST RESPONDERS,' VULTURES OFTEN POISONED

Two dead tawny eagles, three elephant carcasses, and 537 killed vultures. That was what rangers with the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks encountered in June. Poachers, after mutilating the skulls of the elephants for their tusks, had laced the bodies with poisonous chemicals. Why? To avoid detection.

Vultures are the “first responders” to fresh kills. They clear 70 percent of Africa’s carrion, playing a pivotal role in ecosystems. Unfortunately, their rapid response to the deaths of others makes them a target of “sentinel poisoning.” Circling above kills, they give away poachers’ positions to wildlife authorities.

Pressuring Hold-out Countries to Ban Domestic Ivory Trades

The world is getting closer to the day when ivory markets are shut down everywhere — when, in effect, we have a worldwide ivory ban.

Currently international ivory trade is illegal. Through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the world in 1989 banned trading ivory across national borders. But many countries allowed domestic trade of “legal” (old/already stockpiled) ivory. And these domestic markets keep poachers in business, posing a dire threat to the estimated 415,000 elephants remaining in Africa.

Legal markets are notoriously difficult to regulate and police, and often countries don’t even try. This means traffickers

Mass kills by poisoning are a recurring problem. In 2016, poachers poisoned 100 vultures in South Africa’s Kruger National Park. In February of 2018, another 87. Among the vultures killed in June were 468 white-backed vultures, a critically endangered species, and 17 white-headed vultures, also under severe threat.

But it’s not only vultures threatened by poisonings. Farmers often set out poisoned salt licks or other lures to kill crop-raiding elephants and carnivores that hunt livestock.

Conservation NGOs as well as the Council of Elders of the African Elephant Coalition (AEC), which represents most elephant range states, have asked the Japanese

Recognizing the harm, the U.S., China, Hong Kong, and U.K. have all enacted ivory trade bans. Now, the pressure is on Japan, the EU, Australia, and Thailand to follow suit. (Singapore announced a ban in August and New Zealand is soliciting public comments on its domestic trade.)

slip new ivory into the legal stockpiles of ivory on the way to markets. Legal markets also do harm by reinforcing the concept of ivory as a commodity for human use.



AWF SOLUTIONS

AWF works closely with wildlife authorities on anti-poaching. In Botswana, we're deploying highly skilled dog-and-handler teams to major trafficking hubs to deter and disrupt wildlife crime. Throughout the continent, we work with communities to mitigate human-wildlife conflict through a variety of strategies. These proven approaches include beehive fences, predator-proof mobile bomas (livestock corrals), chili crops (which repel elephants), lights, and noisemakers.



government to close Japan’s domestic ivory market, today the world’s most active. Ending ivory trade, said Azizou El Hadj Issa, chairman of the AEC’s elders council, will strengthen Japan’s conservation image ahead of the 2020 Olympics.

The AEC and other conservation groups, as well as the European Parliament, have likewise called up the EU to close its markets.

DRAMATIZING LIFE ON THE SERENGETI

“Many Tales Have Been Told of Africa. But This is Our Story.”

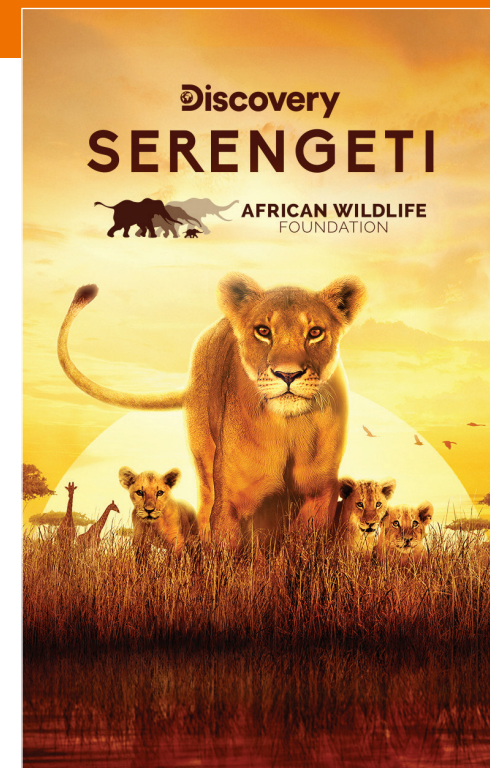
So begins the promo for a new series from Discovery, *Serengeti*. Narrated by actress Lupita Nyong’o, this six-parter celebrates the famed landscape and its iconic wildlife while benefiting AWF. Discovery is promoting AWF’s anti-poaching and anti-trafficking work as the show airs and on the *Serengeti* web pages.

Each episode of *Serengeti* is high drama, following the daily lives of wild animals over a year. From Kali the lioness to Zalika the hyena, each species gets a unique

story as the series depicts challenges such as dealing with enemies or desperately searching for prey.

Serengeti was created and produced by Simon Fuller (“American Idol,” “So You Think You Can Dance”) and directed and produced by wildlife filmmaker John Downer (“Penguin: Spy in The Huddle”).

It aired on Discovery Channel in August and September, but viewers can still catch the series online at DiscoveryGo.



Wildlife Watch: DWARF MONGOUSES

When thinking of the carnivores in Africa, it’s easy to overlook the mongoose, and easier still to overlook the dwarf variety: the smallest carnivore on the continent. These tiny, social animals, measuring 7 to 11 inches and weighing less than a pound, are truly terrifying predators — if you’re an insect. Although known to devour small rodents or reptiles occasionally, they mainly consume insects, spiders, and scorpions.

There are two species of dwarf mongoose: the common and the desert dwarf mongoose. They have all the typical characteristics of the mongoose family, including long fluffy tails, and they are stocky with short, pointed muzzles.

Dwarf mongoose can be found throughout Africa. They live in female-led nomadic groups — ranging from 12 to 15 individuals plus extended family members — found in woodlands, savannahs, and thickets. Troops sleep in termite mounds at night, or if these preferred shelters aren’t available, will take cover in rock crevasses huddling close to one another for warmth.

Inquisitive predators, they spend their days foraging and taking turns as sentries — alerting the group of potential danger. A study done by Behavioral Ecology concluded that dwarf mongooses had general as well as specific alarm calls — depending on the predator, distance, and even elevation! Aside from humans, their natural enemies are snakes and birds of prey.



Dwarf mongooses have evolved a beneficial relationship with the African bird known as the hornbill. While foraging, it stirs up insects, rodents, and lizards, which the hornbill gladly snatches up. In turn, while the mongoose is feeding, the hornbill provides an extra set of eyes — warning its partner to any danger on land or in the sky.

AWF protects the dwarf mongoose, along with many other species, by protecting habitat and investing in eco-tourism enterprises. In Kenya, for example, AWF helped bring together community members and private investors to develop The Sanctuary at Ole Lentille, which provides sustainable tourism income for the community on a 20,000-acre conservancy. Such efforts allow these ferocious tiny predators to continue to thrive and play a vital role in maintaining the ecosystems in Africa.

DEATH BY HANGOVER

by Hans Imhof



Keith Markille

In countries including Vietnam and China, false beliefs in the medicinal properties of rhino horn, which is merely keratin like our fingernails, is threatening the rhinoceros's very existence.

The increase in rhino poaching in recent years has been shocking. In 2007, the country with the largest rhino population, South Africa, recorded only 13 poaching incidents. In 2013, poachers killed more than 1,000 rhinos there, and the carnage has remained intense since.

It's disheartening to realize that we've been here before. About 40 years ago there was an active rhino horn trade fueled by demand in Asia, Europe, the

U.S., and Yemen (which used horn for ornate dagger handles). "Those of us who fought that battle in the 80s came out thinking, 'We won that war,'" said AWF's Senior Vice President Craig Sholley. "Then 15 to 20 years later, suddenly there is a new demand, and we thought, 'What happened?' But it is a new market."

Today rhino horn demand is driving poaching rates to new levels. If this crisis continues, the African rhino could be

extinct within 20 years. Markets for rhino horn products — e.g., powder for medicine to bracelets, cups, and full horns — are most active in China and Vietnam.

ANCIENT OBSESSION

Human civilizations ranging from the ancient Greeks and Egyptians to empires during China's Warring States era to medieval European societies all desired rhino horn. Archaeologists have found

pottery shaped like rhino horns in the tomb of Hor-Aha, an Egyptian pharaoh who ruled around 3,000 B.C. Rhino-horn cups are mentioned in the Book of Songs, the oldest Chinese poetry collection (11th to 7th centuries B.C.), and rhino horn is referenced in Roman and Greek texts written between 400 B.C. and 250 A.D.

Around the same time that the Greeks and Romans were describing the rhino, Chinese armies were wearing rhino-hide armor. The Chinese would continue to hunt rhinos for their hides for centuries, up until the Tang dynasty between 618 and 907 A.D.

People also fashioned drinking cups out of horn, believing it had special properties that would cause liquid to foam in the presence of poison. From poison detection, it was a short walk to the belief that rhino horn has medicinal properties.

MYTHS MEET URBAN LEGENDS

Asian societies, by and large, did not forget these myths. In Eastern medicinal books dating back as far as the 3rd century, there are references to the magical properties of rhino horn. Authors ascribe two main attributes to the horn: detoxification and cooling. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the rhino horn is still considered a cure for fever.

Rhino horn — composed of keratin, the same material as our fingernails and hair — has never been proven to cure anything. Yet TCM holds that rhino horn treats extreme fevers and counteracts toxins. Many people believe rhino horn cures hangovers and cancer despite the absence of proof. The horns of these near-sighted animals are even used to increase sexual stamina for men.

Sadly, some people turn to rhino horn out of desperation, when diagnosed with terminal diseases and unable to access proven treatments. In Vietnam, a shortage of radiotherapy machines combined with the high rates of cancer (150,000 new cases per year) has led to a greater demand for rhino horn. In the mid-2000s, a rumor that a government official said rhino horn cured him of cancer spurred demand even more.



Larry Taxler

There are demand drivers beyond TCM, however. A survey targeting the primary rhino horn consumers in Vietnam — males from upper-class income groups in Vietnamese cities — found that only 22 percent of subjects used it for life-threatening diseases. Another study of the same target group, published in Consumption Markets & Culture, revealed less than 8 percent used it for health purposes.

RHINO HORNS IN BUSINESS: A TESTIMONY TO STATUS

In the wealthy circles in Vietnam, rhino horn is consumed to cure hangovers (33 and 47 percent of survey takers, respectively) and to detoxify the body (30 percent in both studies). Even though not all of the individuals surveyed believe in the "medicinal" power of the rhino horn, many used it because of peer pressure. Said the researchers: "[To] not participate in such networks may make business and political relationships more difficult in such a status-driven society."

Researchers often compare the profiles of rhino horn users to those of bushmeat consumers, noting how similar the two groups are. Despite the pangolin's rapidly declining population, status-driven individuals still consume pangolin meat. Such consumers often look for rare or unusual items to consume as a means of displaying their wealth.

A CALL FOR ACTION

Despite this concern, there are positive trends in the fight against rhino poaching. In 2018, the Vietnamese government increased the severity of punishments for breaking laws protecting endangered species. That year, 2018, also marked a decrease in poaching — the first year since 2013 that poachers killed fewer than 1,000 rhinos in South Africa.

To protect rhinos in Africa, AWF and its partners work on multiple fronts to "Stop the Killing, Stop the Trafficking, Stop the Demand." We recruit, train, and equip rangers to effectively fight poaching through eco-monitoring, anti-poaching patrols, and community engagement and sensitization. We support Kenya's Ol Pejeta, the largest black rhino sanctuary in east Africa.

AWF has also helped conduct awareness efforts in Asia to raise sensitivity to the plight of endangered species and the true price of products such as rhino horn "medicine."

Our efforts wouldn't be possible without the support and commitment of people like you. Thanks to your participation, we can help ensure that the next phony hangover cure does not spell the end of the African rhino.

Rhino horn belongs only to rhinos. SIGN AWF'S PLEDGE IF YOU AGREE.

We must fight to make one thing clearer than ever: Rhino horns are not for sale. Rhino horns cannot cure cancer. They do not cure hangovers. In fact, they cannot cure any ailments. Yet, demand for rhino horn persists, both for its perceived medicinal benefits and also as a symbol of high social status. Rhino horn is made of keratin – just like human nails – and is as effective at curing cancer as chewing on your own fingernails. It has no place in traditional medicine, or in the making of trinkets or ornamental carvings. It belongs on a rhino.

With less than 6,000 critically endangered black rhinos remaining, these magnificent animals are being driven to extinction. We cannot afford to lose anymore. But poachers, traffickers, and consumers don't agree – and it's up to us to stop them.

Stand tall to save Africa's rhinos by becoming one of 50,000 wildlife advocates to fight for these magnificent creatures every day. Add your name now!

AWF.ORG/RHINO-PLEDGE



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Did you know that all of your Amazon shopping can give back to conservation?

All you have to do is select African Wildlife Foundation as your charity by visiting awf.org/amazon-smile. Make sure you bookmark the link smile.amazon.com – and remember to always shop at smile.amazon.com to ensure your purchases can do the most good. Every time you shop, AmazonSmile gives back.

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Preschool Kids Fundraise for Wildlife

Leading up to Earth Day this year, Arizona preschool teacher Debra Hopkins inspired her students with lessons filled with African wildlife, including a mock safari for the kids. The 4- to 5-year-old preschoolers closed out their celebrations with a fundraiser and bake sale for AWF. These young wildlife lovers were so passionate about helping wildlife that they created baked goods, homemade cards, and other

handmade items to raise donations to save the animals they love. One student, Tyler even brought nickels for his entire class (you can see him proudly holding his contribution up front and center), to help kick off the fundraiser – and other students were so inspired they also brought in coins from their own piggybanks.

In total, these amazing preschoolers, their teacher, families and loved ones raised over \$2,300 toward their fundraiser. If you feel as inspired by them as we were, you can start your own fundraiser in honor of a holiday, birthday, special occasion, or other event in your life on fundraise.awf.org.

Start your fundraiser today:
fundraise.awf.org

