

@wildlifecampus



# Anti- poaching

Junior



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A close-up photograph of a rhinoceros's head, showing its thick, wrinkled skin and a large, dark horn. The rhino is looking slightly to the left. The background is blurred, showing green foliage. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

“If we can teach people about  
wildlife, they will be touched.  
Share my wildlife with me.  
Because humans want to save  
things that they love.”  
— Steve Irwin



# Glossary

<b>Anti-poaching</b>	Anti-poaching is controlling, preventing and stopping of poaching activities.
<b>Abalone</b>	Abalone is a type of marine snail that is highly poached.
<b>APU</b>	APU stands for <b>Anti-Poaching Unit</b> .
<b>Arboreal</b>	Animals that are adapted to living in trees.
<b>Arid habitats</b>	A dry habitat.
<b>Axe</b>	A tool usually used to cut wood. Axes are used by poachers as weapons.
<b>Back door street vendors</b>	When a business sells products through the "back door" rather than at the front of the shop, where legal business gets done.
<b>Bushmeat</b>	The meat of African wild animals as food.
<b>CITES Appendix list</b>	The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.
<b>Conservationist</b>	A conservationist is a person who advocates or acts for the protection and preservation of the environment and wildlife.
<b>Criminal record</b>	A record of a person's criminal history.
<b>Cycads</b>	Seed plants with a very long fossil history that were formerly more abundant and more diverse than they are today.



**A cycad**

## What is Poaching?

<b>Debarking</b>	The process of removing bark from wood.
<b>Dehorning</b>	The process of removing a horn from a rhino to make it look less attractive to poachers.
<b>Eradicate</b>	To get rid of or remove. E.g, we work together to try to eradicate poaching.
<b>Exploited</b>	To make use of.
<b>Fauna</b>	Animals.
<b>Firearms</b>	Rifle, pistol, or other portable gun.
<b>Flora</b>	Plants.
<b>Fossorial</b>	An animal that burrows and adapted to live underground
<b>Future generations</b>	Future generations are the generations of people to come in the future, after the currently living generations of humans.
<b>Game animals</b>	Animals hunted for food and the meat of those animals.
<b>Habitat</b>	A place that an animal lives. It provides the animal with food, water and shelter.
<b>Handgun</b>	A short firearm that can be held and used with one hand.
<b>Harvested</b>	To gather.
<b>Illegal</b>	Against the law.
<b>Indigenous</b>	Animals that originate or occur naturally in a particular place.
<b>Iridescent</b>	Showing luminous colours that seem to change when seen from different angles.
<b>Machete/panga</b>	A broad blade used either as an agricultural implement, similar to an axe.



**A dehorned rhino**

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<b>Narcotics</b>	Refers to drugs.
<b>Permit</b>	An official document giving someone authorization/permission to do something.
<b>Petty theft</b>	A non-violent criminal act in which property belonging to another is taken without that person's consent.
<b>Poaching</b>	Poaching is the illegal "hunting" of fauna (animals) and flora (plants).
<b>Poverty</b>	The state of being extremely poor.
<b>Prosecution</b>	Legal proceedings against someone in respect of a criminal charge.
<b>Rifle</b>	A gun, especially one fired from shoulder level, having a long barrel.
<b>Snares</b>	Wire traps, usually made into a loop and placed to catch animals.
<b>Status symbol</b>	A possession that is taken to indicate a person's wealth or high social or professional status.
<b>Terrain</b>	A stretch of land, especially with regard to its physical features.
<b>Traditional healer</b>	An unlicensed person who practices the art of healing using traditional practices and herbal remedies.
<b>Traditional medicine</b>	Traditional medicine refers to health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral-based medicines.
<b>Unauthorised entry</b>	Entry to a place or property without permission. This is also referred to as trespassing.



**Snare wires**

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# Disclaimer

This course is written as a **general guide** to anti-poaching activities on game reserves. The advice, recommendations, protocols, suggestions, and instructions provided should be treated as guidance only. While this course is based upon direct counter-poaching experience, this activity is potentially dangerous and life-threatening and those involved must be **practically trained by experienced personnel** before taking any action regarding the subject matter. Therefore, **WildlifeCampus** and **KaiNav Conservation Africa**, take **no responsibility** for how you may utilise the information contained within this course and any consequences thereof.



## What is Poaching?



# Module # 1 - Component # 1

## What is poaching?

### Introduction

Welcome to the WildlifeCampus Anti-Poaching Junior Course! This course aims to provide you with the necessary skills and knowledge to help eradicate poaching, even at a young age. We explain poaching and anti-poaching, some of the different types of poaching and the ways we can help prevent it from happening. **If you are a young conservationist who is keen to learn and make a difference, this course is for you!** As a young person, you hold the key to positive conservation change, for future generations!



# What is poaching?

**Poaching is the illegal “hunting” of fauna (animals) and flora (plants).**

This is to kill, trap, capture, remove or keep any product of fauna or flora without a permit or permission.



**A flap-necked chameleon**

It is illegal to take these animals out of the wild without a valid permit. It is also illegal to buy or sell these animals. In fact, it is illegal to capture, buy or sell any **indigenous reptiles** in South Africa.



# What is anti-poaching?

**Anti-poaching** is controlling, preventing and stopping of poaching activities.

What is an **Anti-Poaching Unit (APU)**? A highly trained group of people who work within or with law enforcement to control, prevent and stop poaching activities. To be part of an anti-poaching unit, you will need to be **over the age of 18, have no criminal record** and be **fully trained** by an Anti-Poaching Training School.





# Who make the best anti-poaching team members?

The best person is a **passionate conservationist**, a person who will put in more effort than someone who just sees it as a job.



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## Three levels of poaching

Poaching can generally be divided into **three different levels**:

- |                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. <b>Subsistence poaching</b> | → Level 1 |
| 2. <b>Commercial poaching</b>  | → Level 2 |
| 3. <b>Syndicate poaching</b>   | → Level 3 |



**Snares** are widely used throughout Asia and Africa by both subsistence and commercial poachers. We go into detail on snares and what snare poaching is, later in the course.

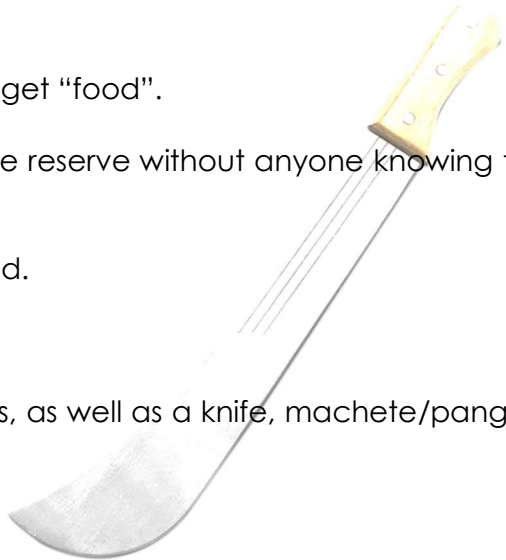


# Subsistence poaching – Level 1

This is a person that usually hunts/traps animals for themselves and their families. They will often live in the area where they poach and will know the area very well. They will have most often grown up in this area too.

## Characteristics of a subsistence poacher:

- This individual is often driven by poverty at first, but can quickly cross over to becoming a **commercial poacher**.
- They will use whatever they have available to get “food”.
- In a large reserve, this person often lives on the reserve without anyone knowing they are there.
- They will generally know how to live off the land.
- They will often know the reserve very well.
- They will usually have their poaching weapons, as well as a knife, machete/panga or axe.
- They may also commit petty theft in the area.
- They will avoid capture and avoid anti-poaching units.
- They often operate alone or with one other person.
- They will generally give up once caught.



**The threat level to the anti-poaching units is low**

**Methods:** this person's methods include snares and traps, spears and bow & arrows. If they can get a firearm, they will frequently progress to a level of commercial poaching.



## Commercial poaching – Level 2

### Poaching for bushmeat, traditional medicine and narcotic (drug) sales.

This person cannot be easily described. They may be the farm manager next door or the **subsistence level poacher** that has now progressed to this next level. Traditional healers and their suppliers also fall into this category. Also included in this category are plant (cycads and others) collectors.

#### Characteristics of a commercial poacher:

- They generally operate as a group and often armed with firearms.
- They are driven by money or even "sport".
- They will often sell the meat to butchers or back door street vendors.
- They may use **poison** to target certain species for traditional medicine trade.
- When poaching for meat, they will hunt anything that can be sold.
- When poaching for traditional medicine (Muti-trade) they may target expensive wildlife and plants to fulfil specific requests.
- Their meat sales can look legal and will often come with proof of purchase.
- They often have equipment such as telescopic sights, night vision spotlights, radio communications and vehicles.
- They will try to avoid getting caught and they will work fast, then get out the reserve before anyone comes.
- They may consider fighting back if caught, but will generally try to get away before being caught.
- They usually target various locations in and around their living environment.
- They may also work seasonally (certain times of the year) or at specific times of the month.
- They generally operate at night. Preferring **full moon** - Also called "**Poachers' Moon**".
- They may remain in larger reserves, living there for a few days while they work.
- This level of poacher may also kill for sport and leave the animal where they shoot it.
- They certainly pose a significant threat to wildlife.

**Level of threat to the anti-poaching unit is moderate**

**Methods:** These include snares, trapping, spears, bow and arrow, hunting with dogs and hunting with rifles.



## Syndicate poaching – Level 3

This is **sophisticated organised crime**, well-funded (they have money to spend on poaching), well-networked (they have many people involved) and internationally orchestrated (planned with or run by people in other countries). They hire large networks of individuals, mostly locals, to do the actual poaching.

### Characteristics of syndicate poachers:

- They are highly organised, resourced and operate within a sophisticated intelligence network.
- They always operate in groups, often very large groups of between 5 and 50 members.
- The upper levels of the syndicates are driven by money. The lower levels are also financially motivated but get paid a fraction compared with their masters.
- They are very well equipped with light aircraft, helicopters, assault rifles, explosives, night vision optics, vehicles, radio communication, dart guns and camouflage clothing.
- Will try to avoid confrontation but will not hesitate to exercise excessive force when confronted.
- They operate during the day and at night.
- They target black & white rhino, elephant, lion and leopard. Marine species such as abalone (a type of shelled sea creature, covered later in this course) are also included in this level.
- They have the resources to target large areas.
- The syndicates work as businesses.
- They are professionals, often with a military background and training.
- Syndicate poachers have skills, knowledge and motivation.

**The threat to the anti-poaching unit is extremely high**

**Methods:** darting and hunting with firearms on foot, vehicle or helicopter.



## The illegal pet trade

The targeted species of this poacher are mainly reptiles, usually **tortoises**, **chameleons** and **snakes**.

This type of poacher is also **most difficult to catch red-handed** because they do not carry weapons. If they feel they are going to get caught, they simply let the captured animals go. When encountered, they are only guilty of **trespassing**. This type of charge is not frequently pursued unless the individual does it again. If caught, the area will be searched, and poached species **removed**. Poachers will often return to areas where they may have left their last capture.

The animals removed from formal or informal reserves are generally **sold on the side of the road**. **Recently, online sales have also become a large threat**. This practice is illegal. Indigenous species are **NEVER** allowed as pets. Only research and rehabilitation permits are issued for the capture and collection of indigenous species. When the informal traders are encountered, local police should be informed and **the animal for sale should never be purchased**. People often purchase the species, not necessarily to keep them as "pets" but rather with the idea of returning them to the bush. While this seems like a good thing, this practice simply fuels the demand and encourages poaching. If nobody bought poached animals, the trade would naturally dissolve.



**Quartz gecko** – a gecko that is often poached in South Africa and sold overseas into the illegal pet trade. Many of these reptiles are disguised in packages or packed into tight containers or bottles for transportation. Many animals from one shipment will perish on the way, due to lack of oxygen, food and water.