



## DECEMBER 2005

### NEWS FROM THE FIELD

#### Project B : News from the Laikipia Wildlife Forum

The LWF is proud to have been chosen by '3 Peaks 3 Weeks Challenge Africa' for sponsorship. In January 2007, 14 women from all corners of the globe will summit Mt Kenya, Mt Meru and Mt Kilimanjaro in less than 3 weeks to raise money and awareness for the three peak issues affecting Africa today; environment, education and HIV/AIDS.

More: [www.3peaks3weeks.org](http://www.3peaks3weeks.org)

#### Project D: Lifting crane for rhino capture truck, Zimbabwe

Project D requests funding for a lifting crane to be used in capture and translocation operations, which will improve the national capacity to attend to all animals that require translocation. The SADC Regional Program for Rhino Conservation team already has a planned programme of translocations, which it continues to carry out, but improving its resources will make a dramatic improvement in its ability to do so.

Lovemore Mungwashu, coordinator of Project D, recently sent us this report of a **rhino capture and translocation** exercise that they carried out recently.

*"This exercise was carried out to save this subpopulation of rhinos that was under severe poaching pressure. Gourlays Ranch, the area where the rhinos were moved from, is a former commercial game ranch that has now been invaded by settlers under the current land reform programme in Zimbabwe.*

*The statistics for this operation are:*

- *Total black rhinos found: 30. All translocated out. 2 of these were on Gwizaan Ranch and one on Inunwa Ranch, the rest on Gourlays Ranch*
- *Rhinos carrying snares that required surgical removal: 5*
- *Additional with old snare scars: 5*
- *Total skeletons found during our operations: 5, of which 2 had bullet holes in the skulls and the horns chopped off.*

*No horns were found by our trackers at any of these carcasses and are therefore likely to have been illegally traded, although one of the carcasses was of a snared calf that was too small to have recoverable horns. From the age of the carcasses, the poaching with firearms appeared to have taken place before 2005, although snaring is ongoing.*

*There were four deaths during this logistically and politically challenging translocation operation:*

*three of severely snared rhinos (including a cow who had lost her entire foot); and the other an old bull who we suspect to have become poisoned by regularly drinking polluted water at a gold mine.*

*We sent a tracker team back for a final search for rhino spoor, several days after the last translocation. They found no sign of any rhinos remaining on Gourlays or adjacent properties, although the possibility that some may still be found cannot be excluded.*

*The bright side of this depressing exercise is that the rhinos are now in a secure area (Bubye River Conservancy) of good habitat with significant room for population expansion. We should also be grateful for the fact that senior government officials recognised the evidence of a serious poaching threat and upheld the decision to translocate the rhinos despite local political opposition and misinformation regarding the security of the rhinos.*

*Peter Morkel of Frankfurt Zoological Society assisted our team on this operation, and we are very grateful for that input."*

### **Project I: Assam launches 'Indian Rhino Vision 2020' Programme**

Assam has launched an ambitious Programme called 'Indian Rhino Vision 2020' to save the one-horned rhino from two overcrowded sanctuaries in the north-eastern state of Assam.

More: <http://news.webindia123.com/news/showdetails.asp?id=181191&cat=India>

## **NEWS FROM THE ZOOS**

### **Chester Zoo supports Sumatran rhinos, with a little help from Nick Garbutt**

In November, author, photographer, artist and tour guide Nick Garbutt gave a talk for the North West Group of Fauna and Flora International at Chester Zoo. The evening focused on wildlife in Madagascar and Borneo, and Nick talked about his fascination with the rainforests of Borneo and their amazing biodiversity, which he visited most recently in July with Cathy Dean, Director of Save the Rhino International.

During the trip Nick got an insight into the work of SOS Rhino Borneo, an NGO which works in two ways: developing a captive breeding programme at the Orangutan Rehabilitation Sanctuary in Sepilok; and supporting Rhino Protection Units in Tabin Wildlife Reserve, home to an estimated 15-20 of the critically endangered Sumatran rhino.

Nick is currently writing a book on the wildlife of Borneo (Wild Borneo), illustrated with many of his own stunning photographs to be published in July 2006.

Nick very kindly waived his fee for the evening, as well as donating one of his beautiful ink drawings of a lemur for auction, and FFI's North West Group very kindly agreed to donate the ?600 raised from the talk to Chester Zoo's efforts to fundraise for "Save the Rhinos", the EAZA Rhino Campaign 2005/6. In keeping with the evening's theme, the donation will be used to support the creation of two further Rhino Protection Units, to patrol the southern quarter of the Tabin Wildlife Reserve

## FUNDRAISING

### **The French NGO Awely supports the project in Yemen: Combating the illegal trade in and demand for rhino horn.**

Awely is a French NGO that was set up in April this year with two goals: contributing to the resolution of human/wildlife conflicts in the less developed countries and to the creation or development of the education department of the zoos located in the same countries.

Awely is giving 600 euros for the creation of educational panels that will be given to the Sanaa zoo, but also providing a slide projector for the same education department.

More: [www.awely.com](http://www.awely.com)

## MEETINGS

### **A crash of rhinoceros experts**

Nick Lindsay, Chair of the EAZA Rhino Campaign, is currently organising a 2-day conference on the management of rhino populations in zoos worldwide: **the Global Captive Action Plan** meeting, due to take place on Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 May at Whipsnade Safari Park. Up to 35 participants from the UK, Europe, the USA and the rest of the world are expected to attend.

Taking advantage of the presence of all these rhino experts, we also intend to hold **the annual Rhino Mayday** immediately after the Global CAP meeting, on Thursday 1 June in central London. The Rhino Mayday has been held at ZSL's meeting rooms in Regent's Park for the last two years, and hopes are high that this will be the venue for the 2006 occasion.

As always, field managers from rhino projects in Africa and Asia, together with representatives of the African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups, will speak about their current work. With the impetus of the EAZA Rhino Campaign, we expect a strong showing from the projects selected to benefit from European zoos' fundraising efforts. This will be a great opportunity for zoo staff, rhino conservation charities and interested members of the public to find out what impact the Campaign is having in situ.

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