



Overview

Illegal ivory and rhino horn trafficking is an escalating global issue. Elephants and rhinos may soon be driven to extinction by poaching. The demand for elephant ivory and rhino horn, driven by China, Japan, the Philippines, the United States and other countries, has created a massive international market that has detrimental economic, social and environmental impacts in Africa. Poaching is now a sophisticated international crime racket and a national security threat with terrorist organizations using profits to finance attacks.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently instituted a near ban on ivory and rhino import and domestic interstate trade. But the states must regulate in-state sales. Many states have enacted or introduced a ban on ivory and rhino horn trades in their jurisdictions.

Legislation

- In 2014, [New Jersey](#) and [New York](#) became the first states to ban sales of ivory and rhino horn products. [California](#) and [Washington](#) enacted similar laws in 2015, followed by [Hawaii](#) and [Oregon](#) in 2016.
- In 2017, at least 13 states considered bills to address wildlife trafficking, including Maryland ([HB686](#)) and New Mexico ([SB81](#)). A full list of 2017 bills is available [here](#).
- Some state bills include exemptions from ivory and rhino horn bans, such as antiques, musical instruments, and weapons within certain parameters; scientific, educational or museum purposes; and inheritance.

KEY POINTS

- Wildlife poaching is worth up to [\\$20 billion per year](#), and ranks only behind narcotics, weapons, and human trafficking in international crime activities.
- More than [30,000 elephants are killed annually](#), close to 100 elephants every day. At this rate elephants will be extinct in 10-20 years. Meanwhile, there are only 28,000 rhinos left globally, and 20,000 of these are the Southern white rhino.
- At least [one-third of ivory sold in the U.S. was illegally imported](#) from recently poached elephants. Recent investigations revealed that up to 90% of ivory sold in Los Angeles and Hawaii was illegal.

Other Resources

- Find current legislation and resources at [ncelenviro.org/issue/wildlife-trafficking/](#)
- [Facts on illegal wildlife trade](#): Humane Society International
- [Illegal Wildlife Trade](#): Wildlife Trafficking Alliance



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