



STATE OF THE TRADE IN VIETNAM:

RHINO HORN

OCTOBER 2022

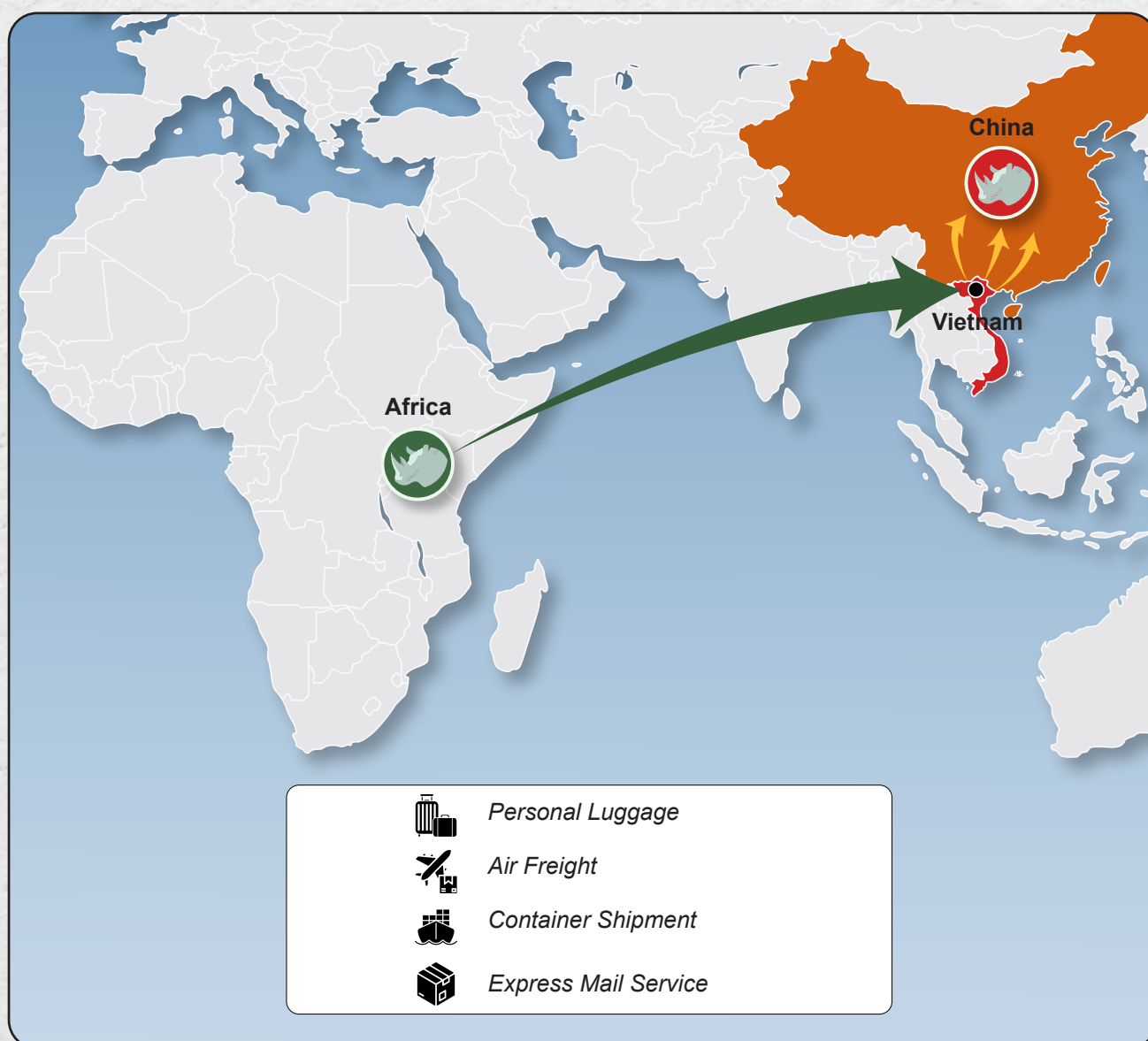
LEGAL STATUS

While different species of rhino are afforded different protection status under CITES, violations relating to rhino horn in Vietnam are treated equally regardless of the species. According to the current laws, individual transporting, trading, or possessing more than 50 grams of rhino horn can be criminally charged and face prosecution and punishment of up to 15 years in prison. For quantities of less than 50 grams, individuals face financial punishment of up to VND 360 million (USD 16,000).

In addition, as a prohibited commodity in Vietnam, advertising rhino horn for sale is an administrative violation punishable by fines of VND 70-100 million (USD 3,000-4,500).

TRADE BRIEF

Vietnamese-led wildlife trafficking networks operate in a number of African countries. Rhino horn is purchased from local suppliers by network operatives. The horns are then smuggled back to Vietnam through established channels that predominantly include use of mules or low-level operatives to smuggle horns in their personal luggage on return flights to Vietnam. Rhino horn is also smuggled into Vietnam by air freight and express mail services, as well as hidden in container shipments arriving at shipping ports.



Once the horns arrive safely in Vietnam, they may pass through several hands before being sold to consumers in Vietnam or smuggled into China as either horns or processed products.

CONSUMER VALUE

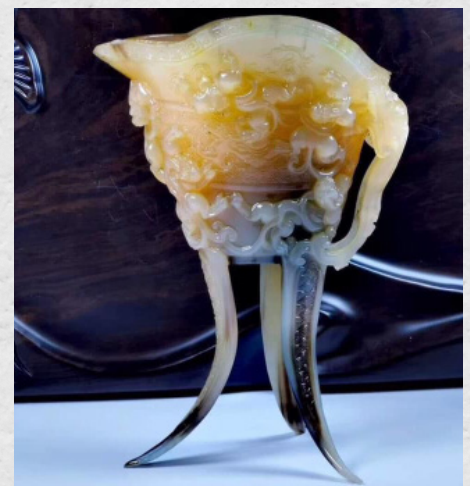
Rhino horn is used in traditional medicine (TM). While there are perceived medicinal values associated with the use of rhino horn in Vietnam, rhino horn is predominantly used as a means to purify the body, reduce heat, bring balance between Yin and Yang, and treat hangovers. Using rhino horn instead of other forms of medicine for these purposes is also associated with projection of status and success. Rhino horn has also been rumored to treat cancer, and it is considered beneficial by some traditional medicine practitioners as treatment for at least 14 other ailments. There is no scientific basis for these beliefs.



Grinding bowl, rhino horn TM box, and rhino horn pieces with rumored medicinal values

Like ivory, rhino horn is also used to produce expensive products like pendants, tea sets, and other decorative carvings, though these products are far less common than ivory products.

Rhino horn consumption is limited to a minute portion of society in Vietnam. Users are typically male and over the age of 40 (ENV consumer data 2012, Traffic 2013).



Tea cup, wine cup, and pendant made from rhino horn

CRIME DATA (ENV)

Between 2017 and the end of 2021, ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit logged a total of 342 cases comprised of 394 individual violations of advertising, sale, possession, and trafficking of rhino horn in Vietnam.

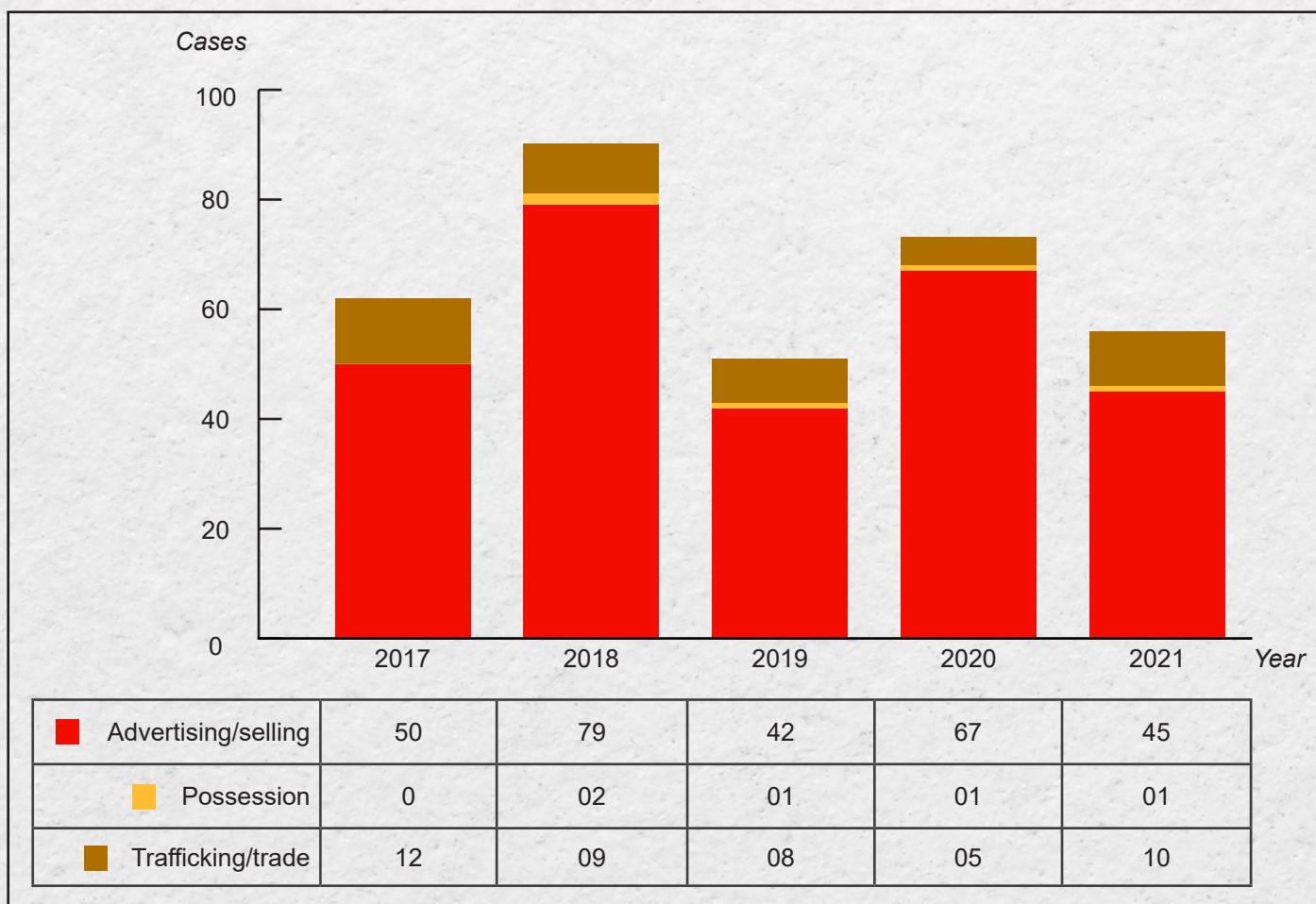


Figure 1. Rhino horn crimes from 2017 to 2021

Advertising and selling rhino horn online comprised the largest portion of cases, with 283 recorded between 2017 and 2021.

While a small number of online cases resulted in successful law enforcement responses and seizures, a considerable portion of the rhino horn advertising and selling cases online involved suppliers that did not possess rhino horn, but were playing the role of middleman and reaching out to their own sources to fill orders where available. A smaller portion of online cases involved connecting would-be buyers with fake products made from the horns of other species.



Subject with confiscated rhino horns

Between 2017 and 2021, there were 35 cases involving seizures of rhino horn, most of these at ports, airports, and land borders. These trafficking cases resulted in the seizure of 857.96 kg of rhino horn and the arrest of 59 subjects.

PROSECUTIONS FOR RHINO HORN CRIME

Of the 35 criminal cases involving seizures of rhino horn occurring between 2017 and 2021, arrests were made in 30 cases, accounting for an arrest rate of 86%. As of January 2022, a total of 20 cases had resulted in prosecution and convictions of one or more subjects (57%). Prison sentences were handed down to subjects in 17 cases (85% of all convictions), with suspended sentences given to the subjects in the 3 remaining cases.



Nguyen Mau Chien, leader of a network trafficking rhino horns and other wildlife from Africa, was arrested in 2017, convicted, and imprisoned

A total of 27 subjects received prison sentences ranging from 10 months to 15 years, with the average prison sentence being 6.07 years.

The average prison sentence for rhino crimes (6.07 years) exceeded the national average for other types of wildlife crimes during the same period (4.08 years).

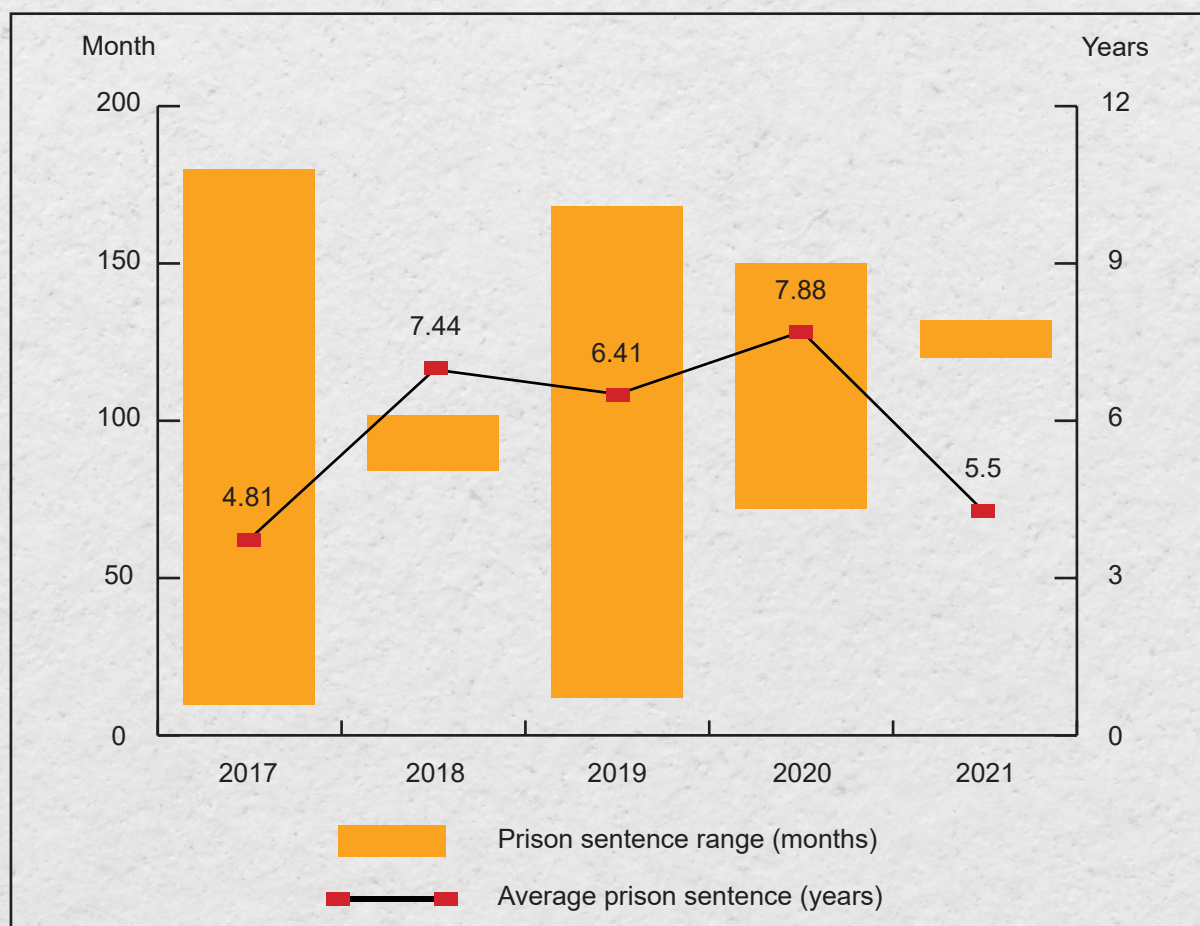


Figure 2: Prison sentences from 2017 to 2021

STATE OF THE TRADE: KEY POINTS

Global Vietnamese-led networks

Vietnamese-led networks operating in Angola, South Africa, Mozambique, and other African countries are responsible for a majority of the rhino horn that is smuggled into Vietnam. Nearly all of these major networks continue to operate with impunity inside and outside of Vietnam.

Targeting kingpins

Since 2017, Vietnam has successfully arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned the leaders of two rhino horn trafficking networks. Aside from these two successes, a lack of aggressive investigations focused on network leaders continues to be a major obstacle undermining Vietnam's ability to have a decisive impact on Vietnamese-led trafficking networks globally.

Increased risks for trafficking rhino horn

Prison sentences for rhino crimes in Vietnam averages 6.07 years, exceeding the national average of 4.08 years for other wildlife crimes.

Trends in trafficking

Based on seizure data, there is no evidence that rhino horn trade has either increased or decreased in Vietnam since 2017.

Rhinos are extinct in Vietnam

Vietnam was once home to the Javan rhino. However, in 2010, the last Javan rhino was killed for its horn and Javan rhinos were declared extinct in Vietnam.2017.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Rhino horn crime classification from 2017 to 2021

Crime classification	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Advertising/selling cases	50	79	42	67	47	283
Advertising/selling violations	52	81	55	80	60	327
Possession cases	0	2	1	1	1	5
Possession violations	0	2	1	1	2	5
Trafficking/trade cases	12	9	8	5	9	44
Trafficking/trade violations	14	9	8	6	13	49
Total cases	65	90	52	78	59	342
Total violations	69	93	67	92	77	394

Table 1 reflects data from ENV's Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking System for rhino crimes between 2017 and 2021. The data suggests that the number of violations detected remains somewhat consistent over this period.

Table 2: Protection and conservation status by species

Species	CITES	Law in Vietnam	Notation
Javan rhino <i>Rhinoceros sondaicus</i>	I	IB	Extinct in Vietnam
Black rhino <i>Diceros bicornis</i>	I		
White rhino <i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	I		All populations, except South Africa and Eswatini (Swaziland)
White rhino <i>Ceratotherium simum simum</i>	II		South Africa and Eswatini (Swaziland) populations
Northern white rhino <i>Ceratotherium simum cottoni</i>	I		

Table 3: Internet crime from 2017 to 2021

Internet crime data	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
No. of cases	49	85	43	67	48	292
No. of violations	51	89	58	80	63	341

Table 4: Seizures from 2017 to 2021

Crime classification	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
No. of seizures in Vietnam	8	8	7	5	8	36
Volume of seizures	276.88	66.87	152.01	139.71	222.49	857.96



Education for Nature - Vietnam

Education for Nature - Vietnam (ENV) was established in 2000 as Vietnam's first non-governmental organization focused on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. ENV combats the illegal wildlife trade and aims to foster greater understanding amongst the Vietnamese public about the need to protect nature and wildlife. ENV employs creative and innovative strategies to influence public attitudes and reduce demand for wildlife trade products. ENV works closely with government partners to strengthen policy and legislation, and directly supports enforcement efforts in the protection of endangered species of regional, national, and global significance.

ENV STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

Since 2007, ENV has focused its activities on three major program areas that comprise ENV's integrated strategic approach for addressing illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam. These include:

- Working with policy-makers to strengthen legislation, close loopholes in the law, and promote effective application of laws and policy that protect wildlife;
- Strengthening enforcement through direct support and assistance to law enforcement agencies in combatting wildlife crime;
- Reducing consumer demand for wildlife products through investment in a long-term and sustained effort to influence public attitudes and behavior, including mobilizing public participation and action protecting wildlife by reporting wildlife crime.

Address: Block 17T5, 17th floor, Room 1701, Hoang Dao Thuy Str., Thanh Xuan Dist., Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: (84 24) 6281 5424

Fax: (84 24) 6281 5423

Email: env@fpt.vn

Website: www.env4wildlife.org

