

# Sustainability vs Overexploitation: A Nexus Between Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and the Climate Crisis

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ALDF

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## Overarching Themes:

- **Sustainability**
- **Development**
- **Climate Crisis**
- **Illegal Wildlife Trafficking**
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**
- **Endangered Species Act**



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# The Growth of Sustainability

- **Historical Progression**
  - 1798, Thomas *Malthus- An Essay on the Principle of Population*
  - 1968, Garrett Hardin- *Tragedy of the Commons*
  - 1987, Brundtland Commission- *Our Common Future*
  - 1992, United Nations, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- ***Our Common Future***
  - “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
  - Mandate- To address environmental issues as well as problems traditionally considered the domain of international law
- **Rio Declaration**
  - “Equitable Global Partnership”- 27 Principles
  - First 4 apply to sustainable development
    - Main theme- Humans are at the center of concern, and policies must incorporate environmental protection to meet developmental needs



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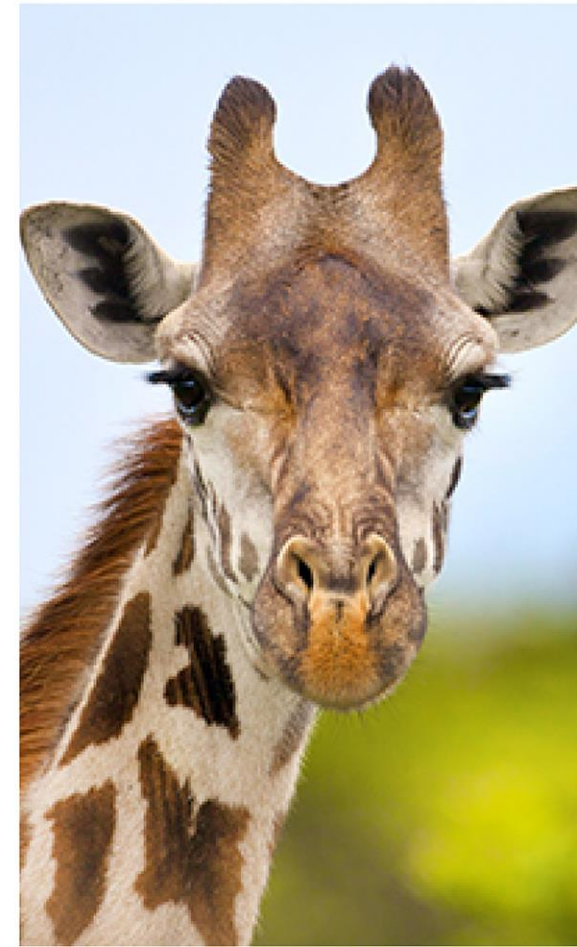
# The Dark Side of Development

- **Difficulties in a growing world**
- **Government runs on regulatory scheme**
  - EPA consideration in 2011
  - Gina McCarthy- Core Theme for 2014-18



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# The Climate Crisis and Sustainable Development

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**
  - Climate crisis is “one of the greatest challenges of our time”
  - “Adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development”
    - Increase in global temperature
    - Sea level rise
    - Ocean acidification
- **Failures in Implementation**
  - **Internationally**
    - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
  - **Domestically**
    - Endangered Species Act (ESA)



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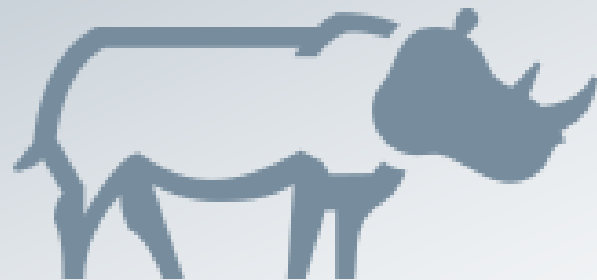


# Classification of species under CITES

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## Appendix I

Trade permitted only in exceptional circumstances - 3% of all species



(Example: African rhinoceros - threatened with extinction)

## Appendix II

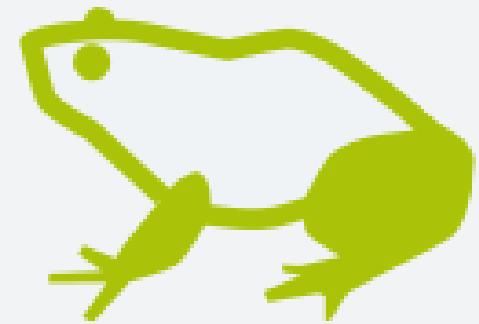
Trade strictly controlled - 97% of all species



(Example: Orchidaceae - at risk of becoming threatened)

## Appendix III

Request for assistance in controlling trade of species protected in a specific country



(Example: Chilean toad)

# The Overexploitaitve Nature of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking

- **Wildlife Trade- Specialized area of organized crime**
  - “One of the most lucrative businesses in the world”
    - 4th largest source of criminal earnings
    - 23 billion dollars, annually
  - **Mature and complex with diverse customers**
  - **Active Network**
    - Spans from Africa to the Amazon, Western Central Pacific, Indonesia and South East Asia with the main destination countries as China, Japan, Western European countries, and North America
    - II- Can be traded with permits
    - III- Ask other countries for support in monitoring trade
  - **Decisions reverberate into domestic trade**
- **Environmental crimes**
  - Cause ecosystem disruption, biodiversity loss, and cripple ecosystem, services



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# Case Studies



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# African Elephant- The Well-Known

- **Great Elephant Census- 375,000 remaining in Africa**
  - Ivory Demand
  - Crime on elephants costs Africa 1.9 billion dollars annually
  - Street value of ivory in Asia- 165-188 million
- **Climate Crisis**
  - Land-use changes
    - Reduce size of African habitat 81-97%
  - **Reduces Ecosystem Services**
    - Carbon Capture
    - Seed dispersal
- **90% of elephant mortality is because of poaching**
  - More elephants die from poaching than natural causes

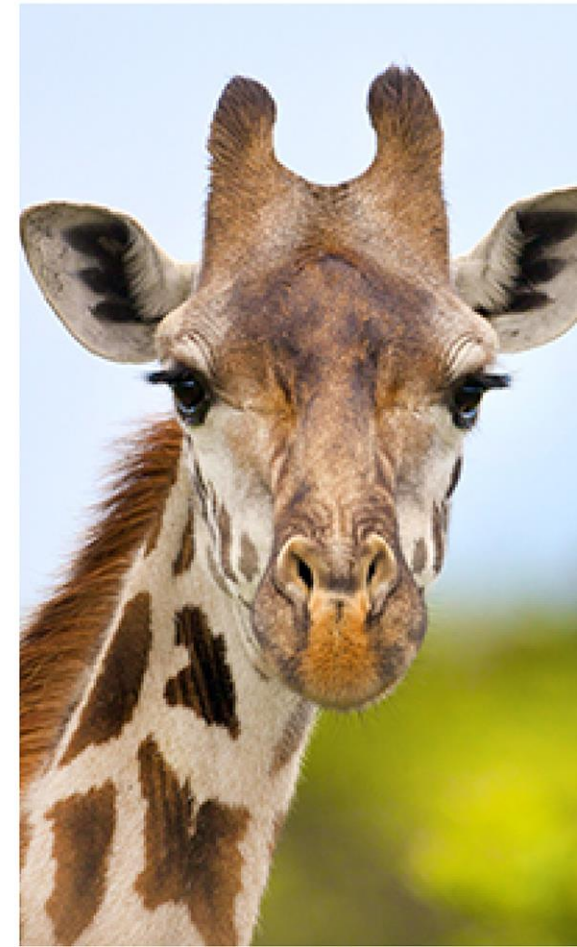


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# Seahorse- The Mismanaged

- **Annual amounts of approximately 150 million caught and sold illegally**
  - 24.4% of total marine products confiscated globally
  - Chinese traditional medicine market (TCM)
    - Exhibit antitumor, antiaging, and antifatigue properties and are able to suppress neuroinflammatory responses and collagen release
- **Souvenir and Aquarium trade- 1 million each annually**
- **Although there are seahorse bans, 22 countries supply, some with bans still in place- Thailand and Philippines**
- **Climate Crisis**
  - Coastal reef destruction, deforestation, plastic pollution, ocean acidification
    - Ocean acidification has greatest impact
- **Could be functionally extinct in some areas of the world in 25-30 years**



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# Pangolin-The Poster Child

- **One of the most illegally trafficked nonhumans**
  - All 8 species threatened
  - Reproduce slowly
- **Killed for meat and scales**
  - Scales used in TCM
  - Everything from breastfeeding issues to arthritis
- **Climate Crisis**
  - Sensitive to temperature variation
  - Habitat loss
  - Interspecies interaction
- **Ranked Class I under CITIES**
  - Still poached
    - Amounts tripled 2017-2019
    - 2019- 97 tons of pangolin scales intercepted



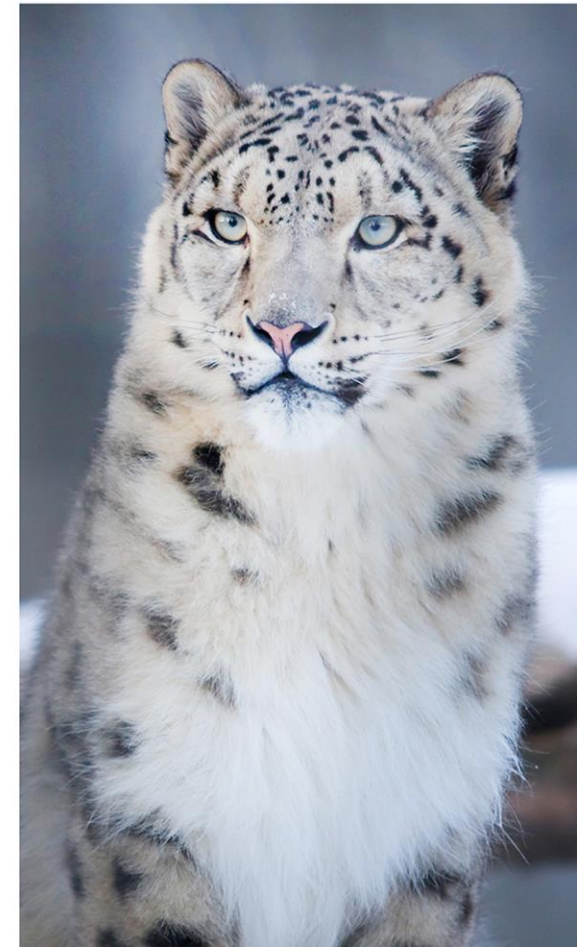
# Difficulties in Combating Illegal Trafficking

- **CITIES- Premiere agreement**
  - Conflicting commercial interests
    - Giraffe
  - **Regulate, not combat**
  - **Organized crime not in purview**
    - Low risk, high profit enterprise
      - Expanded portfolio
  - **Countries cannot adapt quickly enough to enforce**
    - Democratic Republic of the Congo
  - **Multilateral agreements are crucial**



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# Shortcomings of the ESA

- **Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Act**
  - Enacted in 2016
  - Directs federal agencies to work to strengthen law enforcement, reduce demand, and build international cooperation and commitment
- **US ranks as second largest market for illegal wildlife trafficking**
  - **ESA rollback**
    - Prohibition to consider climate crisis as “foreseeable”
    - Eradicates trade limits for threatened species
    - Allows for more trophy hunting
    - Reduces international cooperation regarding foreign species



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# Thank you!

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