

BBC THE WORLD'S BEST NATURAL HISTORY MAGAZINE

# Wildlife

Magazine  
Week  
17-23 September

www.bbcwildlifemagazine.com

SEPTEMBER 2007 £3.25 US \$7.25 CAN \$10.95 Volume 25 Number 10



At home with the  
**Hippos**

Battling crocs, dining on dung, rescuing  
animals in peril – it's all in a day's work  
for Africa's river horse



## LONG-LOST FRIENDS

Meet the cranes  
breeding in Norfolk after  
a 400-year absence

## EAGLE RAYS

Beautiful  
images of these  
aquatic butterflies



## WILDLIFE HOSPITAL

Is rehabilitation a  
waste of time  
and money?



## Blooming algae

# 77%

The increase in the area of the Gulf of Mexico's 'dead zone' between 1990 and 2007. The 'dead zone' is the result of prolific algae growths that are fed by high levels of agricultural chemicals in run-off water entering the Gulf.



## Cod cut

Iceland has cut its cod quotas by about a third in order to maintain its stocks at healthy levels. The Marine Conservation Society said it showed that pressure for sustainable quotas was working.

# PEOPLE OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL

## Mountain madness: conservationists mourn killing of rare gorillas



Four mountain gorillas were shot in Virunga National Park in July, bringing the number of these great apes that have been killed in the past seven months to seven. In addition, two other gorillas, a female and an infant, have not been

accounted for. Though mountain gorillas have been one of the conservation success stories of the past few decades, the loss of up to 9 animals – out of a total population of about 700 – was described as a "trend that cannot continue."

Alan ICGP/Gamma

## Would sir like mercury with that dish?

Diners who eat dolphin meat in Japan may be getting more than they bargained for.

In the coming months, the annual slaughter of several dolphin species will begin in Hatagiri Bay, near the town of Taiji in central Japan.

Bottlenose, Risso's, striped and common dolphins, as well as short-finned pilot whales, are targeted. Each year, several thousand are rounded up in shallow coves and then killed with knives and spears. Some are spared – but only to be taken to dolphinariums.

Most of the meat ends up in local supermarkets or even, as in March 2007, at government-sponsored school whale lunches.

This year, however, Japanese people may pause before buying the meat or letting their children consume it. In July, two Taiji City

## The horns of Africa

An ancient Yemeni tradition, in which men carry carved daggers, is devastating rhino populations in east Africa.

Eastern Africa's rhinos are being slaughtered to meet the insatiable Yemeni market for rhino horn.

The last surviving wild population of northern white rhinos in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been almost completely obliterated with just four rhinos left. In Kenya, poaching has risen in the past four years, with at least 25 rhinos killed for the Yemeni market.

Horns end up in the old souk of Sanaa, where craftsmen have carved

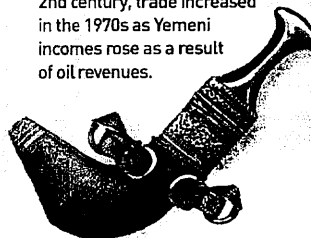
rhino horn into handles for curved daggers, or jambiyas, for centuries.

The wholesale price for rhino horn pieces in the souk has risen by 40 per cent since 2003 to about \$1,700 a kilo. As the Yemen population increases sharply, so does the need for more jambiyas, which nearly all Yemeni men in the north of the country own.

Conservationists say that the demand for rhino horn must be reduced through education campaigns. One proposal is that only posters of the President in which he does not wear his horn should be displayed because Yemenis are hugely influenced by him. *Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne*

### TWISTING THE KNIFE

- » Rhino horn is compressed keratin fibres, like our hair and nails. The central core is reinforced with calcium and melanin.
- » It is valued as a material for handles for jambiyas (below) because it improves in lustre with age, changing through different shades and colours, which each have their own name.
- » The handle is the most prized part of the dagger, its complexity and design showing the status and wealth of the wearer.
- » Though rhino horn has been imported from Africa since the 2nd century, trade increased in the 1970s as Yemeni incomes rose as a result of oil revenues.



Various species of dolphin are rounded up in Taiji each year. Those not sent to aquaria are butchered.