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by

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**Promoting Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors to Reduce the  
Consumption of Illegal Wildlife Products in China**

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**by**

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# **Promoting Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors to Reduce the Consumption of Illegal Wildlife Products in China**

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The world is experiencing an unprecedented wildlife poaching crisis, which has already endangered and brought near to extinction hundreds of species. The rising purchasing power of growing middle classes in Asian countries is thought to be driving the increase in poaching activities in recent decades. China in particular is one of the world's largest consumers of legal and illegal wildlife products. Despite international regulations and national governmental efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade, the considerable Chinese demand for products like ivory tusks, rhino horn, tiger bone and pangolin scales continues to fuel poaching activities around the world. NGOs in China have attempted to address this demand through public awareness campaigns. The effectiveness of their efforts, however, remains debatable, and further studies into the nature of demand are required to formulate better campaigns and strategies. Therefore, the present report analyzes the different combinations of attitudes and behaviors that Chinese people can adopt with regards to the consumption of illegal wildlife products. The objective is to identify areas of opportunity for governmental and NGO efforts to reduce the consumption of wildlife products, based on what we know about the distribution of attitudes and behavior among the Chinese people. The recommendations

that conclude this report underline the need to combine well-targeted public awareness campaigns with governmental law enforcement to address the issue before it is too late.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The world is suffering from an unprecedented poaching crisis that is endangering and threatening several species with extinction. Organized crime syndicates involved in the killing, transportation, and final selling of illegal wildlife products have benefited from the rise in purchasing power of middle classes worldwide, but especially in Asia. With more available wealth in the last couple of decades, people in countries like Vietnam and China have been interested in acquiring “luxury” and “exotic” products that before were unattainable to them. Unfortunately, these products oftentimes include illegal wildlife parts.

Even though the international community has for decades tried to control the illegal wildlife trade worldwide, oftentimes focusing on wildlife conservation in source countries and enforcement of trade regulations at customs points, the financial and logistics resources of organized crime now outmatch those of international organizations. Corruption, lack of rule of law, and limited commitment from national governments are only some of the problems that continue to undermine international law enforcement efforts.

The international community now widely recognizes that more attention needs to be dedicated to demand reduction strategies. Curbing demand, particularly in large consumer countries like China would decrease the prices of illegal wildlife products, and would eventually reduce poachers’ incentives to hunt and trade. Environmental organizations in China, both national and international, have launched several public awareness campaigns with this aim in mind. Their strategies have been shifting from

Western-style campaigns focused on empathy and morality<sup>1</sup> towards more localized, targeted ones based on legality and influential Chinese key opinion leaders.<sup>2</sup>

The effectiveness of these campaigns, however, is still hard to evaluate. On the one hand, funds for pre- and post-campaign surveys tend to be limited, and if these surveys are conducted, they are usually carried out by the same organization that launched the campaign and are based on a very limited sample. The veracity of the results, therefore, is questionable. On the other hand, the effects of public awareness campaigns usually take time before their real effectiveness can be measured—since messages sometimes take decades to percolate into the minds and behavior of the general population. Moreover, in general “there is a lack of research on the value basis of environmentally relevant consumer choices in fast-growing developing economies.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, not much is known about who the consumers of these products are, why they choose to buy, and what would deter them from engaging in this activity.

The present report, therefore, attempts to identify who is—and who is not—consuming illegal wildlife products in China. It does so through the study of the different combinations of attitudes and behaviors individuals can hold towards the environment. Such an analysis will help discover areas of opportunity and risk that organizations dealing with demand reduction strategies can target to obtain hypothetically more effective results.

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<sup>1</sup> Empathy is an other-oriented emotional response, congruent with the perceived welfare of another person/animal. Morality encompasses the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. Prinz, Jesse. “Is Empathy Necessary for Morality?” In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by P. Goldie and A. Coplan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview with Li (Aster) Zhang, wildlife conservation specialist, Beijing Normal University, April 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Thøgersen, John, Yanfeng Zhou, and Guang Huang. “How Stable Is the Value Basis for Organic Food Consumption in China?” *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Accessed July 24, 2015.

To provide some context, the first section broadly depicts the current global poaching crisis, highlighting why this is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed, as well as why international efforts and agreements so far have not been able to stop the deaths of endangered animals. It also touches upon the interest top U.S. authorities have placed on demand reduction strategies that “instill a conservation ethic in consumers for the longer term.”<sup>4</sup>

The second section then turns towards the demand of illegal wildlife products in China. It includes the results of (the few) existing surveys regarding who the main consumers of illegal wildlife are and the uses consumers give to these products. This section also includes the source countries of the main products demanded. It ends with a short summary of the main Chinese governmental responses to this problem.

Some of the most prominent recent public awareness campaigns in China are described in section three. Each campaign includes an example of the message used to reach the population, as well as measures of the effectiveness of the campaign (whenever available). As this section shows, environmental organizations have turned to different messaging strategies and tools, attempting to reach as much of the Chinese population as possible. Some of the most recent examples include plays on words with Chinese characters and Mandarin pronunciation, demonstrating organizations’ efforts at localizing their message.

The next section focuses on environmentalism and how different cultures perceive nature in various ways, highlighting the necessity of considering the particularities of the target population when planning a campaign. In particular, it presents studies about how Chinese people think of and act towards the environment in general. Then, it addresses

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<sup>4</sup> Advisory Council. “The President’s Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking,” June 9, 2014. <http://blogs.law.stanford.edu/newsfeed/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2014/06/Final-recommendations-6-9-14.pdf>.

Ronald Inglehart's theories explaining why developed and developing countries have different levels of environmental concerns. As this section shows, however, Inglehart's explanation cannot fully be applied to the case of illegal wildlife consumption.

For this reason, the fifth section looks into the different combinations of attitudes and behaviors that an individual can hold with regards to the environment, explained through a two-by-two matrix. This matrix allows an easier identification of areas of opportunity for behavioral and attitudinal change. It also points to areas in which environmental awareness campaigns launched by non governmental organizations can be effective, as well as those in which governmental involvement is required to promote change.

Based on the proportion and characteristics of people in each area of the matrix, the final section presents recommendations for those involved in promoting anti-consumption of illegal wildlife products in China. This report concludes that environmental organizations should focus their efforts on people with "*positive attitudes*," reaching them through empathy-based campaigns and asking them to "spread the message" of conservation. These organizations should also target people with "*negative attitudes-positive behavior*" to generate awareness of the dangers of consumption (eventually altering their attitudes) and keep them from potentially becoming consumers. With regards to the "*positive attitude-negative behavior*", however, organizations should change their message. Instead of trying to generate empathy among this group (since empathy is already within these consumers' minds), organizations could highlight the legal consequences of illegal consumption. For this group, as well as for those with "*negative attitude-negative behavior*," governmental support is necessary for effective behavioral change. Law enforcement and lack of availability of products would

be able to generate a much faster change in consumption patterns than campaigns alone.

What is needed, then, is government's willingness to join the efforts.

## THE CURRENT POACHING CRISIS

Poaching and illegal trade of wildlife products are not new phenomena, but recent years have witnessed a worrying increase in these activities. The current crisis—the worst on record—is threatening with extinction hundreds of fauna and flora species. National and international institutions responsible of regulating wildlife trade and combating trafficking have not been able to cope with the problem, plagued with corruption, lack of rule of law and governance, and the involvement of transnational organized crime. With a (illegal) market worth an estimated \$19 billion dollars per year<sup>5</sup> and an increasing demand for this type of products, wildlife worldwide faces an ever-growing threat.

With weapons that can be acquired only from military forces—pointing to the complicity of governmental forces in poaching activities—poachers have intensely targeted African elephant and rhinoceros populations. Only in the last decade, the total population of forest elephants decreased by 62%.<sup>6</sup> According to estimates by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), in 2013 more than 20,000 African elephants were killed for their tusks.<sup>7</sup> Although poaching in East Africa has decreased from its 2011 peak—when poachers killed one of every twelve African elephants—West Africa’s situation is “at its worst since reliable record-keeping began.”<sup>8</sup> Since 1990, African elephants have been listed in

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<sup>5</sup> Ratchford, Marina, Beth Allgood, and Paul Todd. “The Global Security Implications of the Illegal Wildlife Trade.” *Criminal Nature*. Washington, D.C.: International Fund for Animal Welfare, 2013. [http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/ifaw-criminal-nature-2013-low-res\\_0.pdf](http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/ifaw-criminal-nature-2013-low-res_0.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Mathiesen, Karl. “Elephant Poaching Crisis Unchanged a Year after Global Pledge.” *The Guardian*. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/23/elephant-poaching-crisis-unchanged-a-year-after-global-pledge>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

CITES's Appendix I, with the exception of populations of Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa (all listed in Appendix II, see CITES Listings box below).<sup>9</sup>

#### **CITES LISTINGS**

CITES is an international agreement ratified by 180 governments that aims to ensure that international trade in animal and plant specimens does not threaten their survival. Currently, CITES stipulates varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 fauna and flora species.<sup>10</sup> This agreement establishes a mechanism for international cooperation, setting import, export, and re-export controls on species listed in three appendices. Among the criteria considered for CITES listings are (1) trade in the species; (2) population size of the species; (3) quality of habitat used by the species; (4) extent of the area where the species is distributed; (5) number of subpopulations and their size; and (6) reproductive potential.<sup>11</sup> Based on these criteria, species can be listed in one of three appendices, according to the degree of protection they require:<sup>12</sup>

Appendix I: Species threatened with extinction. Trade of these species is limited to exceptional circumstance.

Appendix II: Species not yet threatened with extinction but may become so if trade is not controlled. Also includes species that resemble those on Appendix I ("look alikes"). International trade may be authorized by the granting of an export permit or re-export certificate, which should only be granted if the relevant authorities are satisfied that

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<sup>9</sup> CITES. "African Elephant." Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 2013. [http://www.cites.org/eng/gallery/species/mammal/african\\_elephant.html](http://www.cites.org/eng/gallery/species/mammal/african_elephant.html).

<sup>10</sup> CITES. "What Is CITES?" Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 2013. <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>.

<sup>11</sup> Sheikh, Pervaze A., and Mary Lynne Corn. "The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Background and Issues." *Congressional Research Service*, Library of Congress, 2005. <http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/RL32751.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> CITES. "The CITES Appendices." Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 2013. <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/index.php>

certain conditions are met, particularly that trade will not negatively affect the survival of the species in the wild.

Appendix III: Species protected by at least one Party state that has asked other Parties for assistance in controlling trade.

Poaching is also driving African rhinos to extinction, despite being listed in CITES's Appendix I. In 2011, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declared the Western black rhino as extinct, and included the five remaining rhino species on the Red List of Threatened Species.<sup>13</sup> The world's Northern white rhino population has been decimated to a single male and four females—all infertile.<sup>14</sup> South Africa, the country with the largest rhino population in the world (with approximately 20,000 Southern white rhinos, 93% of the total world population and 73% of all wild rhinos),<sup>15</sup> has suffered a dramatic increase in poached rhinos from 13 poached in 2007, to 1,215 in 2014.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, pangolin populations have halved in the past 15 years.<sup>17</sup> This scaly anteater is currently the world's most illegally traded wild mammal.<sup>18</sup> In 2013, an

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<sup>13</sup> Save the Rhino. "Poaching: The Statistics." Accessed June 26, 2015. [https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino\\_info/poaching\\_statistics](https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino_info/poaching_statistics).

<sup>14</sup> Sieff, Kevin. "How the Fate of an Entire Subspecies of Rhino Was Left to One Elderly Male." *Washington Post*. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2015/06/16/how-the-fate-of-an-entire-subspecies-of-rhino-was-left-to-one-elderly-male/>.

<sup>15</sup> Daily Mail Reporter. "South Africa's Rhino Population close to 'Tipping Point' as 1,000 Die." *Mail Online*. Accessed August 1, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2541495/South-Africas-rhino-population-close-tipping-point-poachers-kill-record-1-000-year-50-2012.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Save the Rhino. *op.cit.*

<sup>17</sup> "Wildlife under Threat from Asia's Poaching Crisis – in Pictures." *The Guardian*. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2015/feb/05/wildlife-under-threat-from-asias-poaching-crisis-in-pictures>.

<sup>18</sup> IUCN. "The Most Traded Wild Mammal-the Pangolin-Is Being Eaten to Extinction." *News*, July 22, 2013. [http://www.iucn.org/news\\_homepage/news\\_by\\_date/?13434/The-most-traded-wild-mammal--the-Pangolin--is-being-eaten-to-extinction](http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/news_by_date/?13434/The-most-traded-wild-mammal--the-Pangolin--is-being-eaten-to-extinction).



estimated 81,000 pangolins were killed for the illegal market.<sup>19</sup> Although all eight species of pangolins are listed under CITES Appendix II, according to IUCN's Red List, these eight species are in decline—with the Sundra and Chinese pangolin listed as Critically Endangered.<sup>20</sup> The IUCN also lists tigers as an Endangered species, with as few as 3,200 specimens left in the wild, and CITES includes tigers within Appendix I. TRAFFIC calculates that two tigers per week died from 2000 to 2014.<sup>21</sup>

As the above examples demonstrate, the poaching crisis is a problem that calls for an urgent response. Coordinated international efforts—including multiple and cross-disciplinary international organizations (both governmental and non-governmental), conventions and other multilateral measures—are fairly new and continue to evolve. Coordination issues within these efforts still pose obstacles to effective wildlife protection. Activity redundancies, difficulties in information sharing, and general lack of consensus on legal agreements are evidence of this problem. Multilateral efforts, moreover, face another set of challenges.

The identification of endangered species is a key element of the wildlife protection regime and is required for informed decision-making. While CITES, IUCN and non-governmental organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) conduct scientific evaluations of animal species, their monitoring capacity is limited. This limitation derives from these organizations' need to largely rely on available resources and cooperation (i.e. truthfulness and willingness to address the issue) from countries in

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<sup>19</sup> Cota-Larson, Rhishja. "Pangolins Roll into the Wildlife Trafficking Spotlight." *National Geographic*, February 18, 2014. <http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2014/02/18/pangolins-roll-into-the-wildlife-trafficking-spotlight/>.

<sup>20</sup> IUCN. "The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species," 2015. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/search>.

<sup>21</sup> WWF. "Tiger Facts." *WWF Tx2*. Accessed June 26, 2015. <http://tigers.panda.org/tiger-facts/>.

which the species reside—both of which tend to be limited.<sup>22</sup> Multilateral organizations and wildlife NGOs also heavily rely on member contributions and public donations to fund enforcement activities. Although funding has increased in recent years, resources available for wildlife protection are still outmatched by those of the organized crime groups involved in wildlife trafficking.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond financial obstacles, organizations and multinational bodies like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) also have limited access to the information gathering, law enforcement, and judicial resources necessary to enforce their decisions.<sup>24</sup> The wildlife regime (CITES, UNODC, ASEAN-WEN, and NGOs, for example) cannot impinge on state sovereignty by forcing countries to accept inspectors. Therefore, most wildlife regime inspectors and researchers must receive state permission to monitor and evaluate species within a state's borders. When dealing with trafficking, however, even organizations like INTERPOL<sup>25</sup> have faced resistance in some countries, particularly from the developing world, where governmental authorities themselves may be involved in trafficking activities.<sup>26</sup>

States challenged by wildlife trafficking-related problems often face more systemic governance issues and do not have the capacity or resources to submit

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<sup>22</sup> Reeve, Rosalind. "Policing International Trade in Endangered Species: The CITES Treaty and Compliance." *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal* 14, no. 2 (May 1, 2003): 310. doi:10.1108/meq.2003.14.2.310.4.

<sup>23</sup> Zimmerman, Mara E. "Black Market for Wildlife: Combating Transnational Organized Crime in the Illegal Wildlife Trade, The." *Vand. J. Transnat'l L.* 36 (2003): 1657.

<sup>24</sup> Cockayne, James. *The UN Security Council and Organized Criminal Activity: Experiments in International Law Enforcement. WIDER*, 2014. [http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/178055/ipublicationdocument\\_singledocument/5bccabe0-dd3e-43f4-9037-bd70ecc766b7/en/WP03-TheUNSCandOrganizedCriminalActivity.pdf](http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/178055/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/5bccabe0-dd3e-43f4-9037-bd70ecc766b7/en/WP03-TheUNSCandOrganizedCriminalActivity.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> INTERPOL conducts operations with states to fight environmental crime, including wildlife trafficking. In particular, INTERPOL assists in dismantling environmental crime networks, providing intelligence, forming taskforces with local and national law enforcement agencies, strengthening capacity building, and gathering law enforcement support to combat environmental crime. INTERPOL. "Operations" Accessed August 1, 2015. <http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Operations>

<sup>26</sup> Cockayne, James, *op.cit.*

comprehensive reports on wildlife trafficking.<sup>27</sup> As a result of this incapacity and financial limitations, customs officers in most developing nations have little knowledge about different conventions and their own role in implementing them, have low awareness of national laws regulating wildlife, and have limited access to human resources and equipment.<sup>28</sup> The amount of obstacles to reduce poaching and trafficking, therefore, make the reduction of demand a more viable and cost-effective alternative to combat wildlife crime.

The worrying poaching trend has already caught the attention of high-level leaders worldwide, including U.S. authorities. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2012 described illegal wildlife trade as a “global challenge that spans continents and crosses oceans.”<sup>29</sup> Beyond conservation worries, Secretary Clinton characterized the trafficking of live animals and animal products as “a national security issue, a public health issue and an economic security issue.”<sup>30</sup> With regards to these concerns, in 2013 President Obama launched the “Executive Order 13648 on Combating Wildlife Trafficking.” This order called for the creation of the Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking and the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking.

In June 2014, the Advisory Council presented its recommendations to implement the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking. Among these points, the

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<sup>27</sup> Choi, Charles Q. “Rules Needed to Protect Endangered Species, Researchers Say.” *LiveScience.com*. Accessed July 5, 2015. <http://www.livescience.com/10923-rules-needed-protect-endangered-species-researchers.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Schaedla, William H. “Wildlife Smuggling: Augmenting Southeast Asia’s Intergovernmental Response.” In *Transnational Crime in the Asia-Pacific: A Workshop Report*. Canberra: RSPAS, Australian National University, 42–50, 2007. [http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/IR/TEC/Transnational\\_environmental\\_crime\\_Asia\\_Pacific\\_workshop\\_report\\_TEC\\_Workshop\\_Report\\_2007.pdf#page=46](http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/IPS/IR/TEC/Transnational_environmental_crime_Asia_Pacific_workshop_report_TEC_Workshop_Report_2007.pdf#page=46).

<sup>29</sup> “Clinton: Illegal Wildlife Trade Demands Global Solution.” *International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development*, November 13, 2012. <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa/news/clinton-illegal-wildlife-trade-demands-global-solution>.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Council dedicates an entire section to the importance of effective demand reduction strategies in consumer countries. These strategies involve U.S. government funding for existing demand reduction efforts already taking place in key consumer markets, “which aim to reduce demand immediately [...] and instill a conservation ethic in consumers for the longer term.”<sup>31</sup> The Council argues that in most cases, the U.S. can have a more significant impact working with existing campaigns, rather than designing and implementing new ones.

So far, however, the wildlife protection regime has focused much of its conservation efforts on addressing the supply-side of the wildlife trade, while paying less attention to understanding consumption dynamics. Some suggest that this policy bias is due to a preference for enforcement projects that offer results that are achievable within a defined period of time and budget, while demand reduction ones are longer term (sometimes more than a decade) and budgets are not easily estimated.<sup>32</sup>

Some emerging projects, such as those from NGOs like TRAFFIC-International, WildAid, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), and WCS, are beginning to explore consumer behavior and motivations, identifying the need to engage with consumers “on their own terms.” Most campaigns, however, continue to target “awareness raising” without striving to be fully culturally intelligible to actual consumers of wildlife products. Some NGOs focus efforts on general education and awareness, without targeting actual purchasers of illegal wildlife products, or dealing in a culturally specific manner with the right demographics. Examples of recent and ongoing public awareness campaigns in China will be described later in this report.

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<sup>31</sup> Advisory Council, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> Duffy, Rosaleen, and Jasper Humphreys. “Mapping Donors: Key Areas for Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade (Africa and Asia),” *Evidence on Demand-UK Department for International Development*. 2014. [http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/18868/1/EoD\\_HD151\\_June2014\\_Mapping\\_Donors%20Final%20Report.pdf](http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/18868/1/EoD_HD151_June2014_Mapping_Donors%20Final%20Report.pdf).

## CHINA’S DEMAND FOR ILLEGAL WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

In the early 2000s, demand for wildlife products shifted towards the developing world, particularly Asia. With standards of living rapidly improving in China, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, the buying power of growing middle classes increased. This new purchasing power translated into the consumption of food delicacies, luxury products, and traditional medicine at an unprecedented rate.

<b>Markets</b>	<b>Examples of Products</b>
Food	Snake, turtle and tortoise, shark
Medicine	Musk, tiger bone, bear bile, deer antler, rhino horn
Crafts	Ivory, antelope skull
Decoration	Tiger skin, crocodile skin, Tibetan antelope wool
Pets	Turtles, lizards, blue peacocks

Table 1: Examples of wildlife products consumed in China.

Throughout China’s history, wildlife has been regarded as an important source of food and income.<sup>33</sup> Utilitarian views towards nature have driven China’s economic development for more than three millennia, “marked by the constant expansion of agricultural and otherwise utilizable areas at the expense of the original flora and fauna.”<sup>34</sup> Today, China is one of the largest consumers of wildlife products (legal and illegal) in the world, within a variety of markets (see Table 1).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin. “Wildlife Consumption and Conservation Awareness in China: A Long Way to Go.” *Biodiversity and Conservation* 23, no. 9 (May 6, 2014): 2371–81. doi:10.1007/s10531-014-0708-4.

<sup>34</sup> Roetz, Heiner. “On Nature and Culture in Zhou China.” *Concepts of Nature: A Chinese-European Cross-Cultural Perspective* 1 (2010): 198.

<sup>35</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin, *op. cit.*

<b>Animal</b>	<b>Estimated volume consumed in China (annually)</b>
Turtle	10,000 tons of freshwater turtles (food and TCM)
Seahorses	20 million animals (TCM)
Sharks	100 million animals <sup>36</sup> (food)
Elephant	62 tons <sup>37</sup> / 1,500 tusks seized <sup>38</sup>

Table 2: Estimated volume consumed in China (annually).

According to IFAW, “wealth is increasingly overtaking health as the demand driver for many endangered species.”<sup>39</sup> The development of a consumer economy and increasing individual purchasing power in recent years corresponds with a substantial growth in Chinese demand for wildlife products, particularly in China’s most developed Southern cities.<sup>40</sup> Besides, certain wildlife products (such as ivory carvings) have traditionally represented a status symbol in China, and were until recently available to a privileged few. The cultural interest in defining status also plays a role in fueling the demand for these products.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> WildAid. “Shark Fin Demand in China Down, Report Finds.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/news/shark-fin-demand-china-down-report-finds>.

<sup>37</sup> Figure representing the amount of ivory imported legally by China in March 2009. Personal interview with Li (Aster) Zhang, wildlife conservation specialist, Beijing Normal University, April 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Amount of tusks seized in/going to China in 2011. Gabriel, Grace, Ning Hua, and Juan Wang, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> IFAW. “Reducing Demand for Wildlife Products.” *IFAW*. Accessed July 7, 2015.

<http://www.ifaw.org/international/our-work/wildlife-trade/reducing-demand-wildlife-products>.

<sup>40</sup> TRAFFIC. “Understanding Chinese Consumer Motivation the Key to Controlling Unsustainable Wildlife Consumption.” *TRAFFIC - Wildlife Trade News*. Accessed July 7, 2015.

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/1/28/understanding-chinese-consumer-motivation-the-key-to-control.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Gabriel, Grace, Ning Hua, and Juan Wang. “Making a Killing: A 2011 Survey of Ivory Markets in China.” *IFAW*, 2012.

Some Chinese investors are shifting their focus towards art-based markets, which involve paintings, porcelain, jade, mahogany furniture, and rhino horn and ivory carvings. Elephant ivory in particular is increasingly coveted as “white gold,” with wholesale prices tripling since 2006 and ivory often promoted as having “inflation-proof investment value.”<sup>42</sup> Currency fluctuations between the Chinese Yuan (RMB) and the US Dollar have also increased the appeal of illegal wildlife trade. The strengthened RMB provides more purchasing power for Chinese buyers who convert RMB to USD to trade in overseas markets. Smuggled items are then sold within China at high prices, allowing smugglers and traders a margin of profits.<sup>43</sup>

Wildlife consumers in China tend to be young (between 26-45 years old) and male. Consumers with higher income (USD \$625/month and above) and higher educational attainment (college level and above) also consume at higher rates.<sup>44</sup> These trends may be associated with the prevalence of wildlife consumption for business purposes. In a 2010 survey conducted by TRAFFIC, more than a quarter of respondents considered “edible” wildlife to be a special treat for guests, representing social status and respect for and closeness to guests.<sup>45</sup>

Using ivory for gift giving purposes is especially common, since this product is considered a precious present. “Gift giving involves ‘*guanxi*’ and face, which are deemed important by Chinese for maintaining interpersonal relationships.”<sup>46</sup> Gift giving of ivory is

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<sup>42</sup> Gabriel, Grace, Ning Hua, and Juan Wang, *op. cit.*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin, *op.cit.*

<sup>45</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao. “Understanding the Motivations: The First Step toward Influencing China’s Unsustainable Wildlife Consumption.” *TRAFFIC East Asia*. TRAFFIC East Asia, China, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Gao, Yufang, and Susan G. Clark. “Elephant Ivory Trade in China: Trends and Drivers.” *Biological Conservation* 180 (2014): 23–30.

also closely associated with bribery, and there is evidence of upscale ivory artworks being reported in official corruption cases.<sup>47</sup>

Surveys have also found that a majority of participants considered “wild” food sources as “unpolluted,” “precious,” and “special,” with 53% of those surveyed saying that wildlife products had more medicinal or nourishing benefits for the body than non-wild meat foodstuff.<sup>48</sup> Information about the curative properties of wildlife products seems to be largely transmitted by word-of-mouth, particularly from people in older generations and among traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioners. Older individuals (45-60 years old) tend to use wildlife for medicinal purposes and have strong beliefs in its curative powers.<sup>49</sup>

<b>Sources of Key Illegal Wildlife Products Consumed in China</b>	
Pangolin	Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand)
Elephant ivory	Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa
Rhino horn	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania
Tiger parts	China (tiger farms)
Bear parts	China (bear farms)

Table 3: Sources of Key Illegal Wildlife Products Consumed in China.

Wildlife products consumed in China are sourced from a wide number of regions around the world, and mainly enter the Chinese mainland through porous land borders in

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*



Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar, as well as busy ports in Hong Kong and Macao. However, some products are also domestically harvested (see Table 3).<sup>50</sup>

China became a party to CITES in January 1981, being CITES the first multilateral environmental treaty that China ever joined. The CITES Management Authority of China is one of the largest in the world, with 130 full-time staff and 22 branch offices in the mainland.<sup>51</sup> More recently, China has participated in “Operation Cobra”, “Operation Cobra II” (2014) and “Operation Cobra III” (2015) in cooperation with 28 other countries (including the U.S.), to combat wildlife trafficking. The U.S. State Department, USFWS and the China Wildlife Conservation Association were the main financial sponsors of these operations.<sup>52</sup> The objective of these month-long operations was to promote cross-border law enforcement cooperation through capacity building and information sharing activities. As a result of these efforts, “36 rhino horns, over three metric tons of elephant ivory, over 10,000 turtles, more than 1,000 skins of protected species, and more than 10,000 European eels” were seized.<sup>53</sup>

Domestically, the State Forestry Administration’s Public Security Bureau (established in 1984) is the governmental entity in charge of wildlife law enforcement. Its

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<sup>50</sup> Pantel, Sandrine, and Noorainie Awang Anak. “A Preliminary Assessment of Sunda Pangolin Trade in Sabah.” *TRAFFIC South East Asia*, 2010; “Illegal Ivory Trade.” *The New York Times*. Accessed July 14, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/04/world/africa/illegal-ivory-trade.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/04/world/africa/illegal-ivory-trade.html?_r=0); African Conservation Foundation. “Facts and Fiction: The Rhino Horn Trade,” 2012. Accessed April 20, 2015. [http://www.africanconservation.org/images/files/Rhino\\_Poaching\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.africanconservation.org/images/files/Rhino_Poaching_Brochure.pdf); Staff, N. P. R. “‘Blood Of The Tiger’: Shedding Light On China’s Farmed-Tiger Trade.” *NPR.org*. Accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/2015/01/10/375894967/blood-of-the-tiger-shedding-light-on-chinas-farmed-tiger-trade>; Jacobs, Andrew. “Chinese Bear Bile Farming Draws Charges of Cruelty.” *The New York Times*, May 21, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/22/world/asia/chinese-bear-bile-farming-draws-charges-of-cruelty.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Scanlon, John. “Thirtieth Anniversary of CITES in China.” *CITES*, April 8, 2011. [http://cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110408\\_SG\\_remarks\\_China\\_30th.php](http://cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110408_SG_remarks_China_30th.php).

<sup>52</sup> IFAW “IFAW applauds global wildlife protection operation: Operation ‘Cobra II’ Nets Traffickers in Africa and Asia.” *IFAW*. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/ifaw-applauds-global-wildlife-protection-operation-operation-%E2%80%9Ccobra-ii%E2%80%9D-nets-traffickers-africa>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

role involves the development of statistical reports and the coordination of programs against wildlife-related criminal activities, as well as wildlife breeding and utilization.<sup>54</sup> This Bureau is guided by the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Wildlife” (1989), which seeks to protect endangered species listed in national and international lists, as well as to regulate captive breeding and sales of animal parts. The National People’s Congress Standing Committee is currently revising this law, looking to place more emphasis on conservation and protection of species, rather than breeding and trading.<sup>55</sup>

China’s central authorities have engaged in other activities aimed at showing their commitment to reducing the demand of wildlife products. The government took an important step in 2012 by banning ivory, rhino horn, and tiger bone in auctions, reducing overall auction sales of these products on mainland China by 40% in a year.<sup>56</sup> That same year, as part of the Chinese Communist Party’s austerity and anti-corruption campaigns, shark fin soup was banned at official banquets, along with bird nests and other wild animal products. Since then, sales of shark fin have fallen from 50-70%.<sup>57</sup> Other efforts have involved the donation of airtime (on state-controlled Chinese Central Television) and advertisement spaces in social media, subway stations, and airports (through display boards, showcases, posts and leaflets) for public service announcements and public awareness campaigns related to demand reduction.<sup>58</sup> Law enforcement authorities have

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<sup>54</sup> China Forest Fire Management. “Introduction to Forestry Public Security Bureau (Forest Fire Management Office) of State Forestry Administration.” Accessed July 7, 2015. [http://219.239.221.19/cffm\\_office/english/about.html](http://219.239.221.19/cffm_office/english/about.html).

<sup>55</sup> “China’s Wildlife Experts Call for Effective Wild Animal Conservation in Draft Law.” Accessed July 7, 2015. <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/7735-China-s-wildlife-experts-call-for-effective-wild-animal-conservation-in-draft-law>.

<sup>56</sup> Personal interview with IFAW China representative, April 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Duggan, Jennifer. “Sales of Shark Fin in China Drop by up to 70%” *The Guardian*. Accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/chinas-choice/2014/aug/08/sales-of-shark-fin-china-drop-70>.

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview with WildAid China representative, April 2015.

also worked with organizations like IFAW and online trading platforms such as Baidu to limit the amount of online sales of ivory and illegal TCM.<sup>59</sup>

In January 2014, in the context of the London Conference on illegal wildlife trade and following U.S. footsteps, Chinese authorities burned 6.1 tons of seized ivory in a public event that signaled the government's interest in addressing this problem. A month later, China announced a one-year moratorium on the import of ivory carvings. However, according to IFAW, this highly advertised ivory ban is only a “*temporary suspension of carved ivory imports, from only a few southern African countries with CITES Appendix II elephant populations.*”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, this ban:

- Does not apply to raw tusks (most of the ivory legally imported are raw tusks, carved ivory is only a very small portion of imports).
- Does not apply to a majority of countries in Africa because they already prohibit the legal export of ivory adhering to CITES.
- Is not a permanent ban.
- Is not a full domestic trade ban.<sup>61</sup>

More recently, on May 29, 2015, during an official event in which 1,455 pounds of ivory were crushed, the head of China's State Forestry Administration stated that “[the Chinese government] will strictly control ivory processing and trade until the commercial processing and sale of ivory and its products are eventually halted.”<sup>62</sup> Meng Xianlin, China's top representative to the CITES said the government is selling five tons of ivory

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<sup>59</sup> Personal interview with representative from IFAW China, April 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Gabriel, Grace Ge. “China's Ivory Ban Is Not The Victory It Appears To Be.” *The Dodo*. Accessed August 1, 2015. <https://www.thedodo.com/community/GraceGeGabriel/china-ivory-import-ban-1062518769.html>.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Torchia, Christopher. “Conservationists Say New China Policy Could Stop Elephant Poaching.” *The Portland Press Herald / Maine Sunday Telegram*. Accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.pressherald.com/2015/06/25/conservationists-say-new-china-policy-could-stop-elephant-poaching/>.

a year to carving workshops, but would “gradually” reduce that annual quota to zero. Organizations question the government’s timeline and plan of action for this ivory restriction (as will be further discussed in this report’s Recommendations section), especially after Meng declared that for a total ban to be in place, “one year, two years, three years, four years, ten years...Is that quick or not compared to the history of the world?”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Denyer, Simon. “China Calls on US to Follow Its Lead in Eradicating Ivory Trade.” *The Guardian*. Accessed August 6, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/09/china-us-eradicate-ivory-trade>.

## **DEMAND REDUCTION PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS IN CHINA**

Besides governmental efforts to reduce the demand of illegal wildlife products, wildlife conservation non-governmental organizations in China (both national and international) have also contributed through different mechanisms. Some organizations, such as WCS, are active supporters of local enforcement of international wildlife conservation agreements, helping Chinese authorities train customs officials in species identification and applicable legislation.<sup>64</sup> Other organizations, including IFAW and WildAid, have focused on public education and awareness raising campaigns, aiming to educate consumers on the negative consequences of illegal wildlife consumption. Their campaigns often rely on social media, television, magazines, billboards, and radio to transmit their messages, sometimes with support of governmental entities.<sup>65</sup>

This section looks at some of the most relevant and recent public awareness campaigns, their goals, strategies, delivery mechanisms, and relative effectiveness (where such information is available). As these examples show, campaign organizers attempt to transmit messages such as the following:

- Consuming wildlife products causes harm to animals.
- Consuming wildlife products causes harm to others (in source countries and in China).
- Consuming wildlife products is harmful to the environment.
- Wildlife products do not have curative powers/have health risks.
- Consuming wildlife products is punished by law.

The effectiveness of campaigns is very difficult to measure with precision, as well as knowing which audiences are better to target (particular consumers vs. general

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<sup>64</sup> Personal interview with WCS in China representative, April 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Personal interview with WildAid China representative, April 2015.

population), which delivery mechanisms are more effective, and which messages can best affect consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Wildlife groups that conduct public awareness campaigns are often their own evaluators, and while demand for a product may decrease, establishing causality (particularly when accompanied by governmental efforts) is hard to do.

#### WILDAID: "I'M FINISHED WITH FINS" (2006)



Figure 1: "I'm FINISHED with Fins", WildAid Campaign, 2006.<sup>66</sup>

Considered one of WildAid's most well-known campaigns in China, "I'm FINISHED with Fins" relied on celebrity ambassadors and a massive media outreach to educate the public on the shark fin industry in Asia. The message "When the buying stops, the killing can too" was promoted through social media, television, and PSAs in heavily transited public spaces (e.g. subway stations, shopping centers, hospitals and schools). WildAid invited citizens to pledge online ([wildaid.org/sayno](http://wildaid.org/sayno)) to stop

<sup>66</sup> "WildAid - Can China Save the World's Sharks?" *Origin Magazine*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://www.originmagazine.com/2013/12/31/wildaid-can-china-save-the-worlds-sharks/>.

consuming shark fin products, with the final objective of influencing governmental policies in countries (like China) where finning practices most regularly occurred.<sup>67</sup>

The campaign's message, translated into Mandarin as "I don't [eat] wings" (我不翅了), was transmitted through celebrities that ranged from athletes (most notably, Yao Ming, right side of Figure 1) to pop stars, who pledged publicly that they were "finished with fins." Public service announcements aired 3,250 times on 19 channels between 2006 and 2008, and reached 200 million Weibo users through social media. Around 340,000 users uploaded their own photos or signed the pledge within the first two weeks of the campaign.

According to WildAid, this campaign (in combination with government bans at official events) has contributed to a 50%-70% decrease in shark fin consumption.<sup>68</sup> This organization's self-conducted survey in 2013 found that thanks to this campaign, awareness of the source of shark fin soup and its impact on shark populations increased from 25% in 2006 to 96% in 2013.<sup>69</sup> The same survey showed that 65% of respondents said that awareness campaigns were most responsible for their desire to reduce or stop consuming shark fin.

Despite these survey results, it is not possible to conclusively argue that WildAid's campaign was the main causal factor in reduced consumption of shark fin. Attitudes worldwide toward the shark fin trade had been changing for over a decade. In China in particular, negative health effects, such as high mercury levels and potentially toxic counterfeit fins, had already been linked to reduced consumption of shark fins.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> WildAid. "Shark Fin Demand in China Down, Report Finds." *WildAid*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/news/shark-fin-demand-china-down-report-finds>.

<sup>68</sup> WildAid. "Sharks." *WildAid*. Accessed August 1, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/sharks>.

<sup>69</sup> Whitcraft, S., Hofford, A., Hilton, P., O'Malley, M., Jaiteh, V. and P. Knights. "Evidence of Declines in Shark Fin Demand, China." *WildAid*. San Francisco: 2014.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*.

Moreover, this campaign coincided with a governmental ban that prohibited shark fin and birds nest soups at official banquets (addressed in the next section).

**IFAW: “MOM I HAVE TEETH” CAMPAIGN (2009)**

In a 2007 poll, IFAW discovered that 60% of people did not know that ivory products (carved tusks, bracelets, seals and chopsticks) were made from parts of elephants that had either died from natural causes or had been killed by poachers. It also found that 80% of people would not have bought these items if they had known their origins. Based on these results, IFAW China decided to launch a public service announcement to enlighten consumers about the origins of their ivory products, while also appealing to viewers’ empathy to stop their consumption.

In 2009, IFAW created the poster ad titled “Mom, I have teeth” (see Figure 2 below), which was placed at Beijing’s Capital International Airport and subways stations in Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, and Nanjing.<sup>71</sup> More recently, IFAW launched a smartphone app through which users can pledge to stop buying ivory (innovatively, by placing one’s thumb on the screen) and the “Mom, I have teeth” ad is displayed.<sup>72</sup>

An evaluation of the campaign conducted by Rapid Asia on May 2013, discovered that after being exposed to this ad, those saying they will definitely not buy ivory products increased from 33% up to 66%. It also showed that 43% of urban Chinese were not aware of the government license system under which you can buy ivory legally but only in certain outlets, with 32% of those who were not aware believing that all ivory sold is legal. According to this study, the ad had positive effects on non-buyers of ivory too. Within this segment, those saying that they may buy ivory in the future was reduced

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<sup>71</sup> IFAW. “Promoting Animal Welfare in China.” *IFAW*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/node/2485>.

<sup>72</sup> Personal interview with IFAW China representative, April 2015.



from 10% to 2%, while those saying they will definitely not buy increased from 61% to 81%.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 2: “Mom, I Have Teeth” Campaign, IFAW, 2009.

**WILDAID, SAVE THE ELEPHANTS AND AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION: “SAY NO TO IVORY” (2013)**

This ongoing three-year campaign aims at reducing ivory demand by educating Chinese people about the consequences of ivory consumption. Similar to other campaigns, Chinese and international celebrities<sup>74</sup> are also part of “Say No to Ivory” messages in print advertisements and public service announcements on TV, airports, subways and other public transportation. A large part of the campaign’s TV broadcast is done on donated time thanks to China Central Television (CCTV), the predominant state-run TV station in China.<sup>75</sup> This campaign also engages Internet users in social media initiatives and tries to commit as many individuals as possible to the “Ivory Free Pledge”:

<sup>73</sup> Rapid Asia. “Impact Evaluation on Ivory Trade in China: IFAW PSA ‘Mom, I Have Teeth,’” May 2013. <http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/ifaw-china-ivory-report.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Some of these celebrities include: basketball player Yao Ming, Chinese film director Jiang Wen, actress Li Bingbing, actor Edward Norton, the Duke of Cambridge (Prince William), and soccer player David Beckham. WildAid. “Elephants.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://wildaid.org/elephants>.

<sup>75</sup> Personal interview with a WildAid China representative, April 2015.

(1) Refuse sales and gifts of ivory; (2) Tell others about Africa’s diminishing elephant population; (3) Support government actions aimed at ending the ivory trade. As of August 2015, 18,089 people have taken the pledge worldwide.<sup>76</sup>

The campaign’s three main objectives are:<sup>77</sup>

- Raise awareness in China of the elephant poaching crisis.
- Support Chinese lawmakers in banning ivory sales.
- Reduce demand for ivory in China, Hong Kong, and Thailand.



Figure 3: Author in front of “Say No to Ivory” Campaign ad featuring David Beckham, Beijing subway station, April 2015.

A year into the campaign, WildAid through HorizonKey surveyed 935 residents in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to evaluate changes in attitudes and behaviors since the launch of the campaign. The key findings—which seemed to be impressive in terms of public awareness in major cities, but questionable in terms of representativeness of the entire Chinese population—were as follows:<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> WildAid. “Be Ivory Free.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://wildaid.org/ivoryfree>.

<sup>77</sup> WildAid. “Elephants.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 2, 2015. <http://wildaid.org/elephants>.

<sup>78</sup> WildAid. “Ivory Demand in China 2012-2014,” *Wild Aid*. San Francisco: 2014. [http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/Print\\_Ivory%20Report\\_Final\\_v3.pdf](http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/Print_Ivory%20Report_Final_v3.pdf).

<b>Change in Attitudes since the Launch of “Say No to Ivory Campaign”</b>			
<i>Respondents that:</i>	<i>2012 Result</i>	<i>2014 Result</i>	<i>Change</i>
Think elephant poaching is a problem	46.6%	70.6%	52.5%+
Believe the Chinese government should impose a ban on ivory trade	94%	95%	--
Saw a PSA and say they will not buy ivory	--	90.1%	N/A
Recognize ivory comes from poached elephants (Beijing only)	25.2%	53.2%	110.7%+

Table 5: Changes in Attitudes sin the Launch of “Say No to Ivory” Campaign, 2012-2014.

**WILDAID AND FREELAND: “SAVE TIGERS” (2013)**

Albeit not as famous as its shark and elephant counterparts, the “Save Tigers” public service announcement was also created by WildAid in an effort to reduce the demand for tiger products. WildAid currently leads the International Tiger Coalition comprised of 42 environmental, zoological, and animal protection groups (such as the FreeLand Foundation), advocating the permanent ban on the trade in tiger parts and products.

The “Save Tigers” campaign involved the creation of a public service message (video clip) with actor Jackie Chan and director Jiang Wen, which was distributed across China though television ads.<sup>79</sup> In one of the videos, animations are used to explain how tiger products are obtained by killing the tigers. It asks the viewers to question

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<sup>79</sup> WildAid. “Jiang Wen - Save Tigers.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 3, 2015. <http://wildaid.org/video/jiang-wen-save-tigers>.

themselves and ponder: “Do you really need tiger bones and furs? Tigers need these to survive.” The message aired 5,140 times across nine TV channels, but the impact of the campaign is yet to be evaluated.<sup>80</sup>



Figure 4: Video “Save Tigers”, WildAid, 2013.

#### **IFAW AND SOLAR VISTA: “GIVE PEACE TO ELEPHANTS, SAY NO TO IVORY GIFTS” (2014)**

In the context of the Chinese New Year, a time often associated with visits to families and gift giving, in 2014 IFAW and SolarVista Media (Shanghai based marketing firm) launched a series of giant billboards on 27 buildings in nine cities in China. The message juxtaposes a picture of a mother elephant and her calf with an ivory bracelet linked to a handcuff, “a visual metaphor for the moral and legal ramifications of the ivory trade.”<sup>81</sup> A social media campaign was released in parallel on China’s largest micro blogging site, Sina Weibo. On this platform, users are invited to re-post the “Give Peace to Elephants, Say No to Ivory Gifting” messages.

The image reproduced on billboards mixes unique features of the Chinese language. The Chinese characters depicted on the ivory bracelet (“Have status?”) and

<sup>80</sup> WildAid. “Tigers.” *WildAid*. Accessed August 3, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/tigers>.

<sup>81</sup> Gabriel, Grace Ge. “With a New Year in China Comes a New Campaign.” *IFAW*. Accessed August 3, 2015. <http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/new-year-china-comes-new-campaign>.

those on the handcuffs (“Have sentence!”) have the same pronunciation *you xing*. In contrast to previously described campaigns, however, IFAW’s New Year ads remind people of the potential prosecution they can face when buying illegal ivory. Another play of Chinese words is the pronunciation *xiang*, which is shared by words for auspicious and elephant (on the left side of the ad).



Figure 5: “Give Peace to Elephants, Say No to Ivory Gifts,” IFAW, 2014.

Taking the idea of Chinese characters but with a different approach—more geared towards empathy and morality than to lawfulness—IFAW launched another poster for the conservation of elephants, tigers, and bears. These ads feature “mutilated” Chinese characters for these species, symbolizing the fate they suffer in order to be consumed. It also includes the mutilated character for “person.”



Figure 6: “Being without Humanity,” IFAW, 2014.

The message asks: “When we take the tusks out of elephants, bone out of tigers, gall bladder out of bears, what does it make us? Doesn’t it make us just being without humanity?”<sup>82</sup> According to IFAW’s Grace Ge Gabriel, the combination of these types of messages “appeal for the rejection of ivory from emotional, legal, and moral angles.”<sup>83</sup> The effects of these recent IFAW campaigns are underway, and survey results will be available at the end of the year. These results will also include a new online survey looking at consumers’ behavior online (e.g. search trends). The details remain confidential.<sup>84</sup>

The examples presented above demonstrate the different perspectives that environmental organizations have explored in order to target various types of consumers (and non-consumers) of illegal wildlife products in China. As the next section will describe, Chinese people historically have not necessarily had a pro-conservation view of nature. In part thanks to public awareness campaigns, however, notions about the need to protect wildlife might be evolving. The extent of this evolution and what it means in terms of reducing the demand for illegal wildlife products remains debatable, and will be examined below.

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Personal interview with IFAW in China representative, April 2015.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN CHINA

“Environmentalism” usually refers to “a concern to protect the environment, wherever and in whatever form it exists [...] through human effort and responsibility.”<sup>85</sup> This term, however, has remained elusive due to the innumerable ways in which humans think of the environment. After all, the environment is “part of the way in which people understand the world and their place within it.”<sup>86</sup> Environmentalism is partly a socially constructed and reproduced phenomenon, shaped by formal and informal social norms, culture and a society’s dominating value system. It is also the result of a person’s individual experience with nature, education, place identity, personality traits, cost-benefit calculations, values and beliefs.<sup>87</sup> Due to the nature of the concept of “environmentalism,” each group (culture) interprets and justifies different activities as environmentally friendly. These groups also assign different levels of risk and responsibility in our use of the environment.<sup>88</sup>

At least until ten years ago, the aesthetic and ethical valuation of nature was very low among most of the Chinese population, and nature was generally viewed as requiring improvement by human manipulation. Knowledge of ecology and environmental issues was generally limited outside major urban areas, undermining people’s “understanding of their own relationship with the environment and [making it difficult] for [people] to value it.”<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, for most Chinese people, environmental concerns were mostly over

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<sup>85</sup> Milton, Kay. *Environmentalism and Cultural Theory: Exploring the Role of Anthropology in Environmental Discourse*. Routledge, 2013. p. 33.  
[https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Fqn0LiT1S8C&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=environmentalism+definition&ots=TMnjg9k5hB&sig=Juo63I76enALBFLDY\\_8f4RpzIRk](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Fqn0LiT1S8C&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=environmentalism+definition&ots=TMnjg9k5hB&sig=Juo63I76enALBFLDY_8f4RpzIRk).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Heidmets, Mati, and Maaris Raudsepp. “Trames.” *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, no. 3, vol. 5. (2001).

<sup>88</sup> Milton, Kay, *op. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Harris, Paul G. “Environmental Perspectives and Behavior in China Synopsis and Bibliography.” *Environment and Behavior* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 5–21.

sanitation and health (i.e. air pollution in surrounding areas and the quality of nearby water). Other national environmental issues (such as acid rain, desertification and deforestation) were much less important. Global issues (including global wildlife conservation) were completely beyond most people's concerns.<sup>90</sup>

As mentioned before in this report, studies have also revealed that Chinese people tend to have anthropocentric viewpoints and value the environment for what it can do for them. People also historically have chosen economic growth over environmental protection.<sup>91</sup> Ten years ago, their list of priorities still typically included poverty alleviation, economic development, economic growth, wealth creation, and reducing official corruption, all of which come before the environment.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, a survey by Chen et. al. discovered that Chinese people generally had a pervasive lack of personal responsibility towards nature, thinking that it was the government's job to protect the environment rather than their own responsibility.<sup>93</sup> Other surveys show that people in China often do not even realize that their own actions are causing environmental harm.<sup>94</sup>

As previously noted, in 2007 IFAW conducted a survey that found that 70% of Chinese people did not know elephants are killed to harvest ivory.<sup>95</sup> One explanation is that in the Chinese language, the word "ivory" literally translates as "elephant teeth"—leading people to think that tusks "fall off" the way human teeth do. Similarly, shark fin soup consumers oftentimes had little understanding of where shark fin soup came from, of overfishing, of illegal shark fishing or of the process of finning a shark. The Mandarin

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Chen, Xiaodong, M. Nils Peterson, Vanessa Hull, Chuntian Lu, Graise D. Lee, Dayong Hong, and Jianguo Liu. "Effects of Attitudinal and Sociodemographic Factors on pro-Environmental Behaviour in Urban China." *Environmental Conservation* 38, no. 01 (March 2011): 52.

<sup>92</sup> Harris, Paul G., *op. cit.*

<sup>93</sup> Chen, Xiaodong, et. al., *op. cit.*

<sup>94</sup> Harris, Paul G., *op. cit.*

<sup>95</sup> Ge Gabriel, Grace, *op. cit.*



name of shark fin soup, “fish wing soup,” also confused consumers. A 2006 WildAid survey found that nearly 75% of Chinese people were unaware that shark fin soup came from sharks.<sup>96</sup>

Since the time when the surveys described by Harris, IFAW and WildAid were launched, Chinese people’s understanding of nature seems to be evolving, albeit slowly. For example, in 2012, an IFAW survey found that 83% of people surveyed would not have bought ivory if they had known that it comes from dead elephants.<sup>97</sup> After the widespread public awareness campaigns on ivory described in the previous section, the 2014 study by HorizonKey discovered that 90% of participants saw a public service announcement and now say they will not buy ivory.<sup>98</sup>

As mentioned before, WildAid’s campaigns against shark fin consumption (in combination with government bans) have also contributed to an estimated 50%-70% reduction in demand of this product.<sup>99</sup> But more efforts to promote pro-environmentalism still potentially need to be placed on targeting less educated people, those with low employment status (unemployed or low employment rank), and inhabitants of smaller cities and rural areas—who seem to be lagging in terms of environmental awareness.<sup>100</sup> Even though these segments of the population are currently not major consumers, increasing migration to urban areas and improvement in standards of living (i.e. increasing purchasing power) across the Chinese territory could eventually lead these people to higher levels of consumption.

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<sup>96</sup> WildAid. “Sharks.” WildAid. Accessed August 1, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/sharks>.

<sup>97</sup> Swain, Marian. “The War on Ivory -- Grace Ge Gabriel on China’s Fight Against Elephant Poaching.” *The Breakthrough*. July 9, 2015. <http://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/issues/biodiversity/interview-with-grace-gabriel>.

<sup>98</sup> WildAid. “Ivory Demand in China 2012-2014,” 2014. [http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/Print\\_Ivory%20Report\\_Final\\_v3.pdf](http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/Print_Ivory%20Report_Final_v3.pdf).

<sup>99</sup> WildAid. “Sharks.” WildAid. Accessed August 1, 2015. <http://www.wildaid.org/sharks>.

<sup>100</sup> Chen, Xiaodong, et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 51; Personal interview with a representative from IFAW China, April 2015.

## EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

In several developed Western nations, “environmentalism began as a ‘cry in the wilderness’ movement, a warning movement”<sup>101</sup> in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The environmentally concerned consumer that appeared in these developed nations, generally held certain distrust in society, industry and modern technology.<sup>102</sup> Businesses and governments in these societies began to develop environmental concerns because environmental risks were perceived by the public that demanded corrective and preventive action.<sup>103</sup> Survey research about environmental attitudes in the U.S. reveal a “slow-but-steady increase in recognition and concern about environmental issues,”<sup>104</sup> beginning in the 1960s and reaching a high point in the 1970s and again in the early 1990s.

In the mid 1990s, Ronald Inglehart studied the phenomenon of environmentalism across different nations, concluding that the environmental values of a society are affected by its social and economic situation. Inglehart argued that environmentalism could only be found among “post-materialist” individuals in wealthy nations in the West, nations more likely to have allocated resources for environmental protection. For him, “post-materialist” values emphasize self-expression and quality of life, whereas “materialist” values—found in individuals in developing countries—focus on economic and physical security above all.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Slocombe, D. Scott. “Environmentalism: A Modern Synthesis.” *Environmentalist* 4, no. 4 (December 1984): 281–85.

<sup>102</sup> Mostafa, Mohamed M. “Wealth, Post-Materialism and Consumers’ Pro-Environmental Intentions: A Multilevel Analysis across 25 Nations.” *Sustainable Development* 21, no. 6 (November 1, 2013): 385–99.

<sup>103</sup> Rice, Gillian. “Pro-Environmental Behavior in Egypt: Is There a Role for Islamic Environmental Ethics?” *Journal of Business Ethics* 65, no. 4 (June 2006): 373–90.

<sup>104</sup> Schultz, P. Wesley. “Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors Across Cultures.” *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 8, no. 1 (August 1, 2002). 5.

<sup>105</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. “Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43 Societies.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 28, no. 01 (March 1995): 57.

Inglehart’s reasoning was that once a country reached a considerably high level of economic welfare (an economy of mass abundance rather than scarcity), citizens would be comfortable enough to fulfill their less basic concerns (e.g. quality of life, rights of minorities and the environment). In other words, “richer societies are expected to hold more favorable environmental intentions than poorer societies; higher levels of affluence should be positively related to environmental intentions.”<sup>106</sup> This argument is related to the explanatory factors behind the environmental Kuznets curve (EKC): a hypothetical inverted U-shape relationship between various indicators of environmental degradation and per capita income (see Figure 7). In theory, early stages of economic growth show increased degradation and pollution, but after a certain level of income per capita is reached—a level that will vary for different indicators—the trend reverses, and income becomes inversely related to environmental problems.<sup>107</sup>

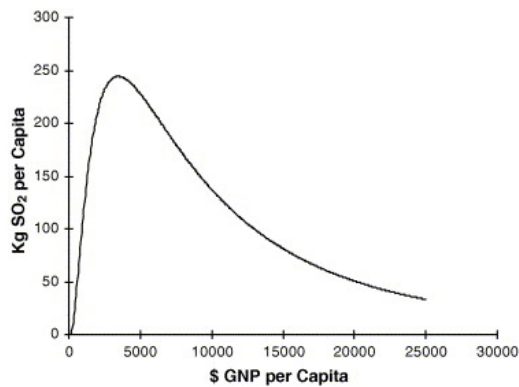


Figure 7: Environmental Kuznets curve for sulfur emissions.<sup>108</sup>

The EKC, as well as Inglehart’s arguments, have been subject of much debate. On the one hand, some authors criticize the EKC results for having “flimsy statistical

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<sup>106</sup> Mostafa, Mohamed M., *op. cit.*, p. 387.

<sup>107</sup> Stern, David I. “The Rise and Fall of the Environmental Kuznets Curve.” *World Development* 32, no. 8 (2004): 1419–39.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

foundations,”<sup>109</sup> and applying only to a subset of environmental measures.<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, empirical evidence has shown that developing countries sometimes address environmental issues and adopt developed country standards with a short time lag, in some cases performing better than their developed counterparts.<sup>111</sup>

Inglehart himself had to revise his theory in the face of this counter-evidence, stating that first-hand experience with severe local environmental problems could explain environmentalist behavior found in developing nations (“challenge-response” model).<sup>112</sup> More recent studies have confirmed this “challenge-response” model, finding similar or even more pro-environmental attitudes in developing countries, with people willing to make similar or larger economic sacrifices for the protection of the environment—because these individuals are more exposed to environmental harm.<sup>113</sup>

The case of illegal wildlife consumption in China, however, challenges these theoretical conceptions. Although it could be argued that China has yet to reach the income level turning point before its population starts caring about the environment (about wildlife protection, in particular), studies have found that in urban China, income is so far a relatively unimportant predictor of pro-environmental behavior.<sup>114</sup> In fact, as Zhang and Feng’s consumption survey (addressed above) revealed, young individuals with higher income (USD \$625/month and above) and higher educational levels, tend to consume illegal wildlife products at higher rates.<sup>115</sup> These results contradict previous

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Mostafa, Mohamed M, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

<sup>111</sup> Stern, David I., *op. cit.*

<sup>112</sup> Inglehart, Ronald, *op. cit.*

<sup>113</sup> Chen, Xiaodong, et. al., *op. cit.*

<sup>114</sup> Aoyagi-Usui, Midori, Henk Vinken, and Atsuko Kuribayashi. “Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors: An International Comparison.” *Human Ecology Review* 10, no. 1 (2003): 23–31.

<sup>115</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin, *op. cit.*

international studies on environmentalism, which had shown that highly educated and younger individuals are more likely to have a greater concern for the environment.<sup>116</sup>

Also, pro-environmental behavior in the case of wildlife consumption in China (i.e. people who think wildlife consumption is wrong and/or who choose *not* to consume) cannot be explained by Inglehart's "challenge-response" model. The pervasive effects of consumption are in the most part felt in animal populations outside of China (in source countries), so consumers do not experience first-hand this environmental issue. Since existing theories based on levels of income and experience with environmental problems cannot explain Chinese people's attitudes and behaviors towards the consumption of illegal wildlife products, another approach is needed.

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<sup>116</sup> Mostafa, Mohamed M., *op. cit.*, p. 387.

## **ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF CHINESE CONSUMERS REGARDING THE CONSUMPTION OF ILLEGAL WILDLIFE PRODUCTS**

Environmentalism is potentially a fuzzy concept, making it difficult to identify ways to measure support for it. However, it can be thought of as being composed of two distinguishable parts: environmental attitudes and environmental behavior. *Environmental attitudes*, or mentalities, refer to the “whole complex of various mental representations of the environment, as well as representations of human-environment relations.”<sup>117</sup> Attitudes are determined by the dominating values and norms of a particular group. *Environmental behaviors*, on the other hand, are the patterns of actual behavior of individuals towards the environment. These actions depend on a person’s situational context, traditions, available resources and infrastructure, cost-benefit and self-esteem calculations.<sup>118</sup>

The relationship between environmental attitudes and behaviors is still debatable. Some scholars believe there is a causal relationship starting with general beliefs about the natural and human world, followed by specific attitudes, finally leading to particular behaviors. There are others who argue that the attitudes and behaviors systems are somewhat independent of each other. In other words, having pro-environmental attitudes “does not automatically mean following environmentally friendly behavioral habits, and vice versa.”<sup>119</sup> The latter assumption will be taken below, to explore attitudes and behaviors with regards to people’s consumption of illegal wildlife products in China.

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<sup>117</sup> Heidmets, Mati, and Maaris Raudsepp, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

	<b>Positive Behavior</b>	<b>Negative Behavior</b>
<b>Positive Attitudes</b>	Against consumption, Does not Consume <b>37%</b>	Against consumption, Consumes <b>22%</b>
<b>Negative Attitudes</b>	In favor of consumption, Does not Consume <b>13%</b>	In favor of consumption, Consumes <b>28%</b>

Table 6: Matrix of attitudes/behaviors related to consumption of illegal wildlife.

Table 6 shows a two by two matrix of attitudes and behaviors towards the consumption of illegal wildlife products, representing different environmentalist combinations individuals can hold. However, people can assume different *degrees* of environmental concern, ranging from being completely against the consumption of illegal wildlife of any kind, to being mildly opposed to the consumption of certain species, to not having anything against consuming wildlife products. For the sake of simplicity, this matrix only considers the two extremes of the positive-negative spectrum, for the consumption of illegal wildlife species in general. A more in depth analysis—showing different degrees of attitudes and behaviors for *each* endangered species—would be required to fully understand people’s environmentalism. Unfortunately, such a study is beyond the scope of the present report.

The percentages in each box were derived from a 2010 survey conducted by TRAFFIC East Asia on the consumption of wild meats in China.<sup>120</sup> The results of this survey (see Appendix) do not include the consumption of ivory and rhino horn, but they do cover other significantly consumed species such as tiger, bear, and pangolin. This survey also was only applied in six major Chinese cities, leaving rural areas out of the study. While further research is necessary to obtain the proportion of consumers in each

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<sup>120</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

box for ivory and rhino horn products, as well as for consumers outside urban areas, the TRAFFIC results could be a valid approximation. The same survey found correlations between the number of people who had “*positive attitudes-positive behavior*” combinations for tiger (96.2%), bear (93.4%), and pangolin (76.1%). It is likely that the same correlation exists for elephants and rhinos. Also, most of the consumption of illegal trade seems to occur in big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou—cities that were covered by the TRAFFIC survey.

A similar survey in 2012 concluded that consumption (current and lapsed users) was skewed towards men, while women were more likely to be non-users.<sup>121</sup> As explained above, users also tended to be between 25-44 years old, and have higher income (over \$625/month) and educational levels. The places where consumers had the most access to these products were restaurants, hotels, and pharmacies selling TCM. Not surprisingly, one of the cities with the highest consumption rates (Guangzhou) also showed the lowest cognitive level regarding protected wildlife.<sup>122</sup>

#### **DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS**

The upper left box corresponds to an individual with “*positive attitudes-positive behavior*” which, for wildlife conservation purposes, is the best-case scenario. A person with this combination believes endangered wildlife should not be consumed and does not buy or eat it. Spreading this type of combination among the population is the end goal of environmental organizations’ public awareness campaigns—a combination that seems to be more common than other combinations, but not by a large margin.

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<sup>121</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin, *op. cit.*, p. 2379.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*



Why do people care about and do not consume illegal wildlife products? According to Schultz,<sup>123</sup> individuals present pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors due to three different types of concerns:

- *Egoistic concerns*: focus is on the individual, personal health, financial wellbeing, quality of life, and availability of resources.
- *Altruistic concerns*: focus is on people other than self, such as friends, family, community, future generations, or humanity.
- *Biospheric concerns*: focus on all living things, including plants, animals, ecosystems, and the biosphere.

Even though it is possible that people care about wildlife and choose not to consume due to egoistic and altruistic concerns, it is more likely that in this case biospheric concerns are behind this particular combination of attitudes and behaviors.<sup>124</sup> To have this type of concern, however, “basic environmental knowledge and indeed basic education” are a prerequisite.<sup>125</sup> Perhaps for this reason, Harris argues that in contrast to the rest of the population, university students seem to care more about global environmental issues.

Some environmental organizations in China (interviewed for this report) also highlighted the importance of including wildlife protection and general environmental sensitization in primary education curricula. It is also partly the reason why campaigns like anti-ivory ones, focus on educating consumers about the consequences of their

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<sup>123</sup> Schultz, P. Wesley, *op. cit.*

<sup>124</sup> In this case, egoistic concerns would drive an individual to want to protect wildlife species because if these animals become extinct, there will not be any more of these “available resources.” On the other hand, altruistic concerns might mean that an individual is worried that future generations will not benefit from the existence of these wildlife species. Even though these two types of concerns could be applied to wildlife protection, it makes more sense to think that people are driven by concerns “for all living things” (biospheric concerns) over other types of concerns.

<sup>125</sup> Harris, Paul G., *op. cit.*

actions (e.g. elephants die when their tusks are removed), with the hope of changing their attitudes (knowing that consuming is bad) and their behaviors (keep them from consuming).

Even though individuals in this area of the matrix are positive in both attitudes and behaviors, there is not inevitably a causal relation between these two aspects. In other words, it is not necessarily the case that because a person has a close relationship with nature and knows of the risks to the environment that illegal wildlife consumption presents, this individual will therefore avoid buying these products. As the next two cases will illustrate, a person can act in favor of the environment (or not) due to other non-attitudinal reasons.

The bottom left corner, with the smallest percentage out of the four combinations, belongs to those individuals with “*negative attitude-positive behavior.*” They are in favor of the consumption of illegal wildlife, but nevertheless do not consume it. This case (along with “*positive attitude-negative behavior*”) challenges the “causality” argument that states that positive/negative attitudes will lead to positive/negative behavior. If a person does not have many environmental concerns and believes consuming illegal wildlife is not wrong, then what are the factors that are shaping his/her behavior in a positive (pro-environmental) way?

As Thøgersen et. al. argue, not much is known about the reasons behind environmentally relevant consumer choices in fast-growing developing countries.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, research still needs to be conducted to fully understand the reasons that drive these individuals’ actions. Some hypothetical factors, however, could be inferred. The

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<sup>126</sup> Thøgersen, John, Yanfeng Zhou, and Guang Huang, *op.cit.*

first one is price. Table 7<sup>127</sup> shows how several illegal wildlife products have very high prices, especially when considering that the median Chinese household earns \$10,200 USD annually.<sup>128</sup> These elevated prices might also partly explain why it is wealthy people who consume the most—since only few people can afford most of these products.

<b>Price of Illegally Traded Animal Products in China \$ per kilogram, 2009-2014</b>		
Bear	Whole gall bladder	\$ 2,492
	Bile flakes	\$ 26,980
	Bile powder	\$ 15,476
	Raw bile	\$ 8,532
	Bear parts	\$ 2,492
Pangolin	Meat	\$324
Rhino	Horn	\$60,881 (world)
Elephant	Raw ivory	\$2,492
Tiger	Raw bone	\$29,795
	Bone gel	\$870

Table 7: Price of illegally traded animal products in China, 2009-2014.

Another explanation for people’s refusal to consume could be effective law enforcement. The clearest example of this situation is the drop in consumption of shark fin soup in the last couple of years. While it is true that the governmental ban on shark fin soup in 2012 was accompanied by a widespread public awareness campaign led by WildAid, and therefore direct causality might be hard to establish, the “anti-corruption

<sup>127</sup> TRAFFIC, “Bitter pills,” *The Economist*. June 19, 2014. Accessed March 28, 2015. <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21607891-parts-some-endangered-species-are-worth-more-gold-or-cocaine-bitter-pills#>.

<sup>128</sup> Weagley, Robert O. “One Big Difference Between Chinese and American Households: Debt.” *Forbes*. Accessed July 27, 2015. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/moneybuilder/2010/06/24/one-big-difference-between-chinese-and-american-households-debt/>.

drive by the Chinese government is thought to be one of the main factors behind the decrease in sales.”<sup>129</sup>

Shark fin soup was often on the menu at official dinners, but after the ban was enacted as part of the government’s austerity measures, government employees risked being seen as disobeying official orders, and losing their positions due to their “lavish behavior.” These regulations—which included a ban to the consumption of illegal wildlife products in general—“have allowed the Xi administration to single out officials for punishment,”<sup>130</sup> from the local level to the party’s top leaders. In 2013, 182,000 officials were punished as part of this campaign, however not all cases were entirely related to wildlife consumption.<sup>131</sup>

Other potential factors include lack of availability, personal taste, and health concerns. It is possible that a person is not a consumer because he/she is unable to get a hold of the product itself: perhaps the product is limited to a particular area, or the person does not know where to purchase it. In fact, a 2010 TRAFFIC East Asia survey found that half of the respondents named limited availability among the top three reasons for not consuming.<sup>132</sup> In some cases, a person might also choose not to consume simply because the taste of the product is not appealing enough or because these types of products are deemed unhealthy. According to the same survey, 3.1% of those questioned responded that they refuse to consume “wild meats” because they do not particularly like the taste of these animals, while 5.8% did so because these products “may cause infection by disease.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Duggan, Jennifer, *op. cit.*

<sup>130</sup> Donovan, Tim. “China’s Crackdown on Corruption and Government Spending: A Timeline.” *China Business Review*. January 23, 2014. Accessed July 27, 2015. <http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/chinas-crackdown-on-corruption-and-government-spending-a-timeline/>.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

The upper right corner, “*positive attitude-negative behavior*,” also challenges causal attitude-behavior explanations, but unfortunately seems to be more common than its “*negative attitude-positive behavior*” counterpart. These individuals believe that the consumption of illegal wildlife products is wrong and animals should be protected, but they still engage in “negative” behavior (i.e. purchasing these products).<sup>134</sup> For them, price is not an issue and governmental regulations do not present enough risk to alter their behavior. A hypothetical person in this situation, on the contrary, is “forced by circumstances” to consume or is “addicted” to this type of consumption. This could be the case, for example, of a person who has to buy and/or receive these products for gift-giving purposes, or someone who is inconsistent between what he or she believes in and the way the person acts.

A 2014 WildAid report on ivory consumption in China confirmed that a major reason for purchasing ivory-made items was private gift-giving to friends, loved ones, and peers, as well as corporate gift-giving.<sup>135</sup> In China, gift giving/receiving and reciprocity are means to build/enhance relationships (*guanxi*). In emerging economies that lack many formal institutions, these social ties “expedite legal trading activity in commercial settings.” Managers are driven to use this type of informal methods to “get vital jobs done.”<sup>136</sup>

But not only ivory is used for *guanxi*. In TRAFFIC’s 2010 survey, more than a quarter of respondents agreed that “edible” wildlife was a special treat for guests or

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<sup>134</sup> Notably, the 2010 TRAFFIC survey found that 90% of current users of wildlife products claimed to support wildlife protection, but only 30% considered ceasing to eat wildlife a major action they had taken to support wildlife protection. *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> WildAid. “Ivory Demand in China 2014.” San Francisco, California: WildAid, 2014. <http://wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/WEBReportIvoryDemandinChina2014.pdf>.

<sup>136</sup> Li, Yan, Fiona Kun Yao, and David Ahlstrom. “The Social Dilemma of Bribery in Emerging Economies: A Dynamic Model of Emotion, Social Value, and Institutional Uncertainty.” *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 32, no. 2 (2014): 311–34.

themselves. These people believed that providing wild meat at a meal represents social status and shows respect for guests. Interestingly, nearly 40% of those surveyed sustained that wild meat was “unavoidable in the business world.”<sup>137</sup> Further studies are required to determine whether the attitudes of the people using wildlife for “business purposes” are “positive” (they do not agree with this consumption) or “negative” (they willingly buy these products).

Another motive that could lead people to consume illegal wildlife products, despite them holding environmental concerns, is the belief in medicinal properties. It could be the case of a person who believes *has to* consume a particular medicine derived from wildlife to cure a particular illness. As will be further addressed below, many individuals believe that there are no substitutes for traditional Chinese medicine, even if that means using illegal wildlife products in their manufacture.

The final combination of “*negative attitude-negative behavior*” is clearly the most dangerous one to wildlife protection, and the second largest in proportion. Not only do these individuals consume wildlife, but they also do not consider it a concern. Factors like price, law enforcement, and availability of the product do not seem to be a problem. Some of the reasons given in TRAFFIC’s survey to explain their actions were: business hospitality, to reward oneself, to enrich life experience, to try something special, and to fulfill one’s curiosity.<sup>138</sup> Another reason (presented in a previous section in this report) is the use of items such as ivory, as an “inflation proof” investment. If we consider that in cities like Guangzhou 71.2% of respondents consumed wildlife within the past year, the proportion of people who fall in this “*negative-negative*” category is large.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** NGOs and governmental entities related to environmental education and awareness should assign more resources to surveys studying what “has worked.”

As the matrix presented above shows, it is likely that despite governmental and NGO efforts, the majority of Chinese people still does not fall under the “*positive attitudes-positive behavior*” category. However, it is remarkable that the proportion of people holding this combination (or saying that they do) is the largest of the four, especially when even ten years ago most of the population had very limited environmental awareness. The fact that around 37% of people believe consuming wildlife products is wrong and act accordingly should be studied further, in order to determine “what has worked.” These results would benefit the effectiveness of future campaigns in changing people’s attitudes and behaviors.

**Recommendation 2:** Public awareness campaigns targeting people in the “*positive attitudes-positive behavior*” field should be not necessarily be informational/aimed at creating awareness, but should ask people to “spread the message.”

Some of the few studies that have been conducted to determine why people choose not to consume, like Rapid Asia’s 2013 survey, point to environmental awareness as reasons behind this behavior (ivory, in this case). Around 90% of respondents said “I feel it is wrong to buy ivory, since elephants are killed” as one of the main reasons explaining their actions; 58% mentioned “elephants are endangered species.”<sup>140</sup> Since

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<sup>140</sup> Rapid Asia, *op. cit.*

“*positive-positive*” people are already aware of the environmental problems associated with illegal wildlife consumption, informational campaigns may not generate much change in attitudes and behaviors within this group. Instead, awareness campaigns should appeal to these people’s already-existing feelings towards nature through emotional campaigns asking them to “spread the word.” Surveys have found that women tend to make up the majority of non-users of illegal wildlife products,<sup>141</sup> and could therefore largely populate the “*positive-positive*” category. Emotion-based campaigns are therefore even more suitable to target this particular group.<sup>142</sup>

As mentioned in this report, environmentalism is a socially constructed notion. If more people openly discuss the consumption of illegal wildlife, awareness of environmental and ecological issues can be more effectively transmitted. Some organizations have begun to encourage this communicative approach, urging concerned individuals to discuss the issue with colleagues, post information on WeChat or Weibo, and share ideas with family and friends.<sup>143</sup> With increased awareness, these organizations argue, “more and more people in China will be uncomfortable being offered [wildlife products] as gifts.”<sup>144</sup> The government should continue its support to these efforts by providing airtime and ad spaces in public spaces. Media space, particularly news coverage and airtime for advertisements, has proved to be the most effective way to engage the Chinese population.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Zhang, Li, and Feng Yin, *op. cit.*

<sup>142</sup> Assuming that women are more responsive to emotion-based campaigns than men.

<sup>143</sup> TRAFFIC. “Good for Chinese Business, Great for Wildlife Worldwide,” 2015.

<sup>144</sup> Personal interview to a representative of an environmental organization in China, April 2015.

<sup>145</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*



**Recommendation 3:** To target people in the “*negative attitude-positive behavior*” field, public awareness campaigns should be informational and aiming at creating a bond between these people and nature (empathy-based campaigns).

People with this combination of attitude and behavior are not consuming, but could do so if the opportunity arose. Some authors caution that “such unconscious pro-environmental behavior can easily be reversed or changed to a more unsustainable pattern because it is not based on some fundamental value.”<sup>146</sup> To avoid these potential consumers from easily becoming members of the “negative attitudes-negative behavior” group, their attitudes towards nature would have to switch. Increasing education about where items come from, what happens to animals when tusks, horns, organs, skins and bones are harvested (through campaigns similar to the “Save Tigers” and “Mom, I have teeth” ones), and how these products are transported and prepared for sale in China, would help.

Education campaigns should also explain how “negative” actions such as wildlife purchasing have pervasive effects on nature. Parallels between Chinese-revered pandas and African elephants (or any other species), for example, could be drawn to exemplify the importance of protecting *all* species, not only those found inside China. Environmental education, moreover, should be particularly strengthened in elementary education.<sup>147</sup> Today’s children are more and more disconnected from nature, and lack of environmental sensitization may affect the way they relate to the environment as adults. Instilling wildlife conservation in children also serves as an educating tool for parents who might have not received this education themselves.

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<sup>146</sup> Kollmuss, Anja and Julian Agyeman. “Mind the Gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior?” *Environmental Education Research*, 8. (2002): 240.

<sup>147</sup> Personal interview to a representative of an environmental organization in China, April 2015.

**Recommendation 4:** To keep people in the “*negative attitude-positive behavior*” field from becoming active consumers, government entities should continue (and increase) their law enforcement activities.

As some individuals in this group demonstrate, effective law enforcement can result in behavioral change, regardless of the person’s convictions towards wildlife protection. Albeit having ulterior political motives, the anti-corruption and austerity measures launched by the central government have had an impact on illegal wildlife consumption (particularly shark fin and bird’s nest soups). Crackdowns on other products often consumed in official dinners should be further implemented, as is established in the government’s new regulations. These policies not only limit the amount of products consumed in public establishments, but also places a certain stigma on them, making them less appealing as gifts to be given and received. A negative perception of these products would even influence those with “*negative behaviors.*”

Moreover, greater attention needs to be placed on overseeing ivory traders, as a way to limit the availability of products and increasing the price of ivory. Surveys suggest that it is very hard to distinguish legal from illegal ivory products, and official ivory shops oftentimes alter certificates to sell illegal ivory as legal. It has also been found that illegal retailers often get tipped off about governmental inspections, giving them enough time to hide their ivory-made merchandise before inspectors get to their shops. Corruption of officials in charge of these inspections is often a problem.<sup>148</sup> Similar inspections should also be enforced on TCM shops to verify the legality of the products for sale, protecting consumers and wildlife at the same time.

Beyond corruption, another potential problem with law enforcement is the fact the State Forestry Administration is involved in overseeing both wildlife protection and

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<sup>148</sup> Gabriel, Grace, Ning Hua, and Juan Wang, *op. cit.*

wildlife exploitation.<sup>149</sup> In the particular case of bears and tigers, this has led to a pervasive dynamic in which animals are legally bred in farms (in terrible conditions) under the argument that “one more caged animal means one less hunted wild animal.” In other words, if an animal is caged, it loses its “wildlife” status, and becomes exploitable. Even though environmentalist organizations have pushed for further reforms to China’s Wildlife Protection law, the government still needs to address the incentives that the State Forestry Administration has to exploit, rather than protect, wildlife.

The destruction of ivory stockpiles is a debatable demand reduction strategy.<sup>150</sup> However, as will be further addressed below, to some extent these acts demonstrate the government’s commitment to fighting the problem of illegal wildlife, they create conversation and awareness about illegal trade and help portray the consumption of ivory as something “negative.” Besides, these types of events are widely covered by the media, spreading the message with even more strength.

**Recommendation 5:** Public awareness campaigns targeting the “*positive attitude-negative behavior*” group should opt for legalistic and key opinion leaders’ campaigns over empathy-based and informational ones.

While public awareness campaigns and education may have achieved positive attitudes among the people in this group, they have yet to alter these people’s behavior—which might take a very long time. Since a person in this field already recognizes that his/her actions are wrong and knows of the environmental consequences, it is likely that public awareness campaigns focused on creating awareness about the death of animals (like most of the ones described previously in this report) may not change their behavior.

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<sup>149</sup> Personal interview to a representative of an environmental organization in China, April 2015.

<sup>150</sup> Mathiesen, Karl, *op.cit.*

For this type of consumers, public campaigns that portray the legal consequences of engaging in this activity (like IFAW’s “bracelet/handcuffs” ad) may have a bigger impact in their consumption activities. Beyond their broadcast on TV and radio outlets, these campaigns’ ads should be placed near restaurants and hotels known for their “exotic” menus (where surveys have found the highest levels of illegal wildlife consumption). Based on the results of TRAFFIC’s 2010 survey, legal-based campaigns have the potential to significantly increase consumers’ awareness, since over 35% of respondents said they did not understand the government’s classification of species that could and species that could not be consumed.<sup>151</sup>

This type of campaigns can be especially effective in targeting people with “*negative behavior*,” considering that the majority of consumers are working men with higher income levels. In contrast to women, men are more likely to be influenced by (non-emotional) law-related/reputation messages that warn them of the consequences that consumption could have for their business relations, career opportunities (i.e. consumption could be associated to corruption), reputation among their peers, and economic interests (i.e. fines).

For this reason, an environmental organization interviewed for this report mentioned the importance of reaching out to key opinion leaders—not only famous sports players and actors, but people in the business and traditional art/medicine realms—that could influence their followers to avoid consuming illegal wildlife products. While it will be hard to dispel the belief that “products from endangered species have an extra aesthetic and financial value, and that their selection [as gifts] reflects the status and importance of the relationship between purchaser and receiver,”<sup>152</sup> key opinion leaders

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<sup>151</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

<sup>152</sup> TRAFFIC. “Good for Chinese Business, Great for Wildlife Worldwide,” 2015.

can at least begin to question these notions. The truly committed could take a step further and contact senior leaders in different industries, who could then establish “positive” corporate policies (e.g. selecting alternative gifts) and spread the message to lower levels in their organizations.

Environmentally responsible TCM practitioners have already committed to increase the use alternative ingredients (e.g. herbal alternatives to bear bile). Others, however, insist that “all of the ingredients are necessary, including endangered species.”<sup>153</sup> Since the practice of TCM draws on metaphysical rather than scientific principles, convincing users of the futility of consuming products like rhino horn (scientifically proved to have no effect on health) will be difficult. Adding to these difficulties is the fact that most consumers of illegal wildlife-based medicines are people between 44 and 65 years old, who might be less willing to change their long-held attitudes and behaviors. This group also has been less exposed (if at all) to pro-environmental education, which has only recently been imparted in schools. Nevertheless, pro-environmental TCM practitioners should strive to spread by word-of-mouth the benefits that alternative (i.e. non-illegal wildlife) products *also* have on health, as well as the dangers of consuming often-polluted/fake wildlife-derived remedies.

**Recommendation 6:** Governmental authorities should have, as an urgent priority, law enforcement strategies that move people away from “*negative behavior*” fields, particularly those who also have “*negative attitudes*.”

Considering the proportion of people in each of the combinations of attitudes and behaviors, it is clear that those in the “*negative behavior*” fields (particularly those with

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<sup>153</sup> Nuwer, Rachel. “From Beijing to New York: The Dark Side of Traditional Chinese Medicine,” June 29, 2011. <http://scienceline.org/2011/06/from-beijing-to-new-york-the-dark-side-of-traditional-chinese-medicine/>.

“*negative attitudes*”) should be the most targeted by governmental efforts. Even though they are not a majority of the population, they still represent a large (and dangerous) segment. In contrast with other combinations of attitudes and behavior, however, this combination will require a deeper commitment from governmental authorities in law enforcement activities (e.g. bans of products, effective inspections of legal and illegal markets, control of TCM products). While different styles of public awareness campaigns may have an effect on other types of users and non users—as the previous recommendations pointed out—these campaigns will take too long to reach the most entrenched consumers.

While there is evidence that public awareness campaigns conducted by pro-environmental organizations are starting to have an impact on the attitudes and behaviors of Chinese people, it is also true that these strategies take time—time that many endangered species do not have. In contrast, as the 2013 Rapid Asia found, over 60% of current consumers said that a reason for them to stop buying ivory would be if the government decided to “make it illegal to buy under any circumstances,” while the second reason (with 39% of respondents) said “strong recommendation from a government leader.”<sup>154</sup>

Governmental efforts, therefore, are more effective at reducing demand in the short term<sup>155</sup> (as proven by shark fin consumption, for example), particularly the demand of that 28% in the “*negative attitude-negative behavior*” field. The problem then becomes convincing governmental authorities to implement wildlife protection and demand reduction policies, and in some cases, to change even their own attitudes and behaviors towards the consumption of these products. Incentives for members of environment-

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<sup>154</sup> Rapid Asia, *op. cit.*

<sup>155</sup> Personal interview with representatives of several environmental organizations in China, April 2015.

related branches of government, as the case of the State Forestry Administration described above, are oftentimes set against conservation and in favor of exploitation. Moreover, conducting research on this particular segment of the population, in order to develop a targeted strategy to influence politicians and legislators, is faced by “time pressures, antipathy, prudence, and mistrust.”<sup>156</sup>

Nevertheless, there is hope in the Chinese government’s recent ivory trade restrictions and wild meat bans, despite criticism from environmental organizations. The ivory ban was announced in the context of Prince William of Great Britain’s visit to China, given that elephant conservation is one of his favorite causes.<sup>157</sup> Some organizations argue that this ban was nothing but a public relations stunt. At the same time, however, the ban signaled that Chinese authorities are sensitive to international and domestic public opinion. A U.S. government representative interviewed for this report acknowledged that high-level U.S. authorities have brought up the topic of wildlife consumption on multiple occasions when meeting with their Chinese counterparts. Also, according to the 2015 WildAid survey, 95% of Chinese supported a total ban on ivory sales.<sup>158</sup>

In a way, these actions are also recognition by the Chinese government that ivory trade and the consumption of certain meats (such as shark) is not “totally acceptable” and that (eventually) these behaviors should be completely banned. It is true that there is still no clear plan of action or a timeline to implement China’s most recent pledge to end the

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<sup>156</sup> Gordon, Ross. “Unlocking the potential of upstream social marketing.” *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 47. 2013. p. 1530.

<sup>157</sup> Brinkley, John. “China’s Temporary Ivory Import Ban Will Have Zero Effect on African Elephant Conservation.” *Forbes*. Accessed August 6, 2015. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnbrinkley/2015/03/23/chinas-temporary-ivory-import-ban-will-have-zero-effect-on-african-elephant-conservation/>.

<sup>158</sup> Mathiesen, Karl. “China Agrees to Phase out Its Ivory Industry to Combat Elephant Poaching.” *The Guardian*. Accessed August 6, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/29/china-agrees-to-phase-out-its-ivory-industry-to-combat-elephant-poaching>.

processing and sale of ivory. But as some organizations point out, this announcement represents a “sea change in official attitudes [...] there is clearly a senior level of commitment from the Chinese government to stop the ivory industry in China.”<sup>159</sup> The Chinese government is evaluating the benefit of legal trade against the damage of illegal trade to its international (and domestic) reputation.<sup>160</sup> Although it has taken time, environmental organizations’ efforts to generate awareness on the problem of illegal wildlife trade—even within governmental spheres—seem to be translating into actual policy.

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<sup>159</sup> Denyer, Simon, *op. cit.*

<sup>160</sup> Associated Press. “Conservationists: New China Policy Could Save Elephants.” *VOA*. Accessed August 6, 2015. <http://www.voanews.com/content/ap-conservationists-new-china-policy-could-save-elephants/2836483.html>.



## Appendix

Attitudes towards consumption of wild meat	% of all survey respondents who hold this attitude	% of current users who hold this attitude	% of lapsed users who hold this attitude	% of non-users who hold this attitude
<b>Totally or somewhat unacceptable</b>	41.2	28.4	46.3	53.4
<b>Neutral</b>	32.2	35.7	33.3	27.7
<b>Totally or somewhat acceptable</b>	26.6	35.9	20.3	18.9
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	0	0	0.1	0

Table 8: Attitudes towards the consumption of wild meat among all survey respondents, with respondents broken into user groups, percentages (n=969).<sup>161</sup>

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>
<b>Total</b>	969	399	312	258
<b>Current Users</b>	425	121	151	153
<b>Lapsed Users</b>	171	70	70	70
<b>Non Users</b>	373	199	104	70

Table 9: Attitudes towards the consumption of wild meat among all survey respondents, with respondents broken into user groups, number of people derived from percentages in Table 8 and n=969.

	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
<b>Non Users</b>	70 (13%)	199 (37%)
<b>Current Users</b>	153 (28%)	121 (22%)

Table 10: Number and percentages of users and non-users who think wild meat consumption is totally acceptable and totally unacceptable (n=543), based on Table 9.

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<sup>161</sup> Wasser, Rachel, and Priscilla Bei Jiao, *op. cit.*

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