



His Excellency Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
Beijing, China

Dear Mr. President:

We, the cosigned groups and organizations from across the country, would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership in several of China's recent milestone decisions for wildlife protection. As one of the most important trading nations with commercial and economic ties to most countries in the world, China has a special leadership role to play in global conservation efforts. We are writing today to hope that China can move to ban rhino trophy imports, a trade that panders to the whims of an extremely small number of the rich but has lasting damages to wildlife and China's reputation.

Trophy hunting is a bloody hobby. It is a pursuit for the wealthy who spend tens of thousands of dollars to travel across the globe to kill rare and iconic wild animals for fun, for bragging rights and for posing for morbid selfies by their slain bodies. This activity is foreign to the Chinese nation. Our country has become the target of aggressive promotion by international trophy hunting agencies that have been losing customers in the West and hope to lure Chinese customers.

China is the world's second largest importer of rhino hunting trophies after the United States. Based on the data submitted to CITES, China imported 46 rhino trophies for hunting trophy purposes between 2009 and 2018. Our country is also one of the major destinations for transnational trafficking of rhino horns. The 2019 CITES report¹ highlights that "there is evidence of Chinese-run rhino horn processing operations that have emerged in South Africa since CoP17, producing worked goods for export to Asian markets" and that this marks a new development in illegal trade. It further states that police investigations in 2017 uncovered small home workshops where rhino horn beads and bracelets are manufactured for export along with horn offcuts and powder. This latest development serves to sustain and perpetuate the trade that has been condemned globally.

What should also be pointed out is that 30% of recorded global rhino horn seizures in the period between 2014-2018 reportedly involved Chinese citizens. This suggested that demand for rhino horn in our country was increasing. The number of overseas Chinese nationals arrested for crimes involving illegal rhino horn has also escalated significantly in recent years. Trafficking of rhino horns by Chinese nationals sabotages our image in Africa and serves to undo the Chinese reputation in the minds of African people. Our nationals should help protect wildlife in Africa not participate in its destruction. The distinction of China being the second largest importer of rhino trophies after the U.S. damages our international conservation image and runs counter to President Xi's "ecological civilization" agenda.

Trophy hunting is not about conservation. It's about showing off one's wealth. As few as 29,000² rhinos remain in the wild. All five extant rhino species (3 Asian species and 2 African species) are threatened with extinction. There are many ways to contribute to wildlife conservation without taking the life of an animal. Trophy hunting, like poaching, artificially selects the biggest and strongest animals with prominent features such as large horns, big tusks or thick manes. These animals play key roles within their society and are important in maintaining the genetic resilience and diversity of their species or passing survival skills to their offspring. By killing these mature and older animals, trophy hunters upset the natural evolution process. The IUCN Ethics Specialist Group has stated that trophy hunting is unethical. Conservation scientists called trophy hunting morally inappropriate. Trophy hunting is deeply rooted in Western colonialism, incompatible with Chinese history and tradition.

¹ CoP18 Doc.83.1, para 28.

² For the two African species: white rhino populations: approximately 18,915 animals at most; black rhinos: approximately 5,627 animals.



Trophy hunting is hugely unpopular around the world. With the number of big game hunters decreasing, trophy hunting is a dying industry globally. As such, the industry is actively seeking to recruit and cultivate Chinese trophy hunters, as a novel and emerging market. Poaching of rhinos has increased dramatically in recent years, from 60 rhinos killed across Africa in 2006 to 1,349 in 2015 during the height of the rhino poaching crisis. Most of the poaching occurs in South Africa--for instance, in 2017, 1,028 out of 1,124 poached rhinos occurred in South Africa. A total of 46 rhinos were poached for the month of March this year alone before South Africa went into a lockdown.³

Poaching of rhinos is extremely cruel. In order to spare bullets and therefore detection, poachers paralyze the rhinos by severing their spines with machetes. Poachers hack off the face of rhinos, sometimes while the animal is still alive, in an effort to get every last bit of horn. Poachers sometimes kill baby rhinos who have tiny horns. Orphaned calves are rarely able to survive, but some that do are taken into care at rhino “orphanages”.

Under your leadership, we have an existing ban on the import of elephant tusks and their products, including elephant tusk hunting trophies. It would be well within our government’s authority to issue a similar ban on the import of rhino trophies. If enacted, China would be one of the first countries⁴ in the world to ban the import of rhino trophies. We stand together behind you, Mr. President and our government, in this global battle for rhino protection and to end the insanity of rhino poaching in all manifestations.

Your respectfully

联署名单/Cosigned Chinese NGO and Groups

- 1 蚌埠市流浪动物保护协会/Bengbo Small Animal Protection Association
- 2 长沙动物保护协会/Changsha Animal Protection Association (APA)
- 3 株洲市小动物保护协会/Zhuzhou APA
- 4 西安市小动物保护协会/Xi'An APA
- 5 淮北市小动物保护协会/Huaibei APA
- 6 苏州市动物保护协会/Suzhou APA
- 7 诸暨小动物协会/
- 8 大连市微善爱护动物协会/Dalian Vshine APA
- 9 松原市善待动物保护协会/Songyuan Association for Ethical Treatment of Animals
- 10 苏州市小动物保护志愿者协会/Suzhou Animal Protection Volunteer Group
- 11 海南省众善关爱小动物志愿者协会/Hainan Public Volunteer Group
- 12 苏州市小动物保护志愿者协会/Suzhou Small APA
- 13 兰州守爱文明志愿者服务中心/Lanzhou Protection and Love Volunteer Service Center
- 14 西安红石榴流浪动物救护中心/Xi'An Hong Shiliu Animal Rescue Center
- 15 漳州市小动物科学养护救助中心/Zhangzhou Small Animal Scientific Care Center
- 16 宁波市流浪动物保护中心/Ningbo Animal Protection Center

³ Not sure if this would confuse reporters or readers. Other than looking at the number of rhinos poached, we can also look at the amount of rhino horn seized. In 2016 and 2017, a total of 4,757 African rhino horns are estimated to have entered illegal trade.

⁴ The Netherlands has a ban on imports of hunting trophies of more than 200 species.



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- 18 苏州天天-宝宝小院/Suzhou Tian Tian Animal Care Center
- 19 郴州爱心小院/Liuzhou Animal Help and Rescue Center
- 20 新疆昌吉小院爱心团队流浪狗救助小院/Xinjiang Changji Love of Animals Rescue Group
- 21 吉林市微爱流浪动物救助基地/Jilin WeLove Animal Rescue Center
- 22 葫芦岛流浪动物救助基地/Huludao Animal Rescue Center
- 23 宝鸡流浪动物基地/Baoji Animal Care Center
- 24 甘肃平凉流浪动物救助基地/Gansu Pingliang Animal Rescue Center
- 25 宁波市奉化区流浪犬基地/Ningbo Fenghua Rescue Center
- 26 保定市爱旺旺流浪动物救助团队/Baoding Wang Wang Rescue Team
- 27 天津易善流浪动物救助团队/Tianjin YShine Rescue Volunteer Group
- 28 西安 701 流浪爱护动物驿站/Xi'An 701 Rescue Center
- 29 唐山自由森林小宠救助/Tangshan Freedom Forest Animal Rescue Group
- 30 宠爱有家青岛流浪动物救助/Qingdao Home of Loved Animals
- 31 株洲市 609 流浪动物领养屋/Zhuzhou 609 Rescue and Adoption Center
- 32 宁波浪浪外婆之家/Ningbo Lanlan Rescue Center
- 33 吉林市普爱行动派/Jilin Love of All Animals Action Group
- 34 蚌埠市流浪动物安乐窝/Bengbo Rescue and Accommodation Center
- 35 首都爱护动物协会/Capital Animal Welfare Association