



Getting the horn: Rhinos dehorned to deter poachers

先下手為強：稀有白犀牛鋸角防盜獵

Four extremely rare Northern White rhinos recently transferred to Kenya from a Czech zoo have been dehorned to protect them from **poachers**, a conservation group announced.

"With the increase of poaching in Kenya, we are simply not taking any chances," Elodie Sampere from the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, which is overseeing the animals' **acclimatization** told AFP.

Cutting off the horns will **spike the hunters' guns** because "without a horn, these rhinos are of no value to poachers," she said.

The rhinos, two males and two females, are among only eight members of a very rare sub-species of white rhinos known to be alive worldwide and were transferred back to Kenya with the hope they would reproduce.

Kenyan wildlife rangers earlier this month arrested 12 men from an **illicit** game trade syndicate suspected of killing a 10-year-old white rhino and hacking off its horns.

The east African country, which has the world's third largest rhino population — around 600 black and 300 white rhinos — suffered its worst year for rhino poaching in 2009, when 12 black and six white rhinos were killed.

The illegal trade is driven by Asian and Middle Eastern demand for ivory used in traditional medicines for fevers, convulsions and as an aphrodisiac.

Sampere said that allowing off the four Northern White rhinos' horns would also allow them to grow back straight.

"All the rhinos had horns that didn't grow upright. This is a result of them being in the zoo and not having trees to rub against," she said.

The conservationist also said that a radio-transmitter the size of a matchbox was screwed into the base of the hacked off horn to enable the tracking of the animals as they are released back into the wild.

(AFP)

一個保育團體宣稱，最近從捷克某動物園被移置肯亞的四隻極稀有北方白犀牛已被去除犀牛角，以免被盜獵者盯上。

奧爾佩亞塔保育區負責監督這群犀牛適應環境的艾洛迪·珊佩爾對法新社說：「隨著肯亞非法捕殺的情況愈來愈嚴重，我們不希望冒任何風險。」

她說，鋸掉犀牛角可以破壞獵人的計畫，因為「沒有犀牛角的犀牛對盜獵者來說，一點價值也沒有」。

這兩公兩母的白犀牛是世界已知僅存的八隻極稀有亞種白犀牛之四，送回肯亞，是希望牠們能在那裡繁衍下去。

肯亞野生動物園管理員本月稍早逮捕了某非法野生動物買賣組織的十二名成員，他們涉嫌捕殺一頭十歲大的白犀牛，並砍下犀牛角。

位於東非的肯亞，境內犀牛數量佔世界第三——約六百頭黑犀牛和三百頭白犀牛，二〇〇九年盜獵犀牛的情況最為猖獗，有十二頭黑犀牛和六頭白犀牛被捕殺。

這些非法交易是為了滿足亞洲和中東的市場需求，這些獸角被製成具解熱、治癲癩和壯陽等功效的傳統藥物。

珊佩爾說，鋸掉這四隻北方白犀牛的角也是為了要讓牠們重新長出挺直的角。

她說：「這些犀牛之前的角都長得不直，是因為牠們生長在動物園，犀角無法摩擦樹木。」

保育人士也說，他們在鋸掉的犀角根部栓進火柴盒大小的無線電傳輸器，以便追蹤牠們被野放之後的情形。（法新社/翻譯：袁星豐）

A recent picture of one of the four white rhinos taken at the Ol Pejeta National Park in Kenya after they were brought from a Czech Republic zoo.

PHOTO: AFP

最近從捷克某動物園被運至肯亞的四隻白犀牛之一。照片攝於肯亞的奧爾佩亞塔國家公園。

照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. poacher /'pɒtʃə/ n.

盜獵者 (dao4 lie4 zhe3)

例：The police arrested a group of poachers for hunting endangered animals.

(警方逮捕了一群捕殺瀕臨絕種動物的盜獵者。)

2. acclimatization /ə,klaɪmə'teɪʒən/ n.

適應環境 (shi4 ying4 huan2 jing4)

例：Acclimatization to a tropical country can take several weeks.

(要適應熱帶國家的環境可能要數週的時間。)

3. illicit /ɪ'lɪts/ adj.

非法的 (fei1 fa3 de5)

例：The teacher talked about the dangers of illicit drugs.

(老師告訴我們非法藥物的危險性。)

LANGUAGE POINT 重要片語

spike someone's guns 阻撓某人的計畫

If you **spike someone's guns**, you spoil their plans. According to the article, the conservationists have **spiked the hunters' guns** by removing the rhinos' horns, thereby removing the only part of the rhino valuable to hunters.

如果說你「**spike someone's guns**」，就表示你破壞了他們的計畫。上文中提到，保育人士先把犀牛身上唯一有價值的犀牛角割掉，預防盜獵者為此捕殺犀牛。