

## Rhino Poaching, Model Essay

The rhinoceros is in danger of becoming extinct because of poaching. Poaching **can be defined as** when people unlawfully hunt, murder, and / or take animals out of their natural habitat. This is a threat in every place where rhinos live, especially Africa. Conservation of the rhino is necessary, but the solutions are quite expensive. **This topic is important because** one of our animal species is dying and will soon be gone unless we do something to stop it. **Davis (2013) states that** if rhinos are removed from the ecosystem, the ecosystem will become unbalanced. **This essay will** describe the problems and solutions related to the subject of rhino poaching. **Specifically, it will focus on the problems related to** rhino poaching, **list two solutions and examine the effectiveness of these solutions for this problem.**

Poaching of rhinos **is a significant issue because** of the decreasing number of rhinos. In the early 1900s both Africa and Asia had about a half a million rhinos, soon, however, the number of deaths could be greater than the number of births (**Davis, 2013**). The demand for the rhino horn, especially in Vietnam and China, is mostly for traditional medicines and although there is no real evidence that it can cure diseases such as cancer, for a kilo of the horn poachers can get up to US \$ 600,000 (**Species Under Threat, n.d.**). **Unfortunately,** the gangs come with advanced equipment, tranquilizer guns, and weapons to shoot rangers if need be. Three rhinos a day die on average in Kruger National Park even though more than US \$1 million a year is spent to stop poachers (**Species Under Threat, n.d.**).

**One solution to the problem** of rhino poaching **is** dehorning, **but this has some drawbacks**. Dehorning is removing the rhino's horn by cutting it (**Davis, 2013**). **According to Mandell (20015),** unfortunately, it is very expensive as an expert needs to carefully cut off the horn every 12-24 months and can cost between US \$600-\$1000. **Nevertheless,** rhinos were saved in the 1990s in Namibia, and in Kenya the last white rhino in existence is protected by armed guards because even though she was dehorned, she is still in danger (**Mandell, 2015**). It seems either the stub is enough to kill for poachers shoot from far away and are not aware that the horn has been cut or poachers wait and kill once the horn grows back. **For example,** in Zimbabwe, dehorned rhinos were killed 12-18

months later (Mandell, 2015). Furthermore, according to Davis (2013), another big disadvantage of dehorning is the rhino's vulnerability in the wild and inability to protect their young.

The other main solution to rhino poaching is using drone technology, although this can also be ineffective. On one hand, drones can help observe land areas that are large, in which poachers can hide. On the other hand, using drone technology is not always useful because the poachers are hard to find and there can be up to 8-12 gangs in one hiding place. In addition, the cost of a good battery is very expensive. Hinks (2014) states that a battery lasting 30-90 minutes is affordable, but the park needs a battery that can last 6-8 hours which costs US \$250,000. In South Africa drones in KwaZulu-Natal have proved effective. Unfortunately, once the drones are gone poaching continues and although reduced, the poachers are not captured (Hinks, 2014).

This essay has described the problem of illegal rhino poaching and evaluated the effectiveness of two main solutions. Poaching of rhino has resulted in an increase in the number of poaching gangs and a drop in the number of rhinos. One possible solution is dehorning but it is complicated and expensive. The other main solution might well be using drone technology. However, drones too are an expensive solution. I believe the international community needs to get more involved and especially needs to stop these criminals. In terms of recommendations, there could be awareness campaigns to educate people everywhere, especially in China and Vietnam. Overall, I am surprised that the governments in these countries have not already stopped poaching and punished the buyers.

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