

BRIEFING PAPER

CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO THE GLOBAL POACHING CRISIS

TRAFFIC & WWF

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the world's most iconic wild animals, including Tigers, rhinoceroses and elephants, are under immense and growing poaching pressure. These animals are killed for their body parts, which are in high demand from consumers, particularly in parts of Asia.

In 2013, just over 1,000 rhinoceroses were illegally killed in South Africa for their horns, which are then smuggled by organized criminal gangs to destination markets mainly in Viet Nam and China.

In 2011, an estimated 25,000 African Elephants were killed for their ivory, which is mainly trafficked to meet the growing consumer demand for ivory ornaments in China and Thailand.

Between 2000 and 2012, TRAFFIC documented the seizure of parts of at least 1,425 Tigers in Asia, where their bones are used to make Tiger bone wine and other pseudo-medicinal or pseudo-healthcare products.

Unless the levels of poaching are reduced, the future for these iconic animals is far from certain.

Traditional efforts to curtail trafficking of wildlife parts have focused on reducing supply—through a combination of better onsite protection, enforcement and detection, and penalties and other deterrents for those convicted of trafficking along the entire supply chain—from source to transit to destination markets.

However, TRAFFIC quickly recognized this was only part of the solution: such efforts need to be reinforced by reducing the main driver of the trade; the demand from the consumer end of the trade chain. This approach was aimed at dissuading consumption of illegal wildlife products. Take away the market, the supply quickly dries up and the incentive to poach is gone.

A structured approach

Focusing initially on reducing the demand for Tiger parts, products and derivatives, but with links to other endangered species, TRAFFIC convened a meeting in 2011, of creative experts from a diverse range of professional backgrounds—including advertising and marketing, social research, behavioural economics, public health and wildlife trade—in Hong Kong. Their insights helped in the development of a five-step approach to changing the attitude of consumers towards the consumption of these products.



THE FIVE STEPS TO BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

STEP 1: IDENTIFYING BEHAVIOURS

Understanding the consumer is a fundamental requirement: behaviours can only be changed if you understand what is driving it. To help this process, TRAFFIC commissioned consumer market research in Viet Nam and China.

STEP 2: UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCERS BY AUDIENCE

Market research revealed that typical rhino horn consumers in Viet Nam were found to be men over the age of 40 whose main reason for buying rhino horn is to reaffirm their social status and who also believe it can detoxify the body, while in China, consumers tend to be a relatively older, better off and educated segment of the population and buy Tiger products mainly for medicinal purposes and ivory and rhino horn for gifting.

STEP 3: DEVELOPING A PRACTICAL MODEL OF INFLUENCERS ON BEHAVIOUR

Changing consumer behaviour is not a new area of research—a number of models already exist and have been shown to be effective. For example, Rogers' Theory (see Figure 1) predicts that the adoption of a new approach / broaching a new idea is something that will be picked up by a small section of society—the innovators—whose lead will later be followed by the majority. Understanding who is best able to influence existing and / or potential consumers of illegal wildlife products is a vital step before developing a strategy. For example, they may be business entrepreneurs who already have high standing in the business community and whose lead will be followed. They may be other prominent individuals, such as religious leaders.

An Innovative and Integrated Approach

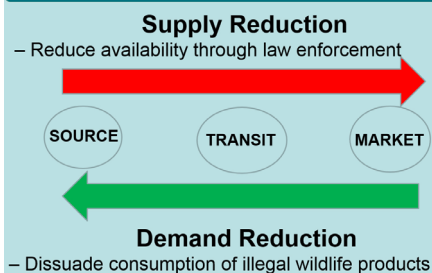
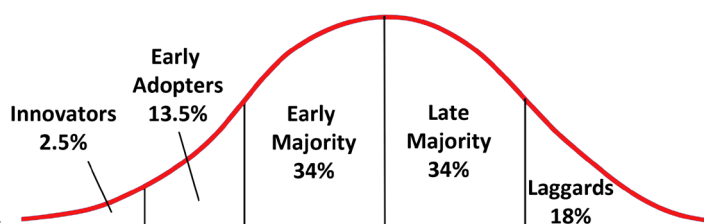


Figure 1: Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Rogers' Diffusion model suggests that innovations amongst e.g. Traditional Medicine practitioners and business leaders have great potential to influence others.



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STEP 4: Building a marketing strategy

Once all the key stakeholders and influencers have been mapped, a strategy can be devised to enlist their support in helping spread targeted messaging, which will ultimately lead to a widescale change in consumer behaviour. A strategy written by TRAFFIC to reduce the demand for Tiger parts was endorsed by the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP) Stocktaking Meeting in New Delhi in 2012 and also provided the framework for rhino horn demand reduction strategy principles endorsed by the Parties to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

STEP 5: Developing a communications strategy and campaign

With the strategy in hand, appropriate demand reduction campaign materials, activities and messaging are developed and communicated: if they reach their target audience and invoke the anticipated response, consumers will change their behaviour and the bottom will drop out the market for illicit wildlife products.



WWF-TRAFFIC Messaging in a Beijing subway (above) and (right) in an online advertisement

Spreading the word

TRAFFIC & WWF has joined forces with governments, inter-governmental organisations, a range of academics, corporate leaders and others, to ensure a variety of skills and expertise is brought to bear in devising the most effective suite of approaches to tackle this challenging issue. This expertise has helped to guide, hone and shape the implementation of an exciting programme of work based on the five step model above, to produce a measurable reduction in the demand for wildlife products in China and Viet Nam.

Together we are embarking on some groundbreaking work, utilizing fully our combined expertise to deliver transformative rather than transient, behavioural change amongst wildlife product consumers in Asia.

It is an exciting yet daunting prospect: the future of some of the world's most wildlife species quite literally depends upon a successful outcome.

Working with:

The Corporate Sector

Through engagement with the Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology (SEE) Foundation, TRAFFIC is recruiting a network of "business elites" in China, who are committed to promoting a zero tolerance approach towards illegal wildlife products within their own companies and to helping spread the message to their corporate peers. TRAFFIC's engagement with online retailers in China has led to a declaration of zero tolerance towards the sale of illegal wildlife goods by 29 e-commerce companies. Logistics companies transporting goods, especially those traversing borders have also been engaged as part of this initiative, while airlines and other companies working within the tourism sector are also being approached.

Governments

In Viet Nam, TRAFFIC and other partners, including from the traditional medicine sector, have engaged with the Ministry of Health, who have joined the collective call to say "No to rhino horn" and are publicly advocating the use of alternatives. In China, TRAFFIC alongside the CWCA is working with government authorities to help promote consumer behavioural change. Radio broadcasts and leaflets targeting Chinese nationals living or visiting Africa have been produced and distributed.

Youth

Working with the youth organization Horizon Yes, TRAFFIC has helped promote behavioural change messages to young people, through more than 198,000 messages on social media platform Weibo and a college campus competition.

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TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, is the leading non-governmental organization working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

TRAFFIC is a strategic alliance between WWF and IUCN, leading the delivery of key components of their missions and programmes through a unique partnership that combines the considerable strengths of each of these two major global conservation organizations.

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