

Poaching

What is poaching?

Poaching is the illegal hunting and killing of animals. This is often done to sell the body parts, but it can be done for sport, which is known as 'trophy hunting'.

Where does poaching take place?

Although most poaching of endangered species takes place in Africa, poaching happens all over the world. This includes whales that are killed in countries like Japan and animal products that are illegally taken and sold in countries like China and Vietnam.

What does this mean for Africa?



At current poaching rates, elephants, rhinos, and other iconic African wildlife may be **gone within our lifetime**.

Where do we stand?



What animals are poached?

Any animal can be poached if it is illegal to hunt and kill. Usually, this is because they are endangered or protected, which is often when the species of animal is at risk of dying out due to human activity and overhunting. Some of the most at risk animals include elephants, tigers, rhinos and lions.

What can be done about it?

Many people, governments and charities are involved in the protection of animals.

The Royal family are also involved in the fight against poaching. Prince

William is the president of United Wildlife and supports the Tusk charity, which aims to stop the use of ivory.

Another way we can help stop poaching is by appealing to governments to make hunting endangered animals illegal in their countries. Leaders around the world have made agreements to stop illegal animal parts coming into their countries, but it's still happening.



Key vocabulary:

Poaching—the illegal hunting, killing or capturing of wild animals.

Whaling—the practise or industry of hunting and killing of whales for their oil, meat or whalebone.

Sustainable—capable of being carried on forever.

Vulnerable—a level of numbers at which the species may be at risk in the future.

Endangered—a level of numbers at which the species may

Critical population—a level of numbers at which the species will struggle to survive without support or help.

Elephants:

Poaching is the illegal hunting, killing or capturing of wild animals. One example of an animal that is hunted and poached is the elephant. They are hunted for the ivory to use for some products which makes them very valuable. The unsustainable demand of elephant ivory means that current populations are becoming endangered. Many are killed illegally and sold on the black market. When numbers are too low it will be difficult for elephants to maintain their population. This is happening in Africa.



Tigers

Demand for tiger parts poses the largest threat to tiger survival. Tigers are being hunted to extinction by poachers for their skins, bones, teeth and claws, which are highly valued for their use in traditional Asian medicine; in the past 10 years, over 1000 tigers have been killed for this reason.

Parts from a single tiger can fetch as much as \$50,000 on the black market.

Rhino

The greatest threat facing African rhinos is poaching for the illegal trade in their horns, which has soared in

recent years. South Africa has by far the largest number of rhinos in the world, but the number of rhinos poached in South Africa alone has increased by 9,000% since 2007.

Poaching gangs use lots of methods, including helicopters and night vision equipment to track rhinos, and veterinary drugs to knock them out.



Whales

Whaling is also a major problem, the Japanese have historically been the main hunters of whales. However, this happens in other countries too.

The blue whales of the Antarctic are at less than one per cent of their original amount, despite 40 years of complete protection. A commercial whaling ban was introduced in 1986. However, illegal poaching continues and 30,000 whales have been killed since then.