News

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Rhinoceros horn thieves at museums

Hunt for the rhinoceros horn poachers do not longer stop at museums

Museum im Ritterhaus, Offenburg

On the hunt for the rhinoceros horn poachers do now no longer stop at museums. In 2011, 56 thefts in natural history collections and exhibitions were recorded, in which valuable specimens were destroyed.
The thieves are organized gangs, which are now in the media dubbed "the Asian-African Mafia." Usually they enter the museum as visitors, distract the staff and tear off rabidly the horn of the specimens.
Especially in Asia, one still believes in a potency-enhancing effect of the processed powders and pills of Horn. The "Traditional Chinese Medicine" speaks of a cure, what can defeat malaria, poisoning and even cancer. The rumors about the "magic bullet" let demand grow immeasurably. So it was probably only a matter of time before this pressure would spread to Europe.
On the black market these stolen horns currently achieve estimated 25000-200000 ? depending on the size of the horn. And this despite the horn of rhinos is made of keratin, that is from the same substance as human hair and fingernails. Therefore, neither a healing nor a potency-enhancing effect can be achieved through the horn.
Europol warned not only museums but also wildlife parks and zoos to protect its rhinos by monitoring systems.
The best protection, however, is the removal of the horn-in live animals, as well as museum specimens.
Thus the rhinoceros in our exhibition also wears an imitation of a horn.

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