

THE
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Editor's note

2013: What a year!

I think 2013 has been a significant year in the fight against wildlife crime. The issue has truly gone global, gaining the attention of President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, as well as the Royals. 2013 was the 40th anniversary of CITES and the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The Philippines and the U.S. destroyed their ivory stockpiles, and France says it will do the same. Kenya's President signed a new law which will hand down strong punishments to rhino horn and ivory traffickers. Nepal can be proud of another calendar year without losing a single rhino to the illegal trade. The long-awaited expansion of Javan rhino habitat in Indonesia is happening. World Rhino Day and World Pangolin Day both enjoyed unprecedented popularity. Mainstream media even took notice of pangolins this year!

But with wildlife crime in the spotlight, criminals are working harder. New smuggling routes, as-yet-unexploited trade loopholes, bigger bribes, and a proliferation of online trade all come to mind. So we'll be keeping an eye out for unscrupulous players hiding behind the "sustainable utilization" cloak. We'll be working on "mainstreaming" wildlife crime, sensitizing legal teams and the media to wildlife crime, and publicizing instances in which countries fail to comply with their obligations as CITES signatories.

And I'd like to say thanks to this issue's contributors: Sal Amato, Susie Watts, Astrid Andersson, Andy Larson, and Melinda MacInnis. You guys rock!

I'm looking forward to fighting the good fight and building on the successes of this year for an even stronger 2014!

Enjoy!
Rhishia



In Nairobi: INTERPOL-UNEP Conference

by Salvatore Amato

The International Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee Conference, hosted by INTERPOL and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), kicked off on November 4, 2013, with over 560 registered participants representing governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations from more than 80 different countries.

The full roster of events began with encouraging news from the Environmental Crime Programme, who reported a recent elevation to a sub-directorate level within the INTERPOL organization. This elevation to an Environmental Security Sub-directorate is in response to the direct recognition that environmental crime is a serious form of organized crime on par with other forms of transnational crime including trafficking in narcotics and firearms, as well as terrorism. The sub-directorate is currently organized under four major crime areas with projects and operations coordinated within each. These specialized crime areas are; Wildlife (Projects Predator, Wisdom and Ursa), Forestry (Project Leaf), Fisheries (Project Scale) and Environmental Quality (Project Eden).



Also on the first day, the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group held its 24th meeting since formation in 1992. The working groups Chair, Klairoong Poonpon (Thailand) kicked off the meeting with an update on the four main focus areas agreed upon by the group: wildlife forensics, illegal trade in wildlife on the internet, illegal trade in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn, and illegal logging. Updates were also provided by individual project coordinators.

Dr. William Clark (INTERPOL) provided an update for Project Wisdom which was formed to address alarming levels of crime involving elephants and rhinos. Stating that “poaching and trafficking in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn have surpassed the capacity of law enforcement to address it,” Dr. Clark called for broader involvement by partner organizations recognizing that this was a problem that was going to take all of us to solve. Dr. Clark did report successes in specific multinational task force operations like Operation Wendi and Operation Wildpath that resulted in significant arrests and seizures of contraband wildlife and firearms. Dr. Clark

also reported the deployment of three incident response teams to Togo, Nepal and Singapore in response to requests for assistance from those member countries.

Ms. Ioana Botezatu (INTERPOL) provided an update for Project Predator which was developed to support and enhance law enforcement capacity in tiger-range countries to protect and conserve wild tigers. Project Predator’s efforts also extend to all Asian “big cats” and recently further extended its reach with inclusion of the snow leopard range countries Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Objectives of the project include: encourage communication, cooperation and collaboration with respect to intelligence exchange, cross-border investigations and training; contribute to the apprehension of criminals and organized groups; and develop a global picture of the criminal activity affecting the ongoing conservation of tigers and Asian big cats. In 2012 and 2013 the Operation conducted 5 training and needs assessment workshops and seminars in Nepal, China, India and Thailand.

Mr. Richard Charette (INTERPOL) provided an update for Project Ursa, developed to address the illegal trade in bear and bear parts and products. Specifically, Project Ursa focuses on illegal hunting of bears, the illegal trade in bear parts and products, as well as illegal captive establishments. Similar to the other projects, Project Ursa’s objectives are to improve and increase intelligence capability by law enforcement agencies, build law enforcement capacity to address these crimes, conduct specific operations and assist member countries in an advisory capacity as needed.



“As a former member of the INTERPOL wildlife crimes working group, I found it invaluable to reconnect with international colleagues. It was exciting to learn of new developments and future initiatives being contemplated by the working groups, as well as the role NGOs — such as Annamiticus — can take in assisting the international community in taking on the growing problem of wildlife poaching and trafficking.”



Elephants:

The Poster Child for a Failed Experiment

by Susie Watts



PHOTO: SAL AMATO

The problem with the elephant debate in a CITES context is that the political symbolism of the African elephant has always blinded Parties to the horrific consequences of putting a commercial value on the species' body parts.

Elephants are often referred to as "flagship" species and nowhere is this more true than in the CITES debate over "sustainable utilisation". It seems pretty clear to me that, at some point in the very early 1990s, senior members of the CITES Secretariat, along with certain international NGOs, decided that if they could prove to the world that sustainable use works for elephants, they could prove that it works for any species. The elephants have been the poster child for that difficult and much wider debate ever since.



RHINOS

ILLEGALLY KILLED In SOUTH AFRICA



946
DEC 19

WHY THIS GREED CORRUPTION



SNAPSHOT: PANGOLIN TRAFFICKING IN 2013

Number of pangolins*
confiscated:

8125

Pangolin trafficking figures continued to climb in 2013, with seizures reported in mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam, Cameroon, Gabon, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and France. Based on reported seizures of both bodies and scales in 2013, the gruesome total came to an appalling 8,125 pangolins.

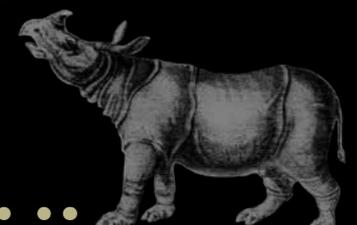
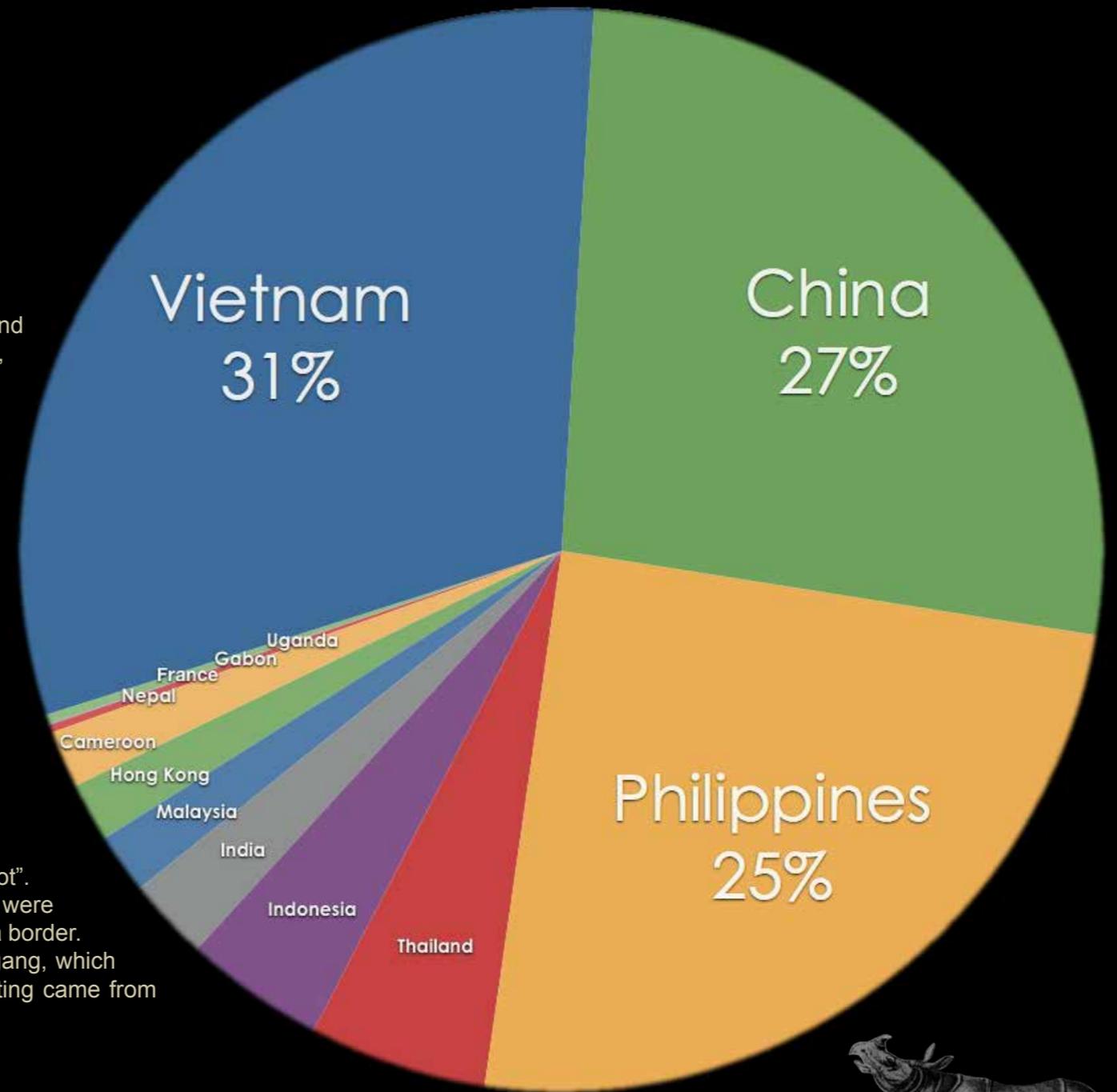
Keep in mind that this figure probably represents a mere 10 - 20% of the actual illegal trade. This means we could be looking at 40,625 to 81,250 pangolins killed *in 2013 alone*.

While the majority of pangolins and scales are believed to be sourced from Southeast Asia, alternative source and transit countries continue to emerge. Investigations in China revealed that more than one ton of pangolin scales were trafficked into the country from Pakistan during 2013. Smugglers also attempted to bring pangolin scales into mainland China from Qatar, Nigeria, and Equatorial Guinea; a shipment of 326 kg of pangolin scales intercepted in Hong Kong was said to have come from an unspecified country in Africa. And 50 kg of pangolin scales from Cameroon (believed to be headed for Vietnam) were intercepted by customs authorities at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

Unsurprisingly, the China-Vietnam border region is somewhat of a trafficking "hotspot". At Vietnam's busy Hai Phong Port, 16 **tons** of pangolins and nearly one ton of scales were intercepted, while 261 kg of pangolins were seized in Quang Ninh Province near the China border. On the China side, four seizures totaling 187 pangolins occurred in or near Fangchenggang, which borders Vietnam. One of the smugglers claimed that the 73 pangolins he was transporting came from Vietnam.

*Combined total of pangolins plus number of pangolins represented by scales.

Where did pangolin trafficking incidents occur?



49

Pangolin trafficking incidents.

13

Countries.

19

Incidents resulted in arrests.*

3

Convictions reported.

More than **17 tons** of pangolins were discovered in cargo ships.

2000 pangolins were discovered in a fishing vessel.

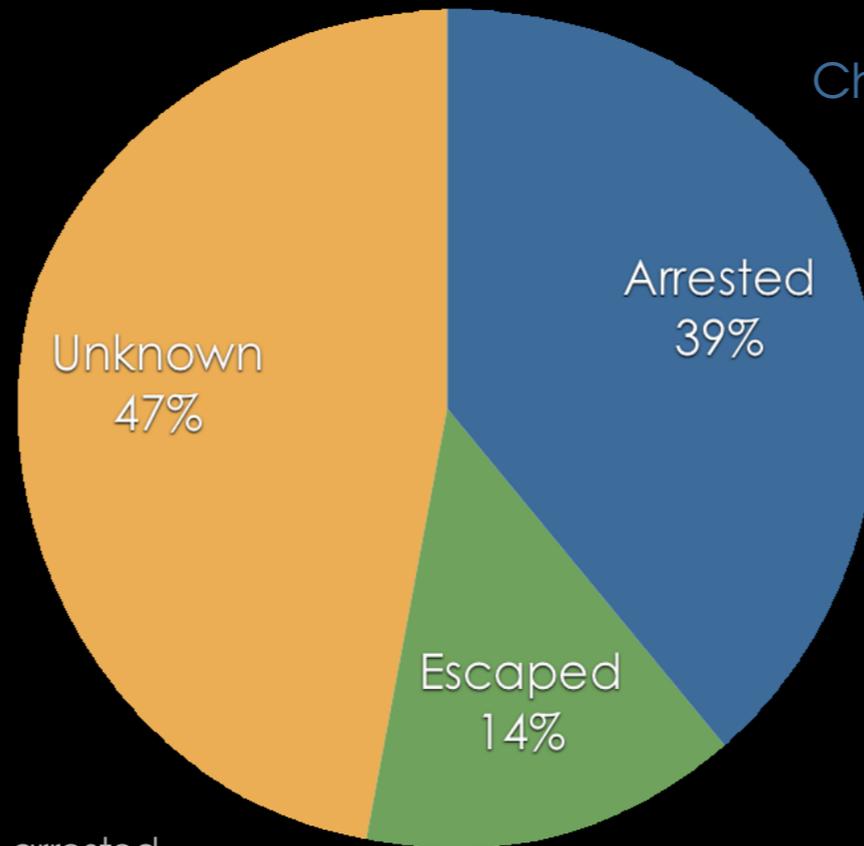
At least **685** pangolins were found in cars and pickup trucks.

1112 kg of pangolin scales were sent through the mail.

49 pangolins were found in a "suspicious ambulance".

1.5 cups of pangolin scales were discovered inside an airline passenger's socks.

9 kg of scales were "attached to thighs and other parts of the body" with duct tape.



China sentenced one smuggler to three years in jail with three and a half years probation, plus a \$4,762 fine. Another was sent to jail for six months and fined \$826.

In Zimbabwe, a pangolin trafficker was prosecuted to the full extent of the law, receiving an unprecedented nine-year prison term.

*In some cases, more than one suspect was arrested.

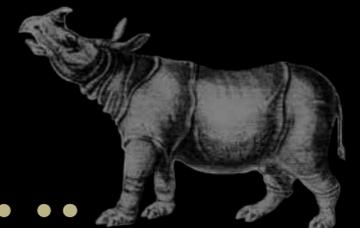


PHOTO: Finning in M'Bour, Senegal (SEBASTIAN LOSADA)



ENFIN: Ending the Shark Slaughter

by Astrid Andersson





The port city of Hong Kong, on China's southern border, handles over 50 per cent of global shark fin trade, and is generally considered "ground zero" for the import and export of fins. In 2008, close to 10,000 metric tons (10 million kg) of the product passed through the territory, according to the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department. Over 145 different countries supply Hong Kong traders with shark fins. PHOTO: Shark fins for sale in Hong Kong (ASTRID ANDERSSON)

Faced with unabated fishing levels and futile protective laws, the changing current of public sentiment seems the shark's best bet for survival.

After 40 million years as the apex predator of the world's oceans, sharks are shaking off their formerly fearsome, Jaws-inspired reputation, and taking on a new role. Sharks have become prey. Targeted for their fins, it is estimated that 73 million sharks are now killed every year. That's 200,000 per day, 147 a minute, and about three in the time it took you to read this sentence.

But the tide is turning. The younger generation of Chinese are showing signs that they are not as interested in the traditional shark fin soup delicacy that is spearheading such unsustainable fishing. The controversial dish – costing up to US\$100 a bowl – is now notably missing from the menu at government functions, hotel kitchens and an increasing number of weddings. Civil society is also rallying behind the species: with popular campaigns, protests and petitions gaining increasing voice, power and influence.

In this case, top-down is not the direction the currents of change are being carried. Although global legislation has been updated, the policing of the shark industry varies between countries, and attempts at creating international standards are littered with loopholes.

Legislative loopholes

Attempts to establish international guidelines are partial, and unevenly implemented. In March, for example, 16 shark subspecies – including Oceanic Whitetip, Porbeagle and Scalloped, Smooth and Great Hammerheads – were added to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) list, making it illegal to trade in their parts. But this is incomplete for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the economy of sharks is such that a fin is worth a lot more than the rest of the carcass. So in order to minimize weight and maximize profit, fishermen cut the fins off the (often live) sharks and toss the rest into the sea, where they sink, finless and helpless, to the seabed. This is not only cruel, but prevents species identification upon landing the fin cargo. Some countries in Europe and America have banned the landing of fins alone, but the chance was missed to do so globally at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' (ICCAT) annual meeting in late November, where the proposal "obliging boats to land sharks with fins naturally attached" was defeated.

Individual national policies then take their lead from this, and the reality is that they do not have the resources, or impetus, to test the DNA of each, legally landed, fin. This renders any species-specific bans, such as those implemented by CITES, totally ineffectual.



unlawful to trade any shark products in 2011 following a series of protests and public pressure.

Elfassy believes this is on the horizon for Hong Kong, the shark's 'ground zero' : "Overall what I think is going to happen is that there will be a societal rejection... and this will inevitably pressure the government to change legislation in tandem with the sentiment of the people."

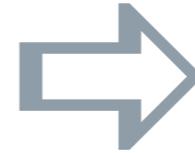
And if momentum continues as it is there's a real chance it's not too late to save the magnificent, mysterious creature that safeguards the balance of our seas.

Why sharks are vulnerable to overfishing

Sharks have fallen victim to a deadly combination of factors leaving them both open to economic exploitation, and extinction.

- * Low reproductive capacity – slow growth, long gestation periods and low birth rate - leaves them exceptionally vulnerable to over-fishing.
- * Shy, solitary nature also means population estimates are difficult to monitor.
- * Habitats are spread over a number of international waters, rendering national legislation attempts relatively ineffectual, and regulation of catch and capture a huge challenge.

On Kids Ocean Day in November 2013, Ocean Recovery Alliance got over 1,000 children, teachers and volunteers to form a giant aerial art shark on the beach and 're-attach its fin'.



Sign the petition [here](#) to demand that the Hong Kong government legislates a ban on the sale and possession of shark fin in Hong Kong.





THE PRICE UPDATE

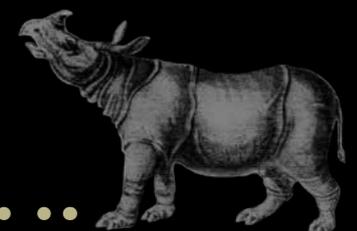
by Melinda MacInnis
Writer/Director/Producer

The Price team traveled widely this fall and winter, wrapping up ongoing story lines in Swaziland and filming innovative, solution-based approaches to rhino protection in Nepal and Kenya.

Nepal has committed the strength of its military to guarding its national parks, designated community forests for local use, and created buffer zones around its parks to mitigate human-animal conflict. 23% of Nepal is now set aside as national parks and reserves.



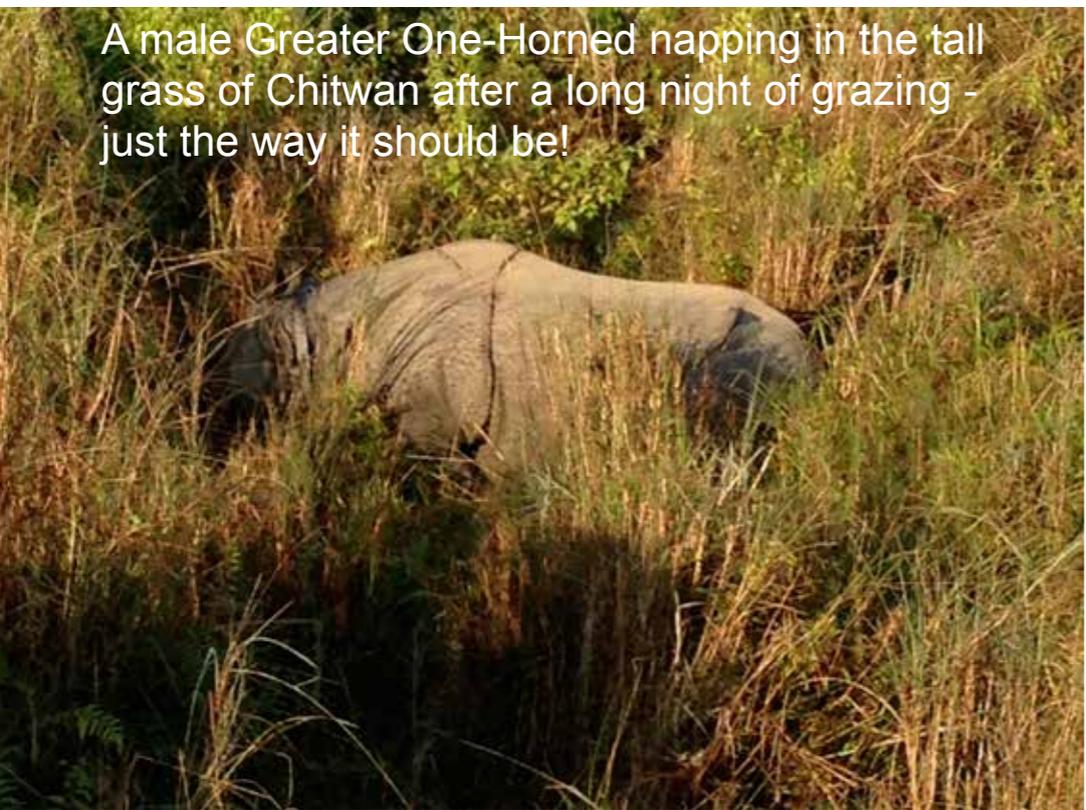
Kamal Jung Kunwar, Chief Warden of Nepal's Chitwan National Park. By relentlessly tracking down poachers and middlemen, confronting judicial corruption, and insisting on "jail not bail" for offenders, Kunwar is largely credited with helping to bring Nepal's rhino poaching virtually to a halt.



Cameraman Mark Crawford films wild rhino and elephant tracks in Nepal's Bardia National Park. Bardia has increased its Greater One-Horned population from 24 to 37 in the last few years, a breeding success story.



A male Greater One-Horned napping in the tall grass of Chitwan after a long night of grazing - just the way it should be!



The Price director and Annamiticus board member, Melinda MacInnis, holding up an Annamiticus logo outside the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) Biodiversity Center in Chitwan. NTNC works in partnership with the government to preserve and nurture Nepal's unique biodiversity and help enrich the lives of local communities through environmental stewardship.



At the famed David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust elephant orphanage in Nairobi National Park, Kenya. Each of these babies has seen its mother murdered by poachers. Thanks to the unparalleled life's work of Dame Daphne Sheldrick, these orphans will have a second chance at life. The eventual fate of Africa's elephants and rhinos are inseparably intertwined.



Rhino Crisis Crosses Over to Pop Culture

by Andrew Larson

Since 2007, Saving Rhinos - now Annamiticus - have worked to bring the rhino crisis to the world's attention. It has been a long, hard-fought struggle. World awareness grows every year.

This year, the crisis moved onto center stage of one of Marvel Comic's most famous heroes: Wolverine. Throughout my childhood, some of the world's most serious issues were editorialized in comics. Dennis O'Neil and Neal Adams took on heroin addiction in a legendary Green Lantern/Green Arrow run. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created the X-men to showcase the world's issues of prejudice and bigotry. Wildlife trafficking is very serious issue in my heart and I am happy to see it brought to comics.

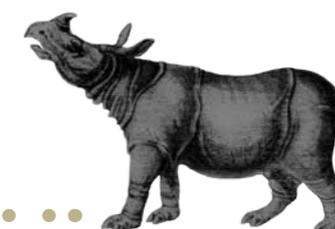
Marvel Comics created a two-part story in *Savage Wolverine 12* and *13*. One of the industry's most gifted artists, Phil Jimenez illustrated the books. Jimenez coauthored the tale with Scott Lope. Wolverine was the perfect choice for the protagonist. He is a hero more in comfort with nature than the human race. He is also a fan favorite in both graphic novels and the silver screen.

The creators portrayed this real life horror in convincing fashion. The first issue did a great job of capturing the brutality of a wounded, dehorned rhino. There was also a scene with a barbaric vault that stores stockpiled rhino horn and ivory. Along the way, Jimenez reveals important aspects of the rhino horn and ivory trade. The story starts with military precision of wildlife trafficking gangs and continues with highly organized smuggling routes to the imaginary Asian nation of Madripoor. Once the rhino horn and ivory arrives in Asia, the story shows that it is just another organized crime racket that has become big business. There is even a reference to the phony cancer cure! The tale sheds light on the destructive wildlife trade and the potential endgame of extinction.

Comics fans will love the story, as it goes back over 80 years and embraces an unknown part of Wolverine's distant past. For me, the story is important for two reasons. First, it is wonderful that the rhino horn and ivory trade problem will be brought to the attention of so many readers. Secondly, it reminded me about why Annamiticus/SavingRhinos was formed. When we started in late 2007, the world was a very tough place. Financial panic was beginning to grip the globe and there was great despair everywhere. Folks asked why we wanted to help wildlife when there was more serious human suffering. Why turn our attention to far away places in Africa and Asia? The answer seemed simple. Wildlife is our planet's precious heritage. It not a resource to be exploited for profit or gain. If human race is the earth's dominant species, then it is our obligation to protect and preserve wildlife.

I send a special thanks to Phil Jimenez, Scott Lope and Marvel comics for stepping up for wild life. The tale shows that this global issue and everyone can help.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy 2014.



Closing thoughts

Thank you for joining Annamiticus on our final voyage of 2013! We hope you found this issue of The Annamiticus Quarterly to be informative, educational, and enjoyable. Our next issue will feature World Pangolin Day 2014 and much more!

We'd also like to give a HUGE RHINO-SIZED THANK YOU to our AWESOME supporters, who make our work possible. Your donations help us produce high-impact educational content, build the digital communications capacity of our partners in the field, provide technical expertise to our international NGO partners, and promote a greater understanding of the threats to endangered species with field visits to regions where threats are unusually high and under-reported.

Want to learn more about Annamiticus? Visit our website at annamiticus.com, connect with us on our Facebook page (facebook.com/Annamiticus), and follow us on Twitter ([@annamiticus](https://twitter.com/annamiticus)).

Until next time ...

PEACE LOVE ANNAMITICUS!

