



# RHINO HORN DEMAND

Vietnam 2017

**WILDAID**



## ABOUT WILDAID

WildAid's mission is to end the illegal wildlife trade in our lifetimes by reducing demand through public awareness campaigns and providing comprehensive marine protection.

The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion per year and has drastically reduced many wildlife populations around the world. Just like the drug trade, law and enforcement efforts have not been able to resolve the problem. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent protecting animals in the wild, yet virtually nothing is spent on stemming the demand for wildlife parts and products. WildAid is the only organization with a mission focused on reducing the demand for these products, with the strong and simple message: **When the buying stops, the killing can too.** WildAid works with hundreds of Asian and Western political figures, celebrities and business leaders, including the Duke of Cambridge, Yao Ming, Jackie Chan, Li Bingbing and Sir Richard Branson, to dissuade people from purchasing endangered wildlife products. These public service messages and educational initiatives reach hundreds of millions of people per week in China alone through donated media space.

[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

## ABOUT AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Founded in 1961, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is a leading conservation organization focused solely on the African continent. AWF's programs and conservation strategies are based on sound science and designed to protect both the wild lands and wildlife of Africa and ensure a more sustainable future for Africa's people. Since its inception, AWF has protected endangered species and land, promoted conservation enterprises that benefit local African communities, and trained hundreds of African nationals in conservation—all to ensure the survival of Africa's unparalleled wildlife heritage.

[www.auf.org](http://www.auf.org)

## ABOUT CHANGE

Officially founded in 2013 by the first Vietnamese to set foot on Antarctica, CHANGE is an incredibly active environmental non-profit organization based in Ho Chi Minh City. CHANGE employs education and innovative communications to fight environmental degradation and climate change, reduce illegal wildlife demands and promote sustainability.

[www.changevn.org](http://www.changevn.org)

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WILDAID

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Africa's wild rhino population faces a severe poaching crisis driven by growing demand for their horns in China and Vietnam. In South Africa, 1,054 rhinos were poached for their horns in 2016<sup>1</sup>, a statistic that declined for the second consecutive year, but when compared to just 13 rhinos killed in 2007 remains unacceptably high. Alarming, world famous safari destination Kruger National Park experienced a sharp increase in poaching arrests.

In 2014, WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation, and the local Vietnamese NGO CHANGE launched a campaign to reduce the demand for rhino horn in Vietnam. Rhino horn is primarily consumed in China and Vietnam for its supposed – and unfounded – health benefits such as curing cancer, increasing virility, and even as a hangover cure. Having launched a similar campaign in China in 2013, WildAid is working to raise awareness of the rhino poaching crisis, support Vietnamese lawmakers in banning the rhino trade and increasing domestic enforcement efforts, with the goal of ultimately reducing demand for rhino horn in Vietnam.

In 2014 and 2016, the campaign partners and the Nielsen Corporation conducted surveys of residents in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to gain insights into participants' awareness and beliefs about rhino horn and attitudes toward the trade.

The 2014 survey showed that prior to our campaigning, the majority of Vietnamese residents believed that rhino horn had medicinal benefits. The 2016 findings showed a 67% decline in the number of people who personally believe that it has medical effects. Just under 10% of respondents now believe that rhino horn can cure cancer, down from more than a third two years ago. A separate 2016 Humane Society International survey of six Vietnamese cities also showed a 45% decrease in the proportion of people believing that rhino horn has medicinal value, compared to 2013.

Knowledge that rhino horn is composed of substances found in hair and fingernails – the main message of WildAid's wide-reaching Nail Bitters campaign – has increased drastically; only 19% knew in 2014, compared to 68% in 2016 (a 258% increase). In China, similar improvements in public awareness were documented in a 2014 WildAid survey.<sup>2</sup>

More than half of respondents are now aware that rhinos are killed for their horns: 54% in 2016 versus 31% in 2014, a 74% increase. Further highlighting the impact of our campaign, 89% of people who have heard rhino protection messages recognized WildAid's slogan and 99% agree the messages are useful and discourage people from purchasing rhino horn.

IN 2016, APPROXIMATELY

  
**1,054 RHINOS**  
WERE KILLED IN SOUTH AFRICA  
FOR THEIR HORNS

A 2016 study published in SWARA magazine<sup>3</sup> found that wholesale rhino horn prices had decreased by half in both China and Vietnam. Horn was widely reported to be selling in the countries for US\$65,000/kg in 2012-13, but declined to US\$30-35,000/kg in 2015. An Al Jazeera report similarly found that the price in China declined even further during 2016 to under US\$30,000/kg<sup>4</sup>, placing it below the price of gold (US\$34,000/kg).

In another positive development, Vietnam's National Assembly is currently revising its penal code to strengthen penalties for wildlife crime offenses. The code is slated for ratification in 2017 and will increase the risk traders take when dealing in illegal wildlife products as well as assist enforcement agencies in the prosecution of suspects.

However, further complicating matters and undermining this progress, the South African government announced plans to permit domestic trade<sup>5</sup> in rhino horns. International trade is not currently permitted under international treaty rules. In the past, legalization of ivory sales stimulated elephant poaching as illegal tusks could easily be laundered. WildAid is concerned, therefore, that this announcement may cause a resurgence of rhino poaching.

Our surveys of Vietnamese residents underline the potential for changing attitudes and behaviors by increasing awareness of the poaching crisis and displacing the idea that rhino horn can be used to treat illnesses. If we can extinguish the demand in consuming nations and ensure enforcement is applied consistently, the profit incentives for poachers and traders will disappear. Only after the horn market collapses will Africa's rhinos be safe from the threat of poaching.

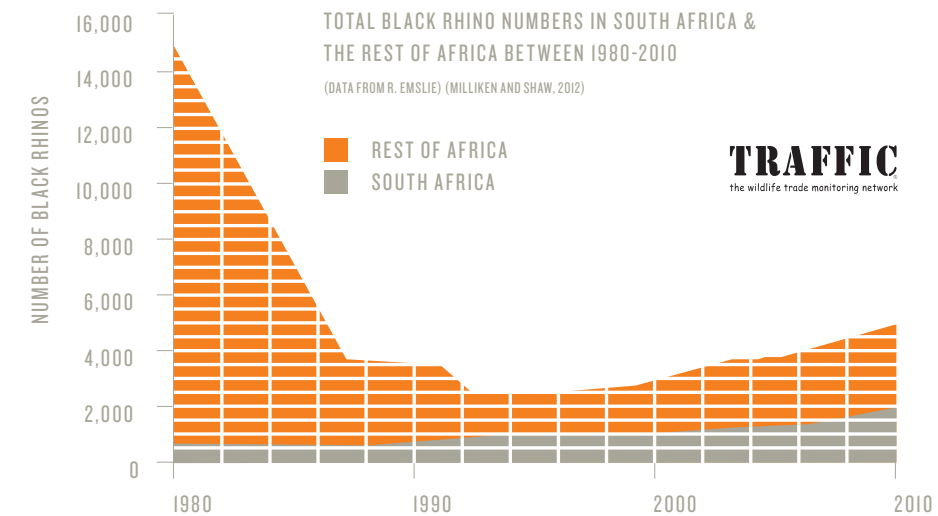
1. "Minister Molewa highlights progress on Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros." Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 2017.  
2. "Rhino Horn Demand, 2012-2014." WildAid, 2015.  
3. Vigne, Lucy and Martin, Esmond. "Money and Poaching: High rhino prices drive poaching." SWARA, 2016.  
4. All Jazeera Investigative Unit. "The abusive and bloody business of rhino horn." Al Jazeera, 2016.  
5. "South Africa Stuns the Conservation World by Proposing to Export Rhino Horns." WildAid, 2017.



# THREATS TO RHINOS

The rhinoceros has existed for over 50 million years, and modern rhino species have been in existence for over 15 million years.<sup>6</sup> Many rhino species are extinct, and only five species remain. Today, the global rhino population has fallen from an estimated 75,000 in the early 1970s to less than 30,000.<sup>7</sup>

Several hundred thousand rhinos once roamed across Africa. Between 1970 and 1995, the black rhino population declined from 65,000 to 2,410.<sup>8</sup> All rhino species are critically endangered, except the Southern White Rhino subspecies, which recovered from less than 100 in the early 1900s to 20,400 individuals today.<sup>9</sup>



6. Prothero, D. "Fifty Million Years of Rhinoceros Evolution. *Proceedings of the International Rhino Conference, San Diego Zoological Society.*" San Diego, 1993.
7. Leader-Williams, N. "Regulation and Protection: Successes and Failures of Rhinoceros Conservation." Rhino Resource Center, 2002.
8. Emslie, R. and Brooks, M. "African Rhino. *Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan.*" IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, 1999.
9. "TRAFFIC's Engagement on African Rhinoceros Conservation and the Global Trade in Rhinoceros Horn." TRAFFIC, 2013.

## CURRENT POPULATION OF ALL FIVE RHINO SPECIES

### JAVAN RHINO

(*Rhinoceros sondaicus*)

Fewer than 50

### SUMATRAN RHINO

(*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*)

Fewer than 200

### INDIAN OR ASIAN ONE-HORNED RHINO

(*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

Approximately 3,000

### BLACK RHINO

(*Diceros bicornis*)

Fewer than 5,000

### WHITE RHINO

(*Ceratotherium simum*)

Estimated 20,405 (northern & southern subspecies combined)<sup>10</sup>

## THREATS

While most endangered species are under threat from habitat loss due to encroaching human development, African rhinos face only one major threat: poaching, specifically for their horns. Rhino horns are actually compressed hair and composed primarily of keratin, the same material as human fingernails.

### TRADE IN VIETNAM AND CHINA

In 1993, as a response to an international trade ban to protect wild rhinos, the Chinese government banned the use of rhino horn in traditional Chinese medicine, removing rhino horn from the Chinese pharmacopoeia administered by the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China. Yet rhino horn is still in demand for use within Traditional Chinese Medicine across China and Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup> Western pharmaceutical studies concluded that, while in high dosage rhino horn might slightly reduce fever, it is not worth pursuing as a medicine, particularly because acetaminophen works more effectively.<sup>12,13</sup> However, demand for its use as a traditional medicine and a speculative asset in Asia appears to have grown in recent years. People that use rhino horn believe it helps relieve fever, improve sexual competency, detoxify the body, and, in recent years, serve as a magical cure for cancer and hangovers in Vietnam, with no conclusive medical scientific evidence.<sup>14</sup> Rhino horn is also used to demonstrate affluence and social status both as a party drug and as a gift to important political officials.<sup>15</sup>

The need for a magical cancer cure is likely the result of the 150,000 new cases diagnosed in Vietnam annually, combined with a shortage of radiotherapy machines in the country. The long waitlist for radiotherapy means many people die before they can be treated.<sup>16</sup>

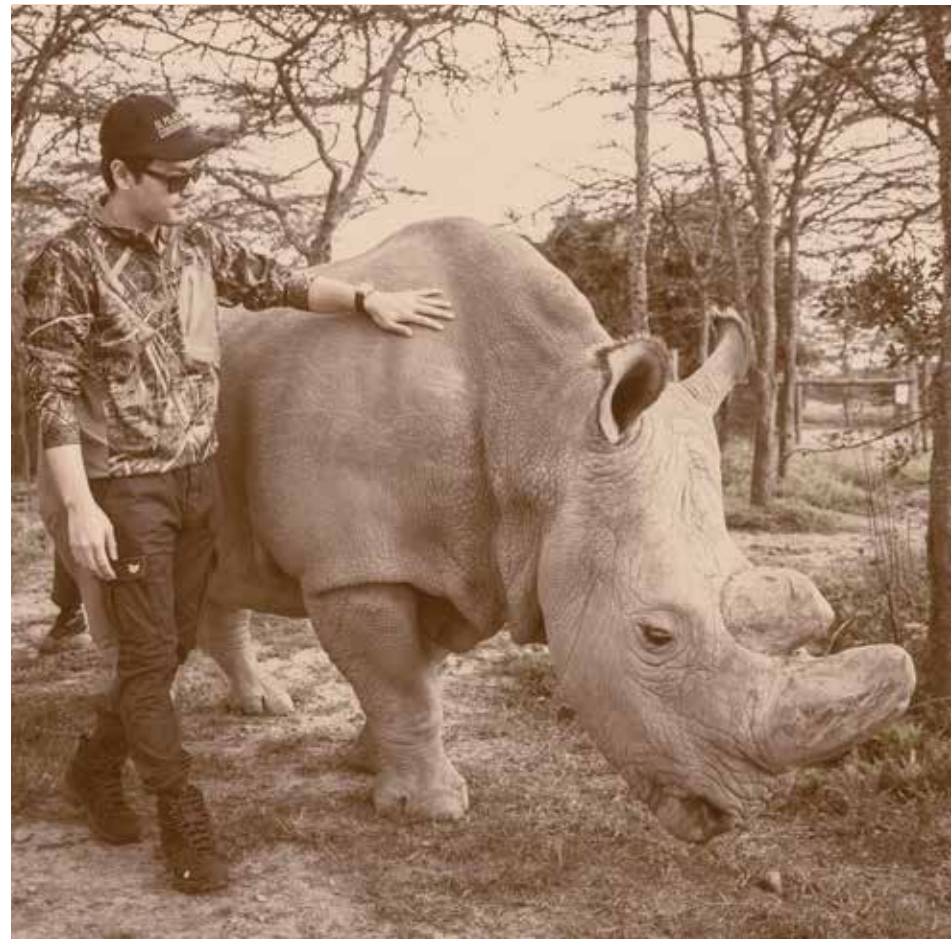
Vietnam has been identified as “the principal end-use market” for rhino horn by the IUCN, TRAFFIC, and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups.<sup>17</sup> A survey by World Wildlife Fund and TRAFFIC in 2013 found that “educated, successful and powerful individuals are the main market for horns.” Of those surveyed who are not currently using rhino horn, “16% are ‘intenders’: individuals who said they wanted to buy or consume rhino horn in the future.”<sup>18</sup>

### LEGAL PROTECTION

In response to rhino poaching, the first international ban on the commercial trade in rhino products was enacted in 1975 by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). However, some countries were allowed to trade live rhinos and trophy hunt. All remaining rhino species were placed on Appendix I of CITES listings by 1977. Appendix I species are prohibited from being traded internationally for commercial purposes. In 1994, following a significant population increase, the South African population of southern white rhino was down-listed to Appendix II

Species placed on Appendix II are identified as not currently threatened by extinction, but may become threatened if trade is not strictly regulated.<sup>19</sup>

While the ban prohibited international trade in theory, domestic sales in Asia were still legal and continued with rhino horn remaining widely available through traditional medicine outlets. Major consumers in the 1980s included China, Taiwan and South Korea for its use in medicine, and the Middle



East, particularly Yemen, for the production of dagger handles.<sup>20</sup> Growing economies ensured that more consumers could afford rhino horn. Rhino populations declined as poaching for their horns increased into the early 1990s.

In 1993, CITES and the international community exerted considerable pressure on consumer countries to ban the trade and to ensure that these bans were adequately enforced. The State Council of China issued the ‘Notice on Prohibiting the Trade of Rhino Horns and Tiger Bones’ and publicized the prosecution of illegal rhino horn dealers. The bans in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, combined with increased public awareness campaigns, reduced demand for rhino horn and reports of poaching greatly decreased.

For 15 years, rhino populations in Africa began to recover, but in 2008 poaching rose again.<sup>21</sup> South Africa had remained relatively untouched by poaching and was successful in rebuilding the Southern White rhino population from around 100 individuals in 1895 to over 20,400 today.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, it has now become the center of the poaching crisis. Despite efforts by CITES in 2010 to increase protection for rhinos—as member countries committed to increased law enforcement, anti-poaching initiatives, and trade controls—448 rhinos were poached in South Africa in 2011, compared with just 13 in 2007. In 2012, the number of rhinos killed for their horns in South Africa rose to 668 and in 2014 South Africa lost a record 1,215 rhinos to poaching, 60% of which were killed in Kruger National Park.<sup>23</sup> The

rise in poaching has been attributed to increased trade links, increased affluence in Asian countries, consuming nations’ growing presence in Africa, involvement of organized crime, and the emergence of Vietnam as a new major importer.

Since 2013, CITES member governments have issued several directions to Vietnam with respect to the development and implementation of its rhino regulations and the enhancement of its enforcement effort. Vietnam was specifically requested to improve the management of imported rhino horn trophies and enhance investigations and prosecutions of Vietnamese nationals suspected of illegally trading in rhino horn.<sup>24</sup>

10. “African rhinos won’t hold out for much longer, IUCN experts warn.” IUCN, 2013.

11. “The Journal of Chinese Medicine.” jcm.co.uk, 2014.

12. Beech, H. “Killing Fields: Africa’s Rhinos Under Threat.” TIME Magazine, 2011.

13. Nowell, Kristin. “Species trade and conservation, Rhinoceroses: Assessment of Rhino Horn as a Medicine.” CITES, 2012.

14. Miliken, T. and Shaw, J. “The South Africa–Vietnam Rhino Horn Trade Nexus.” TRAFFIC, 2012.

15. “Supply and demand: the illegal rhino horn trade.” Save the Rhino, 2011.

16. Potterton, Louise. “Access to Affordable Radiation Therapy Saves Lives.” IAEA Bulletin 51–1, 2010.

17. Julian Rademeyer. “Vietnam denies rhino horn charges.” Mail & Guardian, 2013.

18. “Rhino Horn Consumers. Who Are They?” TRAFFIC, 2013.

19. “IUCN Red List.” IUCN, 2014.

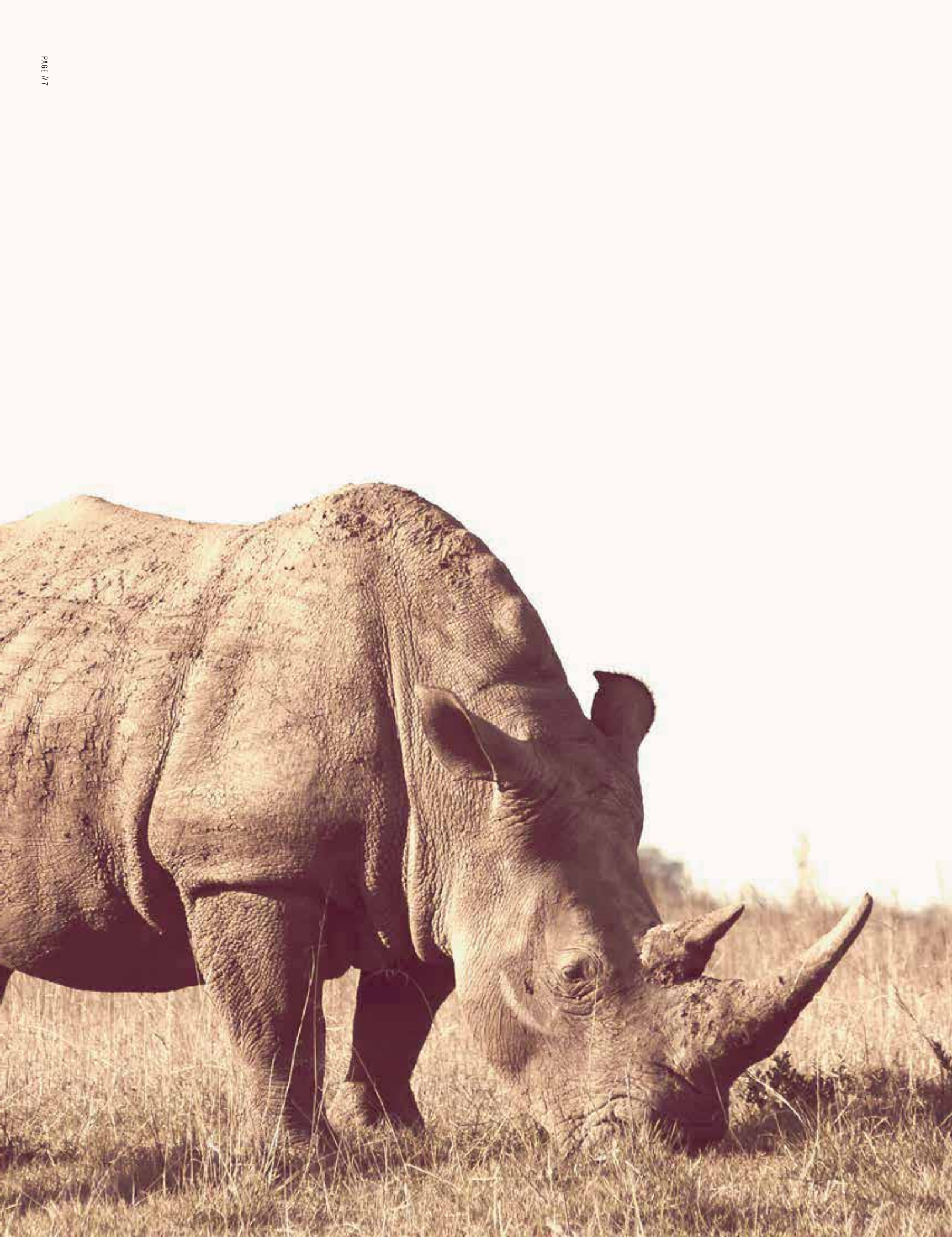
20. Gwin, Peter. “Rhino Wars: Rivaling the price of gold on the black market, rhino horn is at the center of a bloody poaching battle.” National Geographic, 2012.

21. “TRAFFIC’s Engagement on African Rhinoceros Conservation and the Global Trade in Rhinoceros Horn.” TRAFFIC, 2013.

22. Ibid.

23. “Update on rhino poaching statistics.” Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 2014.

24. “Governments Shield Rhinos, Elephants From Illegal Trade.” Environment News Service, 2013.



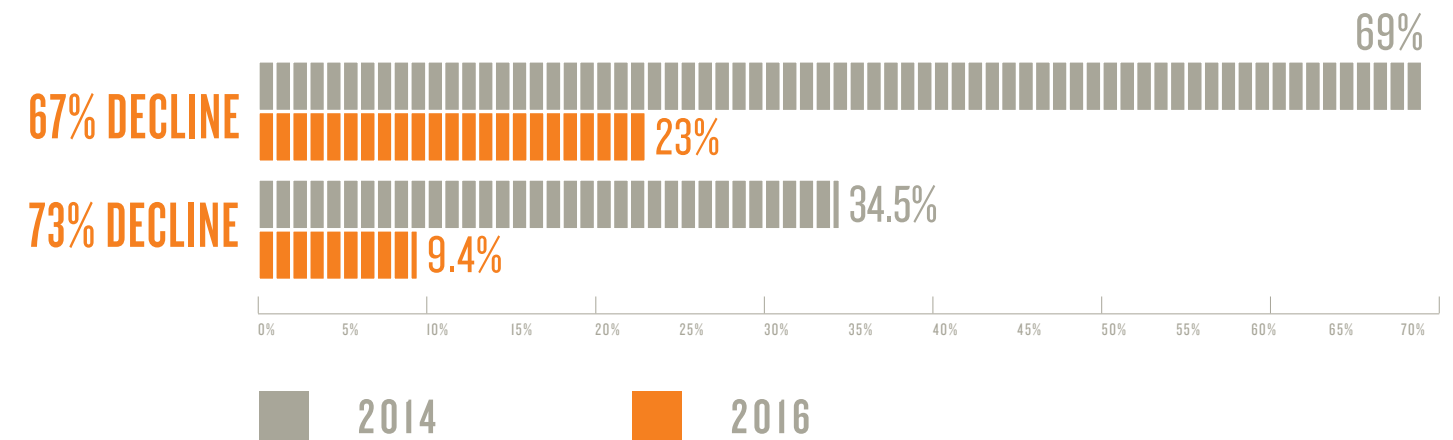
# 2014 & 2016 VIETNAM RHINO HORN AWARENESS & ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

In March 2014, WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation, and the local Vietnamese NGO CHANGE launched a campaign to reduce the demand for rhino horn in Vietnam. Having launched a similar campaign in China in 2013, WildAid began working to raise awareness of the rhino poaching crisis, support Vietnamese lawmakers in banning the rhino horn trade and increasing domestic enforcement efforts, and ultimately reduce demand for rhino horn in Vietnam.

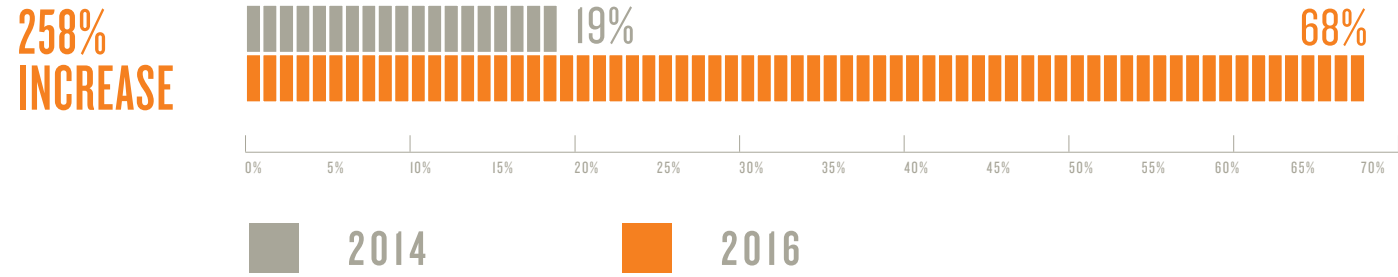
In November 2014, the campaign partners and the Nielsen Corporation interviewed 400 residents in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh to gauge levels of awareness about rhinos and the horn trade, better understand Vietnam's rhino horn consumers, and inform strategy to deter consumption. In 2016, we replicated our baseline survey of the same cities to assess changes in attitudes and beliefs and to measure the impact of our campaign.

## SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

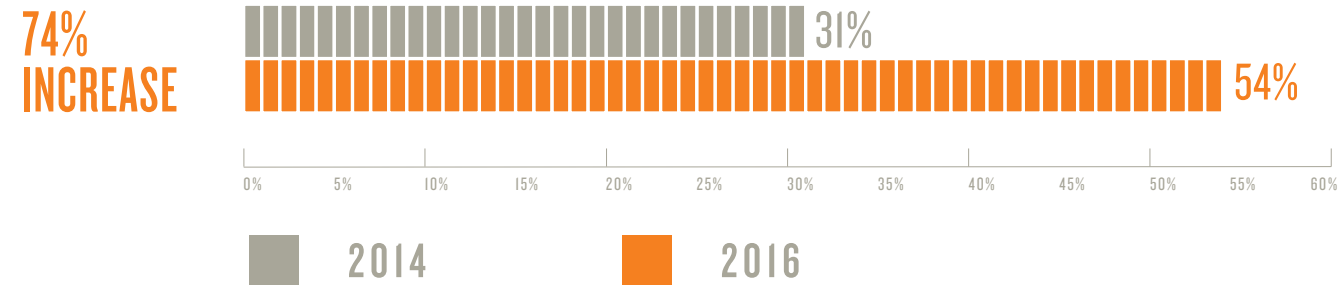
- 1. **Belief in the medical efficacy of rhino horn dropped by 67% between 2014 and 2016, from 69% to just 23%. Only 9.4% of respondents believe rhino horn can cure cancer, down from 34.5% in 2014.**



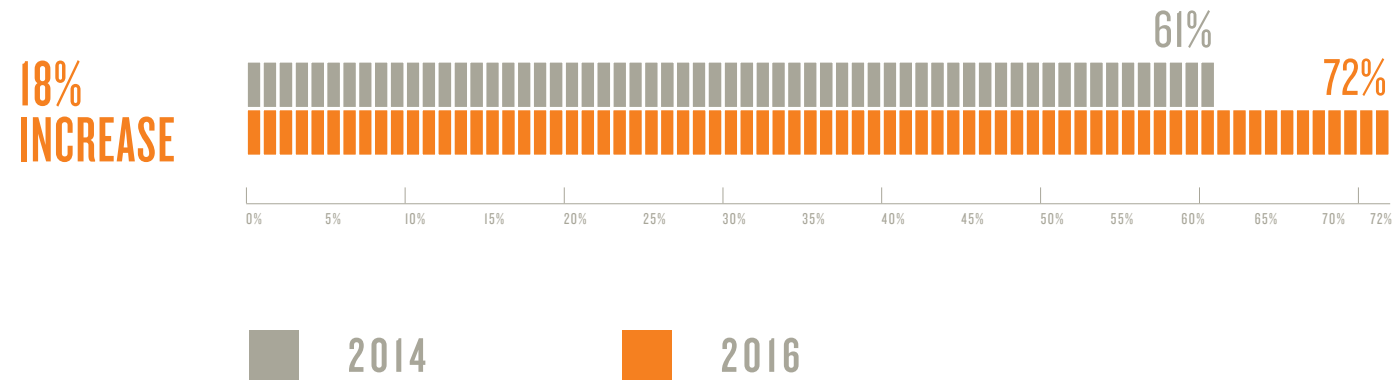
2. The understanding that rhino horn is composed of substances found in hair and fingernails increased by 258% between 2014 and 2016 from just 19% to 68%



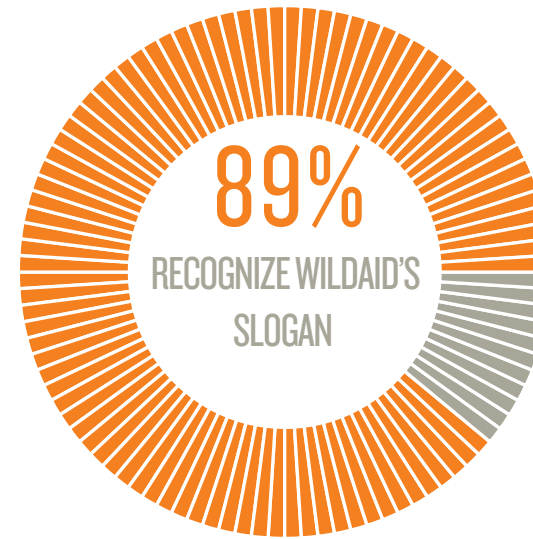
3. More than half of respondents are now aware that rhinos are killed for their horns: 54% in 2016 versus 31% in 2014, a 74% increase.



4. Respondents have shown a stronger intent to not buy rhino horn in the future (72% in 2016 versus 61% in 2014).



5. 89% of people who have heard rhino protection messages recognized WildAid's slogan and 99% agree the messages are useful and discourage people from purchasing rhino horn.



Baby Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)



# WILDAID



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