

Providing for our Anti-Poaching Powerhouses

Whenever people think of the continent of Africa, many things come to mind, one of the first being the breathtaking flora and fauna. Incredible creatures of all shapes and sizes roam the lands. Lions rule their pride, elephants venture the savannah, buffalo graze the field, rhinos frolic in the mud, and leopards hunt their prey. The big five game animals are a must-see for many travelers, as merely a photo or video does not do these beasts justice.

Initially, these were labeled as the “big five” due to the extreme difficulty and challenge it would create for a person attempting to pursue one. They were the prize catch for an experienced hunter and something sought after as a sort of trophy and status symbol. As time went by and technology advanced, huntsmen became more and more capable of this task, and killing the big five became not such a challenge. Poaching is the illegal killing of these creatures, to take a piece of them and sell it for profit, and it has been devising. People saw the value in the horns, tusks, fur, teeth, and bones and the rates of poaching of all kinds significantly skyrocketed.

Thankfully, as people began to notice the severity of this issue and the impact that poachers were having on the populations of these beasts, many rules and regulations began to surface that have helped protect these animals from an inevitable fate. Still, though, people continued to illegally stalk and assassinate some of the creatures that produce ivory, as it is used in some medicines around the world. Elephant and rhino populations declined more and more to the point of critical endangerment.

To assist in the battle against the ivory trade, many organizations instated Anti Poaching Units, consisting of various individuals who dedicate their lives to saving endangered animals such as rhinos. They spend the majority of their life living in the bush with eyes on these creatures at all times, to ensure that they can live long lives and reproduce. This job is an intense one full of lots of physical labor, and frightening situations being at the hands of harmful poachers. The work of these units is over 97% successful when it comes to targeting poachers, removing their traps, having them arrested, and ultimately preserving the wildlife of the continent. While the work they do is necessary, these individuals are very often overlooked and highly underappreciated, making very little income and having limited access to supplies. It is my goal to reverse this narrative, and show anti-poaching units the support and appreciation that they deserve.

My name is Haley Euwema and I am an environmental studies major in my freshman year at the University of Central Florida. In the coming month of May, 2024 eight classmates and I will be venturing to South Africa to fulfill projects of service and sustainability in the town of Harrismith and on the Nambiti Game Reserve. Each student has been given the task of developing a project that will make change, and we must utilize the next few months to raise money for our causes, mine being the Nambiti Anti-Poaching Unit.

To aid the anti-poaching unit in their journey, we want to provide them with new gear such as backpacks, flashlights, binoculars, vehicle fuel, tents, knives, and whatever else they might need. We are estimating around \$5,000 as the price needed to make a difference, and gift them with high-quality goods that will last.

Every 16 hours, a rhino is killed. I hope to lessen this statistic and educate individuals on the importance of worldwide animal conservation, and I need your help in doing so. It would be my genuine honor to have you as our sponsor in making a difference in the lives of countless individuals and animals in South Africa. So, do you want to take part in the revolution against poaching and the preservation of wildlife?

Thank you for your time, Haley Euwema