



WWF

2017

WANTED

TOP 10 MOST WANTED Endangered Species in the Markets of the Golden Triangle



THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

is a global hub for trade in some of the world's most endangered wildlife species. Perfectly situated where

Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and China come together, the area is home to large casinos, shopping malls and local markets that attract tourists from around the region, especially China. It has become a haven for gambling, prostitution and illicit trade in many goods, including wildlife. WWF has identified ten of the most widely traded endangered species that can be found in the markets of the Golden Triangle -- species that could go extinct if this trade persists.

TIGER

1 If the wildlife trade crisis had a poster child, tigers would be a leading candidate. In the markets of the Golden Triangle, every part of a tiger is for sale. Captured from the wild or raised behind bars, the king of the jungle is being sold as decoration, medicine and even wine.

This region--where about 200 wild tigers are thought to live--has become a hub of tiger trade, especially in the markets of the Golden Triangle. **Many of Asia's poached and farmed tigers pass through the Golden Triangle states, where Mong La market is especially notorious for tiger trade.** Tourists from nearby China are keen to buy traditional medicines with tiger products, driven more by the motivation of displaying new wealth or making profit than their largely unproven medicinal benefits.



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A complicating factor in stopping illegal tiger trade in the region is the existence of tiger tourist attractions that can be fronts for illegal activities. Following the recent raid on Thailand's infamous "tiger temple," WWF is calling on governments across Asia to investigate and close all tiger farms to ensure that the tigers do not become part of the illegal wildlife trade.

2 The consequences of ivory trade in Asia are felt strongly half a world away in Africa, where elephants are being slaughtered at increasingly alarming rates. Asian elephants are listed by IUCN as Endangered, however much of the ivory being sold in Asian ivory markets is smuggled from Africa. Illegal ivory can be found for sale throughout the region, including in every market in the Golden Triangle. Recently, Laos was identified as world's fastest growing ivory market, with Chinese visitors making up 80% of sales*. A troubling new trend



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has also emerged in Myanmar, where poached elephants are being skinned to meet demand for elephant skin usage in traditional medicine, driving an increase in poaching of wild Asian elephants in Myanmar. In the markets of the Golden Triangle, almost every part of an elephant was found for sale, including teeth, hair, bones, tails, trunks, ivory, and even skin for consumption in restaurants as a cure for stomach ailments.

ELEPHANT

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>\$4 MILLION

worth of ivory and pangolin products
on display in Mong La market



© WWF-GREATER MEKONG



Many of Asia's **poached and farmed tigers** pass through Golden Triangle states, where **Mong La market** is especially notorious for tiger trade.

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WILDLIFE CRIME

is the fourth-most lucrative illegal business

Globally



3 Though many people have never even heard of them, demand in Asia has led to pangolins being named **the most trafficked animals in the world**. They are in high demand in China and Vietnam, where their meat is considered a delicacy, and pangolin scales are used in traditional medicine and folk remedies to treat a range of ailments from asthma to rheumatism and arthritis.



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All eight pangolin species are protected under national and international laws but that is not stopping the massive international illegal trade in pangolins, which has increased in recent years because of rapidly growing demand. Based on reported seizures between 2011 and 2013, an estimated 117,000-234,000 pangolins were killed, which represents only the tip of the trade. Experts believe that seizures represent as little as 10 percent of the actual volume traded.

PANGOLIN



© BRENT STIRTON / GETTY IMAGES / WWF-UK

RHINO

The single greatest threat African rhinos face is poaching for their horns. With poachers killing rhinos at a rate of three per day in 2014, the threats they face feel closer than ever, but the reason behind this violence lies thousands of miles away in Asia.

4

Powdered horn is used in traditional Asian medicine as an unproven cure for a range of illnesses, from hangovers to fevers and even cancer. But the current surge in poaching has been primarily driven by demand for horn in Vietnam, where rhino horn is bought and consumed purely as a symbol of wealth in addition to its usage in traditional medicine. WWF has organized awareness raising campaigns calling attention to the fact that rhino horns are made from the same material as human toenails and have no true medicinal value.



© MICHEL GUNTHER / WWF

BEARS

Poaching and illegal trade of bears, driven largely by the demand for bile used in traditional medicine and folk remedies

continues unabated across Asia on a large scale. In the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone, Asiatic Black Bear farms house individual tiny cages for each bear in which bile is extracted from their gall bladders. Most bear farms do not appear to house captive breeding programs, suggesting they rely on bears captured from the wild.

Domestic trade of bear bile is legal under strict regulations within mainland China and Japan but is illegal in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, while international trade is not allowed anywhere. Asiatic Black Bears (predominant in this trade) and Sun Bears are both listed in Appendix I of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which prohibits international commercial trade in the species, their parts and derivatives.

5

SEROW

The serow is another lesser-known species falling victim to trafficking for their meat and body parts used for “medicine.” All serow species are listed in CITES appendix 1, meaning they are among the most threatened species and all trade is banned. Native to countries across Asia, including all countries in the Greater Mekong region, the serow is a medium-sized goat-like animal that prefers to live in remote mountainous areas that keep them better protected from predators.

Trade in all parts of the animal has been seen in markets and intercepted at customs checkpoints in the region. Surveys in the Golden Triangle found serow horns, skulls, forelegs, heads, gallbladders and medicinal oil being sold in nine different market areas in both individual stores and out in the open. Outside of the Golden Triangle region, instances of live individuals for sale have been noted in Vietnam

while their bones and other body parts are prized for traditional medicines in Laos. Their inaccessible habitat areas are their main defense against more widespread trade.



© GERALD S. CUBITT / WWF

The world's largest species of cattle is under threat from those who think their impressive set of horns looks better mounted on a wall.

Gaur can be found across the Greater Mekong region, particularly thriving in protected areas. This gaur (right) was photographed by a camera trap in Mondulkiri Protected Forest in the Eastern Plains Landscape in Cambodia. While populations are stable within these protected areas, species numbers are declining globally. Hunting is considered a major driver of this decline, along with habitat loss, which is an issue even in the protected areas in the Greater Mekong region.

Surveys of the markets of the Golden triangle found gaur products in six different markets selling horns, gallbladders for medical purposes and whole heads as trophies.

GAUR



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What distinguishes the helmeted hornbill from other species from the same family--and ultimately has led to their dramatic decline in population--is the solid composition of their casque (the helmet-like structure on the head) that makes it ideal for carving. These carvings are especially prized in China, where they are an alternative to elephant ivory carvings.

Listed as critically endangered on IUCN's Red List, their population is declining due to steadily increasing hunting pressures. After populations in Sumatra were decimated due to Chinese demand for casques, fears are increasing that they may disappear from other parts of their range, including in the Greater Mekong region.

Investigations into trade in Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia indicate that poaching of helmeted hornbills is the work of organized gangs.

HELMETED HORNBILL



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LEOPARDS Although leopards were once widely distributed across Southeast Asia, they have been driven from much of their original range due to habitat loss and poaching. In the markets of the Golden Triangle, leopard products including whole skins, pieces of skin and skulls are openly for

9 sale. Though it can be difficult to determine where and what species the leopard parts are originating from, surveys have seen clouded leopards being traded in particularly high numbers in the markets of the Golden Triangle.



© WIL LITUP / WWF

TURTLES An array of turtles and tortoises can be found for sale in the markets of the Golden Triangle, both alive and as decorative objects and food. Market surveys found softshell (pictured left), big headed, box, and Vietnamese pond turtles, as well as impressed tortoises. Softshell turtles and

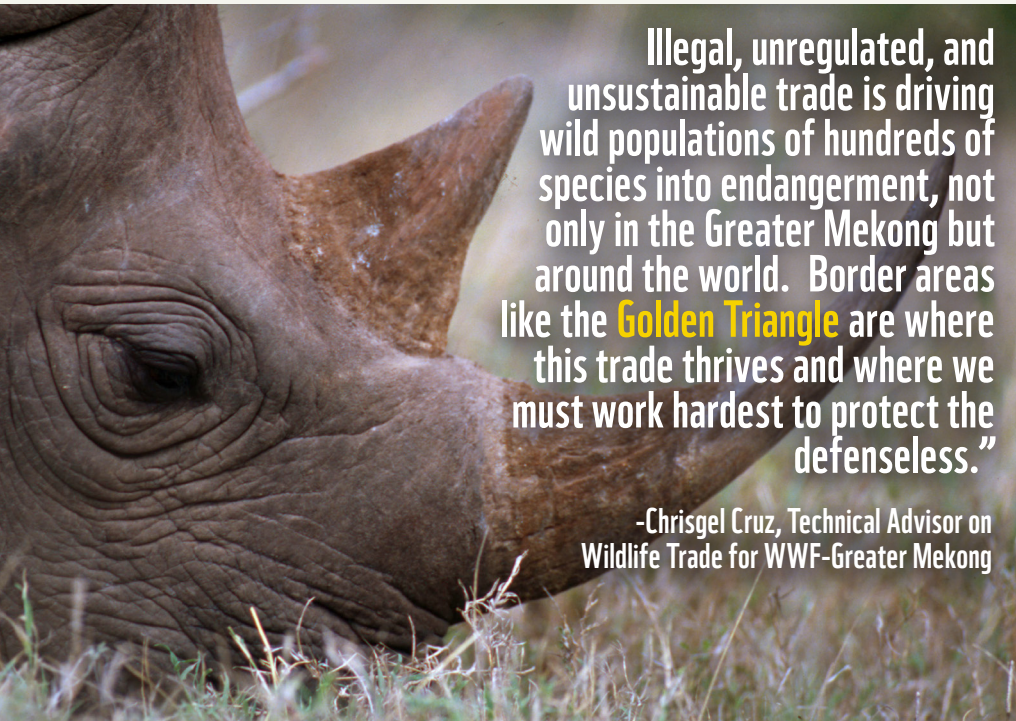
10 Asian box turtles (individual species vary between vulnerable and endangered) as well as impressed tortoises (vulnerable) are often traded as live animals to eventually be consumed as meat.



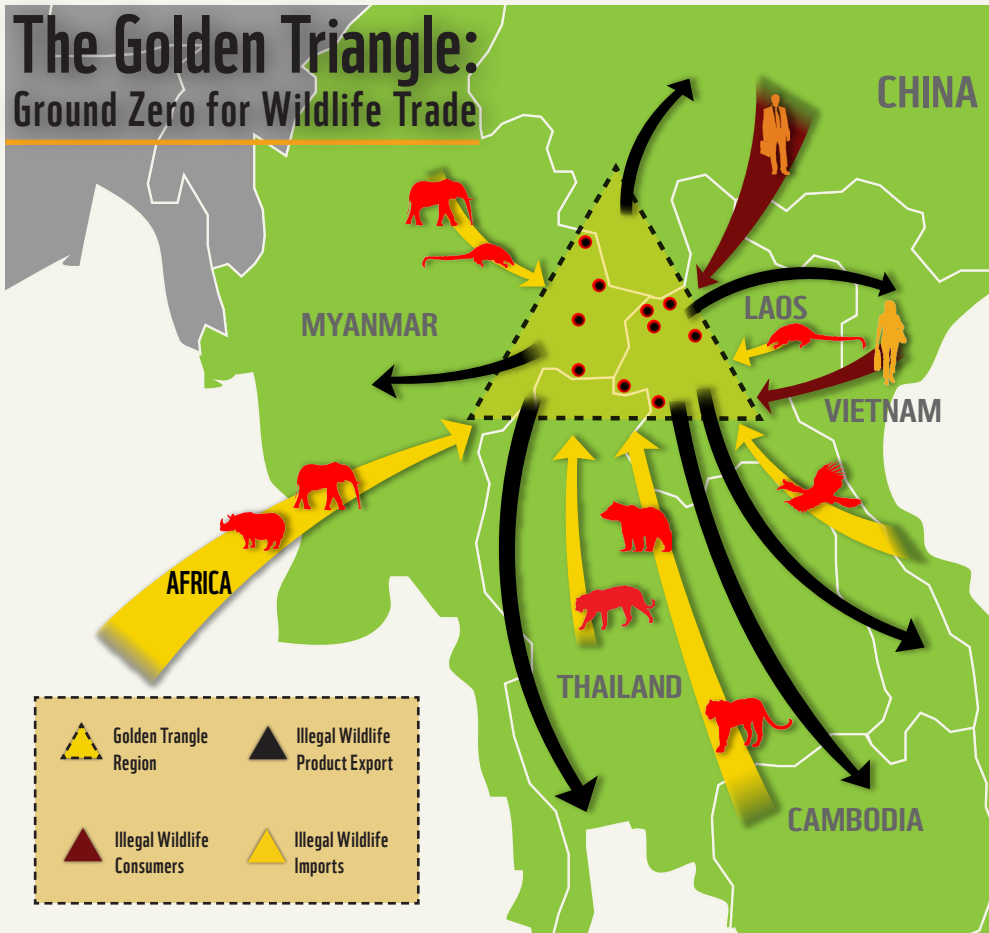
© WWF-INDONESIA / IHWAN RAFINA

Illegal, unregulated, and unsustainable trade is driving wild populations of hundreds of species into endangerment, not only in the Greater Mekong but around the world. Border areas like the **Golden Triangle** are where this trade thrives and where we must work hardest to protect the defenseless."

-Chrisgel Cruz, Technical Advisor on Wildlife Trade for WWF-Greater Mekong



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WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

INCREASE ENFORCEMENT

Often, the illicit activities occurring in the markets of the Golden Triangle are known to governments and law enforcement officials, but when traders and poachers are caught they may only receive a virtual slap on the wrist or a small fine. We need to ensure that the consequences for participating in this trade are enough to deter poachers, traders and buyers.

WWF partners with a wide range of organisations to share data, coordinate action and push for government actions. WWF also works to ensure national wildlife protection legislation is strengthened and law enforcement systems are improved. This includes helping establish National Coordination Committees (with inter-ministerial and NGO presence) for responding to reports of illegal wildlife trade in the Golden Triangle.

SUPPORT RANGERS

Rangers work tirelessly to watch over some of the most endangered wildlife on the planet, like tigers, elephants and rhinos. Many of these animals are among the most widely targeted by poachers for the illegal wildlife trade, and rangers constantly put their lives on the line while trying to keep them safe.

As the first line of defense for animals that end up traded in the markets of the Golden Triangle, rangers need a lot of support. This means not only ensuring they have basic equipment such as backpacks and boots, but also high tech GPS devices, software and computers to match the sophistication of the organized criminal gangs involved in the trade. Finally, they must be respected and financially supported by their governments while national laws against poaching must be enforced.



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CLOSE MARKETS

The wide open markets of the Golden Triangle are a symbol of how rampant and free flowing the trade in illegal wildlife has become. As long as these markets remain open, demand for wildlife products will continue to drive poaching across the globe.

A combined effort is needed between WWF, regional Governments, NGOs and international partners on an ambitious, coordinated strategy to finally close this deadly gateway and give hope for the Greater Mekong's world renowned wildlife species. Our goal is to decrease trade in endangered species in the Golden Triangle by 33% by 2018 and to close 20 priority markets in the region by 2022.

ASIA SAYS NO!

All of these species are under threat because of demand for animal products in Asia. They are being taken out of their homes and sold openly in the markets of the Golden Triangle, where punishments for illegal trade are insufficient or nonexistent.

WWF is determined to flip the script by sending a clear message that **"Asia Says No"** to illegal wildlife trade. Ending open sales of endangered species in markets like the Golden Triangle is the first step toward protecting species around the world from poaching and eventual extinction.

Protecting animals every step of the way, beginning with improving ranger capacity on the front lines to closing markets and increasing enforcement, is a critical step in reducing supply to these markets, while engaging groups that are responsible for purchasing these goods is the key to ending demand.

WWF is calling on all stakeholders to come together with the goal of closing 20 illegal wildlife markets by 2020 in order to show the world that these species are more valuable alive than dead.



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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org

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*Note: species classification information courtesy IUCN