

Right: The official hunting permit list. More than 90% of these permits were issued to people from China, Thailand or Vietnam, countries which have little history in trophy-related hunting.

The first alarm bells on bogus trophy hunts rang in 2003 when the first batch of Vietnamese “hunters” arrived in South Africa, home to the largest remaining rhino population in the world.

Once the beasts were shot, South Africa authorised the export of nine rhino trophy horns to Vietnam, under the authority of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Six years later the number of trophies had grown to hundreds – yet Vietnamese authorities could only account for the official arrival of 38 horns.

According to a report by rhino specialists Tom Milliken and Richard Emslie, at least 87% of the SA trophies were going astray, while CITES permits were also being recycled to launder other illegal horn exports.

“Investigations in SA have revealed disturbing evidence of organised crime, including the frequent involvement of a small number of Vietnamese nationals in rhino hunting, often on the same game ranches repeatedly; numerous cases whereby Vietnamese ‘trophy hunters’ paid above market price for rhino hunts, but then had to be instructed how to shoot,” Milliken and Emslie warned in an official report to CITES officials in 2009.

They also reported on the alleged involvement of Vietnam Embassy staff and vehicles in the illegal movement of horns through South Africa, while one official invoked diplomatic immunity to evade arrest.

The report also warned that there were no systems in place in Vietnam to prevent sport trophies being ground down into powder for Eastern traditional medicine.

Yet, almost a decade after the first bogus hunters began to exploit the legal loopholes in the CITES hunting permit system, scores of Eastern “hunters” are still cashing in – despite several attempts by the SA government to clean up the mess.

In North West province alone, more than 90% of the 194 legally-sanctioned hunts since 2009 appear to have been awarded to Eastern nationals.

The official lists came to light after Democratic Alliance MP Gareth Morgan began to probe hunting permit

statistics in all nine provincial legislatures – as rhino permits are still issued by individual provinces rather than national government.

So far, only North West and KZN have released any data.

The North West data shows that more than 100 hunting permits were issued during the 2010-2011 financial year – equal to about a third of the illegal poaching deaths in the same period throughout the country.

Morgan feels there is little doubt that the majority of these horns end up being crushed into powder for traditional medicine.

While it might be difficult to ban such hunters simply on the basis of their nationality, Morgan says the abuse of the permit system in some provinces has reached the point where national government has to step in.

Earlier this year, Environment Minister Edna Molewa resisted calls to impose a blanket national moratorium on rhino hunting, but said she reserved the right to take tough action in selected provinces.

But from a legal perspective, how can conservation authorities refuse to issue hunting permits to Eastern nationals simply because of their nationality – even though they have legitimate fears that these legal hunts are used to launder rhino horns into the illegal market.

If conservation authorities were to refuse permits to Vietnamese and other Eastern nationals, how could they defend issuing permits to wealthy American or European sport-hunters?

Dr Richard Emslie, scientific officer for the African Rhino Specialist Group of the IUCN International Nature Conservation Union (IUCN), said Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife had tackled the problem by ensuring that it's officers actively monitored all hunts.

He noted that in some provinces, criminal syndicates employed prostitutes to pose as hunters as a way of getting round legal restrictions which limit hunters to one trophy per person, per year.

In KZN, he said, Ezemvelo officials checked to see whether permit-holders could shoot straight and also asked other questions to weed out the bogus hunters. **W**

Pheng Hong Fu	09-06-2010	27123
Dang Dinh Thuong	09-06-2010	27125
Chu Thi Ngoc	09-06-2010	27126
Ho Manh Cau	09-06-2010	27127
Nguyen Thi Cu	09-06-2010	27128
Chu Hung Manh	07/07/2010	17112
Chu Du Gu Lit	07/07/2010	17113
Nguyen Duc Thang	07/07/2010	17114
Hoang Van Hoan	07/07/2010	17115
Nguyen Van Hai	11-08-2010	22004
Chu Du Gu Lit	02-09-2010	22031
T H Huang	02-09-2010	22031
P Chuncham	16-09-2010	22046
T. Sriton	23-09-2010	16755
Vu Van Khoi	08-11-2010	16799
Chumlong Lentongthai	12-11-2010	16800
Nguyen Thi Dung	18-01-2011	16842
Trinh Tich Nam	25-02-2011	16956
Menghua Chen	04-03-2011	16957
T K Toan	15-03-2011	22101
Le Viet Tuan	01-04-2011	16965

DR RUTH SEGOMOTSI DISTRICT		
HUNTER	Date of Issue	Permit Number
Nguyen Xuan Han	2009/12/17	O 26407
Dang Khac Viet	2010/05/13	O 21288
Dang Khac Dinh	2010/05/13	O 21289
Hoang Manh Hung	2010/06/08	O 21345
Nguyen Phi Hung	2010/06/08	O 21348
Vo Van Trung	2010/06/09	O 21349
Chu Huong Giang	2010/06/09	O 21350
Nguyen Canh Thanh	2010/06/11	O 21354
Nguyen Anh Tuan	2010/06/11	O 21355
Carlos Alvares De Alba	2010/06/11	O 21356
Le Viet Tuan	2010/07/23	O 21436
Dang Cong Taun	2010/07/23	O 21437
Vo Hien Nha	2010/07/23	O 21438
Nguyen Dinh Hoang	2010/07/23	O 21439
Phan Van Thanh	2010/07/23	O 21440
Anton Novac	2010/07/30	O 21455
Thai Khac Suu	2010/08/10	O 21475
Tran Van Cuong	2010/08/10	O 21476
Phan Huu Binh	2010/09/06	O 21784
Kypweb Andrei Kurshev	2010/10/04	O 21844
Pham Thi Quy	2010/10/15	O 21871
Pham Xuan Thang	2010/11/08	O 21913
Ho Thi Thuy Ha	2010/11/08	O 21910
Phan Thi Quy	2010/11/17	O 21927
Vuong Dinh Hoan	2010/11/17	O 21926
Nguyen Tuan Anh	2010/11/23	O 21941
Dinh Minh Hung	2010/11/11	O 21917
Petcharat Janmeetes	2010/11/12	O 21921
Boonta Konklin	2010/11/12	O 21920
Onsuthae Khonsanit	2010/11/12	O 21919
Purichaya Hattakait	2010/11/12	O 21922
Jirarak Suwannatral	2010/12/01	O 21950
Onuma Laechankham	2010/12/01	O 21948
Siriporn Phengjoy	2010/12/01	O 21951
Sawitree Suebthangjai	2010/12/01	O 21952
Aereat Chattukun	2011/01/19	O 21983
Sakoduean Lakul	2011/01/20	O 21982
Sahlee Singkeebutr	2011/01/21	O 21985

Nikom Wongprajan	2011/01/14	O 21981
Nimit Wongprajan	2011/01/17	O 21980
Pichet Thongphai	2011/01/16	O 21994
Punpitak Chunchom	2011/01/27	O 22257
Kieu Thi Phuong	2011/03/14	O 22261
Tran Huy Bao	2011/03/15	O 22259
Arune Senam	2011/01/15	O 21995
Chumlong Lentongthai	2011/01/28	O 22258
Onuma Laechankham	2011/02/07	O 22272
Sawitree Suebthangjai	2011/02/10	O 22273
Jenjira Kanlaya	2011/02/08	O 22274
Siriporn Phengjoy	2011/02/09	O 22275
Ho Thi Thuy Ha	2011/02/01	O 22266
Chu Duc Gu Lit	2011/02/02	O 22299
Chu Duc Loi	2011/03/08	O 22298
Thanapa Singnan	2011/03/23	O 26034
Pornnipa Khantarin	2011/03/25	O 26033
Suchada Seenwangsee	2011/03/23	O 26032
Boonta Konklin	2011/03/24	O 26035
Nguyen The Ky	2011/04/18	O 26087
Lee Ka Wang	2011/05/05	O 26086
Meng Hong Fu	2011/05/06	O 26085
Chen Jen Bon	2011/05/07	O 26078
Nguyen Tuan Anh	2011/04/20	O 26105
Pham Xuan Thang	2011/04/19	O 26104
Dinh Minh Hung	2011/05/06	O 26106
Tran Huy Cuong	2011/06/14	O 26137
Pham Thi Dien	2011/06/15	O 22463
Mai van Hung	2011/05/17	O 22409
Hui Cheng	2011/07/07	O 16602
Surasak Senam	2011/06/30	O 22492
Wiroj Ueangsopa	2011/07/05	O 22493
Chapichit Alemmoy	2011/07/06	O 22494
Kowit Pangthaisong	2011/07/04	O 22490
Thongchai Kamonkarn	2011/07/07	O 16575
Tha Thi Thu Ha	2011/07/16	O 16564
Pham Thi Kim Tuyen	2011/07/14	O 16565
Tran Thi Ai Duyen	2011/07/15	O 16566

DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT			
Name of a Hunter	Date Issued	Permit	Permit #
Le VAN Chien	12.06.2009		26827
Hong Tat Thang	19.06.2009		26830
Daniel F Cooseman	20.07.2009		26848
Le THI Van Anh	28.07.2009		26904
Pam Van The	28.07.2009		26856
NGU Yen Mau Chin	28.07.2009		26857
Nguyen Thin Lieu	28.08.2009		26859
Huynh Hoang Nam	22.09.2009		26920
Thi Thanh Huyen	11.09.2009		26921
T T Huyen	30.10.2009		26755
J Van Der Westhuizen	30.10.2009		26754
N Cong Suu	20.11.2009		26763
C Van Vinh	20.11.2009		26764
N Van Tue	20.11.2009		26765