

# BEYOND ENFORCEMENT:

*Communities are the first line of defence  
against Illegal Wildlife Trade*



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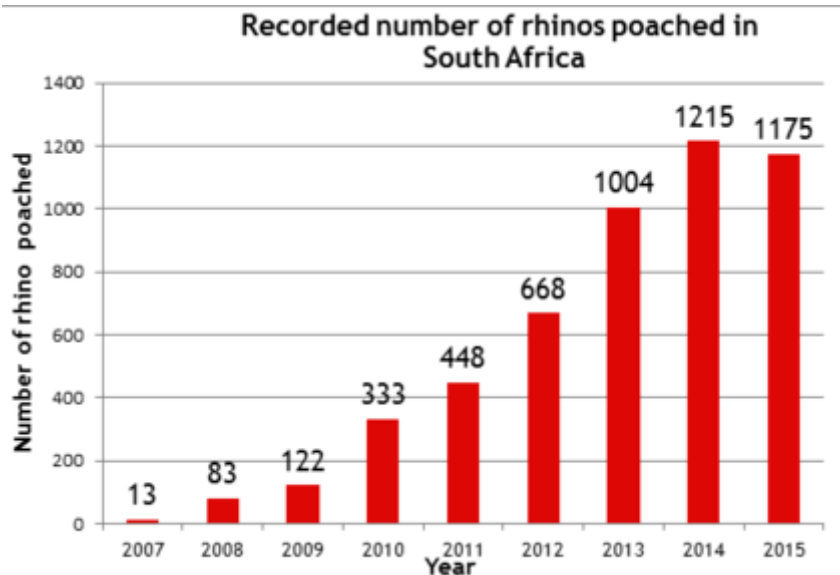
IUCN CEESP/SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group [www.iucn.org/suli](http://www.iucn.org/suli)



While most wildlife trade is legal and much sustainable, illegal wildlife trade has reached crisis proportions...



# Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)



- increasingly linked to organised crime (drugs, arms trades)
- links with official corruption
- can be source of revenue to armed militias

# What should we do?





February 2015: international symposium - 70+ researchers, NGOs, government, community participants, experiences from 5 continents



IIED collection of case studies, 2015

February 2016: West+Central African regional workshop - 50+ government, community, NGO and academic participants



# 1. “Top-down” enforcement-led approaches can create threats to communities, governance and conservation...

*human rights abuses and livelihood impacts*



*undermining the legitimacy of conservation regulations and approaches based on trust-building*

*displacement of poaching to other areas; increased prices and increased incentives to poach*



## 2. When addressing IWT, we need to understand the broader conservation context ...

*banning use and trade of wildlife has often led to wildlife having little or no socio-economic value to the people who live with it....*



*...but living close to wildlife is dangerous and costly*

*...so this leads to people converting natural habitat to crops or livestock*



*...and means they have no incentive to refrain from poaching, to protect wildlife from illegal killing, or to sustainably manage it.*

### 3. Communities can be powerful and positive agents of change...



*know what is happening on the ground – can be “eyes and ears” of enforcement*

*are highly motivated where they have a strong sense of ownership/stewardship, and perceive poaching as stealing from them*



*strong cooperative relationships with arresting authorities are crucial*



# What do these community-level approaches look like?



Mali Elephant Project

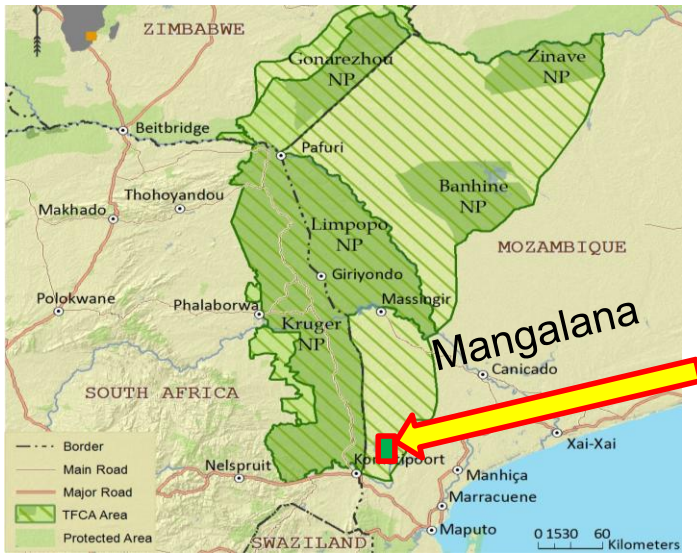
Mangalane community,  
Mozambique

# Mali Elephant Project (Oxford University)



- benefits are non-financial – paid only food, but engagement in anti-poaching activities supports cultural identity, help protect livestock from raiders, help them manage natural resources
- still have poaching but are helping curb it

# Community engagement against rhino poaching in Mangalane, Mozambique (WWF)



- financial benefits from gaining share of trophy hunting revenues – some for community development, some for community game scout programmes
- impact on poaching not yet clear, but community attitudes to wildlife and conservation have changed

# Recommendations



When developing and implementing approaches to address IWT:

- ***Recognise the central role*** of the communities that live close to wildlife in addressing and combating IWT;
- ***Strengthen community voices*** in IWT decision-making
- ***Support community rights and responsibilities*** for managing wildlife
- ***Strengthen communities' abilities to benefit*** from wildlife
- ***Ensure enforcement efforts are sensitive and accountable***
- ***Strengthen partnerships*** between communities, conservation NGOs and law enforcement agencies in tackling IWT;
- ***Strengthen the evidence base on*** the motivations for, drivers of, dynamics of, and responses to, IWT

See more at

[https://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp\\_ssc\\_sustainable\\_use\\_and\\_livelihoods\\_specialist\\_group/communities\\_and\\_wildlife\\_crime/](https://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp_ssc_sustainable_use_and_livelihoods_specialist_group/communities_and_wildlife_crime/)