



*(Poster also available in German)*

## Gambling on Extinction Fact Sheet/Press Kit 2015

### Contact:

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### Production Info

Country: Germany/Canada

Year: 2015

Duration; 52 MINS

Production: A&O BUERO AND REAL TO REEL

Director: JAKOB KNESER

Versions Available: ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN

**“Gambling on Extinction” is a powerful documentary about human greed and a merciless battle over limited resources: elephant ivory and rhino horn**

Illegal trade in wildlife is an estimated \$20 billion (USD) black market business, funding organized crime and decimating crucial ecosystems in Africa and Asia

*“Gambling on Extinction’ shines a light on this devastating transnational crime, covering supply and demand, the involvement of criminal syndicates, and links to terrorism. The film is intense, with graphic images sweeping across the screen, conveying the brutal and bloody reality of the poaching epidemic plaguing Africa’s iconic wildlife.” – Environmental Investigation Agency*

***MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET***

**Premieres & Broadcasts**

Jakob Kneser’s “Gambling on Extinction” had its Canadian (English) broadcast premiere on Animal Planet (February 26, 2015) and CTV W5 (February 28, 2015). The film had its festival premiere at the DC Environmental Film Festival (March 24, 2015) at the Goethe Institut-Washington. Community Partners the Environmental Investigation Agency and the International Fund for Animal Welfare supported the screening and assisted in its promotion. Two experts from each organization volunteered as panelists for a post-screening Q&A, moderated by Sylvia Blume, Cultural Programs Coordinator (Goethe-Institut Washington).

On May 27, 2015, “Gambling on Extinction” premiered to German audiences at the historical Abaton Cinema in Hamburg. Filmmakers Jakob Kneser and Tristan Chytroschek joined Robert Kless (International Fund for Animal Welfare) for a post-screening discussion on the film and the disastrous illegal trade in wildlife.

“Gambling on Extinction” has since aired on SVT (Sweden), TG4 (Ireland), ZDF (Germany) and ARTE (France). The film has secured broadcast licenses with 20 international broadcasters, with more deals in negotiation.

## **Screening at the German Parliament**

In October 2015, the filmmakers were invited by the **The Social Democratic Party** to screen the film in the German Parliament. This screening took place on November 10, 2015. The aim was to educate parliamentarians on the illegal trade in wildlife before a critical debate about proposing a ban on the importation of ivory.

## **The Film**

In “Gambling on Extinction”, Jakob Kneser, takes the viewer on a horrific journey, starting from the killing fields in Kenya and South Africa to the trading hubs of Vietnam and China. Joined by undercover investigators, rangers, ex-poachers, conservationists and buyers, Jakob exposes the lethal mechanisms of the global trade in endangered species, the terrorist connection, the customers, and the champions working to end this environmental disaster.

The illegal trade in wildlife is the dark side of globalization: Ivory and rhino horn have become lucrative commodities. Endangered species are now the most lucrative illegally traded goods after drugs and weapons, and has been taken over by powerful, connected, heavily armed international syndicates.

As numbers go down the prices go up, making it a perverse futures market in extinction. Poaching is an international crime. It will take a concerted international response to stop it. As Allan Thornton, President of the Environmental Investigation Agency, says: The world has two choices. We can have elephants. Or we can have ivory trade. We can't have both.

Gambling on Extinction is an international treaty co-production between a & o buero filmproduktion gmbh (Germany) and Real to Reel Productions Inc. (Canada).

**View and embed the trailer, download press materials and learn more here:** [www.gamblingonextinction.net](http://www.gamblingonextinction.net)

## **Online resources**

Visit the “Gambling on Extinction” website for background on the film, more resources about wildlife crime, information on our partners and supporters, and updates on the film (screenings, broadcasts, appearances). Also follow “Gambling on Extinction” on Twitter: @GOEfilm, and on Facebook.

## Filmmakers’ statements

*“As a documentary filmmaker I always try to make films that I feel are relevant and important. But this subject is especially close to my heart. If this slaughter continues there won’t be any more tigers, rhinos or elephants left in the wild. All these beautiful creatures will be gone in a few years from now. Can you imagine a world without these majestic animals? What an incredibly sad and empty place this would be.”* **Jakob Kneser, Director**

*“When Jakob came to me and said that rhinos are being brought to the brink of extinction because their horns are ground up and used as party drugs, I couldn’t believe it. Then I saw the horrific pictures of slaughtered rhinos. Not just a few, but dozens. Hundreds. That’s when I decided that we must do a film about this.*

*The killing must stop right now because if it doesn’t, then the threat that rhinos, elephants and tigers become extinct in our own lifetimes is real.”* **Tristan Chytroschek, Producer**

*“We cannot let this happen and I firmly believe that if we can rally everyone from the grassroots up to the rich and powerful we can put an end to this ruthless illegal wildlife trafficking. I truly believe if we can stop the demand we can stop the trafficking.”* **Anne Pick, Producer**

## Filmmakers’ bios

After studying philosophy, history and religious sciences at university, **Jakob Kneser** began working as a film director, author and editor. Since 2002, he has directed numerous reports, features and documentaries for arts and science television programmes. Jakob has also written and produced various radio features about cultural and scientific topics. Since 2006, he has been concentrating on creating longer non-fiction television formats. In 2009, Jakob started working as a freelance lecturer in journalism at the Humboldt University in Berlin.

Award-winning documentary filmmaker and producer **Tristan Chytroschek** has worked for the BBC and Channel Four in Great Britain and for Discovery/TLC in the United States. He lived and worked in London, Los Angeles, Mexico City and Cordoba/Argentina, before he returned to his native Germany. Since 2004, he has been the co-owner of the Hamburg-based documentary production company a & o buero.

An award-winning independent filmmaker, **Anne Pick's** passion for story telling began as a teenager writing for her father's country newspaper in South Australia. This led to a career in journalism with major Australian newspaper and television organizations. She has been producing, directing, writing, and story-editing docs and factual series for over 20 years, resulting in hundreds of hours of documentaries and television series, and won many awards, including a Canadian Gemini, Australian AFI and Dendy, top prizes from New York, Chicago and Houston and had her work screened at many international festivals. Anne's work has and continues to find appreciative audiences around the world

## **Credits**

*More detailed credits available upon request*

|                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Director:            | Jakob Kneser                    |
| Producers:           | Anne Pick & Tristan Chytroschek |
| Executive Producers: | Anne Pick & Robert Tasso Pütz   |
| Writer:              | Jakob Kneser                    |
| Story Editor:        | Anne Pick                       |
| Editor:              | Rob Ruzic                       |
| Music:               | Mark Corven                     |
| Running time:        | 52 mins                         |

## **Festivals**

**Winner: Naturfilmpreis - German Wildlife Film Award, Best Film: Man and Nature - Darßer NaturfilmFestival (2015)**

**Winner: Special Prize of the Jury Award - Matsalu Nature Film Festival (Estonia) (2015)**

**Winner, *President of the Festival Committee Prize - IFF EkotopFilm-EnviroFilm* (2015)**

**Nominee, *Green Report - Green Screen Eckernförde International Wildlife Film Festival* (2015)**

**Nominee, *German Conservation and Sustainability Film Award - NaturVision* (2015)**

Official Selection, *DC Environmental Film Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *IFF EkotopFilm-EnviroFilm* (2015)

Official Selection, *Dominican Republic Environmental Film Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *NaturVision-Wettbewerb* (2015)

Official Selection, *Filmambiente Film Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *Green Screen Eckernförde International Wildlife Film Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *Darßer Naturfilm Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *Life Sciences Film Festival* (2015)

Official Selection, *Wildlife Film Festival Rotterdam* (2015)

Official Selection, *Masuku Film Festival* (2015)

## **Press**

Visit [www.gamblingonextinction.net/press/](http://www.gamblingonextinction.net/press/) for all related coverage, stills, posters, and press releases

## **Production Companies**

**a & o buero filmproduktion gmbh:** Since 1995, a&o buero has produced more than 80 documentaries. a & o buero has received the Human Rights Film Award, the French-German Journalists' Award the Axel Springer Award, and an International Emmy Award, along with other prestigious awards, for its films.

**Real to Reel Productions Inc:** For over 20 years, Anne Pick and Bill Spahic, the award-winning team behind Real to Reel Productions Inc. (R2R), have been creating factual programming and documentaries. R2R films span several genres, from social issue and pop culture, to biography, history, and the arts; on 2D, 3D and multi-platform. R2R promises engaging stories and high production values.

## **Funders**

**“Gambling on Extinction” was produced in association with:** ZDF/ARTE (Germany/France), Bell Media: Animal Planet, CTV & W5 (Canada), Radio Canada (Canada), SBS (Australia), SVT (Sweden), ORF (Austria), DR (Denmark), NRK (Norway), YLE (Finland), VRT (Belgium), TG4 (Ireland), TVN (Poland), Česká televize (Czech Republic), TVI (Portugal), Yes Doku (Israel)

**Additional funding for “Gambling on Extinction” provided by:** Rogers Cable Network Fund (Canada), MEDIA (Europe), Film Fund Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit (Canada), Ontario Media Development Corporation (Canada)