

THE END OF EDEN



GLOBAL NEWS READING: “The Last Animals”: a journey to the frontlines of **extinction**

A new **documentary** shows the human cost of the illegal wildlife trade

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*In Vietnam, Kate Brooks is **posing** as a tourist looking to buy wildlife products.¹ On the dealer’s counter there is a poster featuring a cartoon of a baby rhino, *part of a campaign to spread awareness about the animals’ **looming** extinction. **Oblivious** to the **irony**, the salesman presents pictures of his **rhino-horn bracelets** on his phone, placing the **device** atop the poster.*²*

It is one of many shocking moments in “The Last Animals”, *an urgent and beautifully **shot** film about the world’s largest land **mammals** and the people fighting to prevent their **extinction**.*³ *During its making, 100,000 elephants and 5,000 rhinos were killed*

¹ Kate Brooks is posing [*as a tourist [looking to buy wildlife products]*].

² [*Oblivious to ..*], the salesman presents pictures ..., [*placing the device ..*]

³ ...moments in “The Last Animals”, [*an ... [about A and B]*]

for their **tusks** and **horns**, *used in ornaments, jewelry and traditional medicines*. The problem is not new *and* this documentary is not the first to **highlight** it, *but* Ms Brooks's five years of work, *uncovering the lesser-known sides of the story*, has resulted *in* an impressive and far-reaching film.⁴

Ms Brooks, a **photojournalist** *turned film-maker*, previously worked in the Middle East and is no stranger to **conflict** zones. She makes clear that the frontline in the fight to protect **endangered** animals is no different to any other. **Poachers**—*funded by criminal networks, enabled by corrupt politicians and often linked to terrorist organizations*—are now armed with automatic weapons, night-vision **goggles** and **helicopters**.⁵ *After drugs, weapons and human trafficking*, it is the fourth most **lucrative transnational** crime.

“The Last Animals” is an **ode** to the “unsung heroes,” *who every day risk, and frequently lose, their lives protecting animals*.⁶ *Early on*, it shows a **Congolese** community in **mourning** for a **ranger**. His **colleagues** must put their **grief** aside to continue their training, *led by Jacques Lusengo, a colonel in the armed forces, and Patrick Duboscq, a French ex-policeman who laments their shoddy equipment*.

They are later **ambushed** while on **patrol** in Garamba National Park, *leading to a shoot-out*, the footage of poachers **riddled** with **bullets**, *one of them dying on camera*, is **horrific** to watch. Later the viewer learns that the rangers' helicopter was gunned down, *killing the colonel and three of his team*. It is hard to **reconcile** these tragic deaths, both animal and human, *with* the demand for **trinkets** and ineffectual **potions**.⁷

⁴ (Ms Brooks's five years of work, *[uncovering ...]*), (has resulted) *[in ...]*.

⁵ (Poachers—*funded by...*, *enabled by ...* and *often linked...*) (are) (now armed) *[with ...]*.

⁶ ...to the “unsung heroes” *[who ...]*.

⁷ It is hard to reconcile A with B.

At the start of filming, there were seven northern white rhinos left in the world but this **figure** quickly decreased to five. *In zoos in San Diego and the Czech Republic, and in Ol Pejeta **conservancy** in Kenya, the animals are named individuals, making it all the more shocking when they die—Nola, Nabire, then Sudan, the last male, until there are only two.* They die of various natural causes *while in **captivity**, **interventions** to make them breed have failed.*

Yet there are some **glimmers** of hope in “The Last Animals”. Scientists hope to be able to create a northern white rhino using **stem-cell** and **in-vitro fertilization** technology. **Conservationists** and international activists are making progress in changing **attitudes** and **legislation**. Further campaigning is needed, Ms Brooks says, *given the scale of the problem.* She asks her audience to **petition** to stop the legal trade of ivory and rhino horn.

It is a **dire** situation, and worsening. *On October 29th* China partially **reversed** a ban to allow sales of rhino products and tiger bones in “special circumstances”. Countries including Australia, Canada and New Zealand are yet to **implement** comprehensive **bans**; ivory continues to be sold in 41 states in America. The EU is one of the largest exporters of legal ivory in the world. A recent report from the **WWF** says that population sizes of **wildlife** decreased by 60% globally between 1970 and 2014. *If we don't stop the killing, it will eventually be just us humans as the last animals.*