



# **RHINO MAY DAY**

**30 MAY 2007**

HUXLEY LECTURE THEATRE  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

## **PROGRAMME**

ORGANISED BY  
RHINO RESOURCE CENTER  
and  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON



## **RHINO MAY DAY – 30 MAY 2007**

09.45 – 10.30	REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS
10.30 – 10.40	WELCOME
10.40 – 11.00	PETER HALL <i>Keynote Speech: Rhino Conservation</i>
11.00 – 11.30	RICHARD KOCK <i>Are rhino out of the woods? A reflection on rhino conservation in Kenya and Nepal</i>
11.30 – 11.55	HUGO VAN DER WESTHUIZEN <i>Black rhino return to Zambia</i>
11.55 – 12.10	CATHY DEAN <i>Results of the EAZA Rhino Campaign</i>
12.10 – 12.30	KEES ROOKMAAKER <i>New website of Rhino Resource Center</i>
12.30 – 13.45	LUNCH
13.45 – 14.10	JOHN GRIPPER <i>Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy in Zimbabwe</i>
14.10 – 14.30	MALCOLM STATHERS <i>Bronze rhinos: why and how</i>
14.30 – 14.55	FELIX PATTON <i>East Africa's largest ever rhino translocation</i>
14.55 – 15.20	SCOTT WILSON <i>DNA Analysis: Counting Rhinos in Chyulu Hills National Park</i>
15.20 – 15.50	TEA BREAK
15.50 – 16.15	BARBARA MAAS <i>Rhino conservation in Nepal</i>
16.15 – 16.45	BIBHAB KUMAR TALUKDAR <i>Rhino Conservation in Assam: Need for constant vigil</i>
16.45 – 17.10	ESMOND MARTIN <i>New developments in Yemen's rhino horn trade</i>
17.10	RAFFLE
17.30	CONFERENCE ENDS

# **ABSTRACTS**

## *in alphabetical order*

# **OF THE PRESENTATIONS**

**Cathy Dean** (Save the Rhino International)  
*EAZA Rhino Campaign: surpassing all expectations*

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) launched its fifth conservation campaign, "Save the Rhinos, the EAZA Rhino Campaign 2005/6" on 7 September 2005. The campaign raised an astonishing amount for rhino conservation in range states, topping E 620.000. Visitor education during the year increased awareness of 125 million people of the need to protect rhinos.

**John Gripper** (Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust)  
*Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy in Zimbabwe*

The Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust was founded by John Gripper in 1988 to help establish a black rhino Conservancy in the Midlands area of Zimbabwe. His talk will outline the present difficulties and problems that have occurred in the Midlands Conservancy over the last 2 years and will cover rhino poaching, farm evictions, wildlife based land reform policy, new stakeholders and the present economic and political situation in Zimbabwe.

**Richard Kock** (Zoological Society of London)  
on behalf of: Ben Okita, Shant-Raj Jnawali, Rajan Amin, Richard Kock  
*Are rhino out of the woods? A reflection on rhino conservation in Kenya and Nepal*

Black rhino in Kenya plummeted to ~380 animals by the late 1980s due to severe poaching. The Kenya wildlife department was restructured as a result of this and other crisis and from that time on a new wildlife service was created. ZSL involvement started through provision of rhino and veterinary programme coordinators and this has continued most recently with a successful Darwin Initiative. The decline in rhino numbers was finally reversed by 1991. ZSL following on from the early strategy development support in 1993 and 2001, assisted in the development of the 5 year conservation strategy in 2006. The growth rates over the last few years have exceeded the AfRSG targets of minimum 5% and numbers are now above 540 and continue to grow.

Greater one horned rhino in Nepal reached an all time low in the late 1960s of approximately 100 and with considerable effort this was reversed. The population grew up to 612 by 2000 but with deteriorating social and political conditions in Nepal and weakened management this positive situation changed. By 2005 it was realised that not only were the numbers no longer increasing but in fact had dramatically declined to less than 400 due to poaching (both opportunistic and organised) due to considerable insecurity.

### Review of existing and development of next 5-year black rhino strategy for Kenya

Although the story is currently very positive in Kenya considerable challenges remain and the new strategy tries to address these and maintain the upward momentum. The workshop in Naivasha in 2006 agreed the following goal and key strategic objectives for the new 5 year black rhino conservation strategy.

Goal: A minimum growth rate of 6% per annum in sanctuaries achieved. A minimum population of 220 rhinos achieved in free – ranging areas. A minimum of 20 rhinos in one forest area achieved. Total to reach 700 rhinos by 2011 towards the vision of 2000 rhinos as a minimal viable meta-population

#### Strategic objectives:

Coordination and Support - Develop a sustainable framework to support stakeholders and enhance decision making and action

Protection - Minimise rhino poaching, encroachment and illegal extraction of natural resources through effective law enforcement measures and stakeholder collaboration

Monitoring for Management – Standardised monitoring system is maintained to provide information for efficient protection, meta-population management and programme implementation

Biological Management - Maintain a minimum growth rate of 6% p.a. in sanctuaries; reach a minimum of 220 in free ranging populations and a minimum of 20 in forest populations to attain a meta-population of 700 animals by 2011

Capacity – Sustain an effective and efficient resource capacity through collaborative efforts between all stakeholders with a strategic focus on under-performing areas

Community - Promote establishment of community rhino conservation through partnerships and the generation of goodwill from neighborhoods to all rhino conservation areas

### Support to pulling rhino out of crisis in Nepal

Over recent years despite continued determination amongst Nepal stakeholders to resolve this crisis there seemed to be difficulty in moving conservation efforts forward. The recent progress towards resolution of ten years of civil war in Nepal provided a window of opportunity in 2007 when ZSL proposed a Darwin Initiative earlier scoped with all the key partners and this was accepted for execution in May. The focus will be on three protected areas, one of which is a world heritage site, with the following main objectives: 1) strengthening and increasing the capacity of Nepal's existing wildlife department officials, patrol scouts and communities particularly in monitoring and surveillance of rhino and in anti-poaching; 2) strengthening metapopulation approach to ensure viable populations as soon as possible in all sites which includes a feasibility study on a Sanctuary Approach in SWR and/or community areas, and institutionalising standardised status reporting on each rhino population; 3) developing a *Terai* grassland invasive species management programme with focus on training of field scientists in habitat assessment and control; 4) implementing more effective human-wildlife conflict resolution approaches and 5) improving public engagement and integration of local communities, politicians and other stakeholders in conservation efforts and facilitating improved governance of rhino conservation.

#### ZSL's role

CP's purpose is to actively facilitate the process of conservation of rhino in these 2 countries providing; advice, technical support and training where appropriate and bringing in other players when necessary such as other AfRSG/AsRSG members and other scientists.

**Barbara Maas** (Care for the Wild International)

*Emergency mission to save Nepal's rhinos*

Care for the Wild International responds to an acute poaching crisis in Chitwan National Park. The greater one-horned rhinoceros once roamed across the entire north of the Indian subcontinent. Today only a few small subpopulations in north-eastern India and Nepal survive. Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park, which encompasses 93,200 hectares of prime rhino habitat, is one of the species' last strongholds. A population count in 2005 revealed that 172 individuals had been lost to poachers in the past five years, leaving a mere 372 survivors. Since then a further 28 individuals have died for their horn. In the last six months of 2006 alone at least eleven rhinos were slaughtered in and around the Park.

In the autumn of 2007, Care for the Wild International set up a collaborative emergency conservation programme with Wildlife Conservation Nepal. The programme provides much needed resources to monitor the movement of rhinos and poachers, established an effective intelligence network, rewards outstanding enforcement, and includes conservation education initiatives amongst local communities. By mid November seven rhino poachers and four illegal traders were arrested in the biggest string of arrests for years. Since then the number of arrests has risen to 20. To help ensure that offenders are prosecuted we have initiated an information programme on wildlife crime for court and enforcement officials. The response was overwhelmingly positive, sensitising key legal figures to the rhino's demise. Rhino poachers face a 15 year prison sentence in Nepal. But in light of the current crisis, some officials are calling for the introduction of a life sentence.

**Esmond Martin**

*New developments in Yemen's rhino horn trade*

Lucy Vigne and I visited Yemen for three weeks in February- March 2007 to investigate the rhino horn trade, for which no study had been conducted for over four years. We collected data on trade routes for rhino horn from Eastern Africa to Yemen, the wholesale prices for rhino horn in Sanaa, the number of workshops and craftsmen producing dagger (jambya) handles in Sanaa and Taiz souks and the quantity of rhino horn coming in to the country over the last few years. We also updated our findings on the jambya trade in general. We had meetings with Ambassadors, Ministers and other senior Yemeni officials to gain support in law enforcement and substitute materials for rhino horn. We also spent time in Sanaa and Taiz Zoos; we designed, produced and had installed several billboards, banners and signs for the zoos on the theme of wildlife conservation - with emphasis on the plight of the rhino and Yemen's continuing demand for rhino horn for jambya handles. We gave interviews to the media in Yemen in order to increase PR on the need for rhino conservation. Our visit not only (at last) updated our information on Yemen's rhino horn trade, but also contributed to much needed public awareness in Yemen, concentrating on educating the hundreds of thousands of visitors that annually visit the two recently built zoos in the country.

**Felix Patton***Conservation Science in Practice - East Africa's largest ever rhino translocation*

Habitat evaluation and population demography studies showed that the black rhino populations at Solio Game Reserve and Sweetwaters Game Reserve in central Kenya had reached or exceeded Ecological Carrying Capacity. There was urgent need to move rhinos out of these areas. Around the same time as the studies, the owner of Sweetwaters and its parent Ol Pejeta Ranching sold out to the Arcus Foundation with ownership subsequently passing to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC). This led to the availability of some 25,000 new hectares for rhino conservation. A plan was finally agreed that allowed for the translocation of 30 rhinos from Solio, with 26 going to OPC and four to another reserve Ol Jogi who in turn moved four of their rhinos to OPC. Candidate selection was science based and carefully adhered to. The process, on such a scale, involved several "firsts" for Kenya - rhinos were darted on foot rather than from a helicopter; a cow/calf combination was captured and released; the rhinos were "free released" rather than the traditional boma release. In order that guidelines may be provided to other rhino conservation areas that consider utilising free release translocations, subsequent research is focusing on how the population colonises the new area and establishes a social organisation in comparison with experience from South Africa.

**Kees Rookmaaker** (Rhino Resource Center)*The new website of the Rhino Resource Center*

The Rhino Resource Center (RRC) maintains a library of all literature on the five species of rhinoceros. There are currently over 11,000 items. There are 927 references in books prior to 1800 (8%), 1539 from the 19th century (14%), 7207 from the 20th century (64%) and 1563 published since 2000 (14%). The RRC also maintains archives of rhino related correspondence and unpublished reports, as well as a depository of rhino images. We aim to make all this material available to all people interested in rhinos in every discipline and every country through the website. The new site launched today contains a reference base which can be searched and PDF files of selected publications can be downloaded free of charge. It also contains an image base, as well as a message board to discuss rhino topics. The use of the website is free of charge: [www.rhinoresourcecenter.com](http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com).

**Malcolm Strathers***Bronze rhinos: why and how*

I intend to explain why I got interested in rhinos from a very early age, where I've seen them and then take people through the various steps in the creation of a bronze which I have illustrated.

**Bibhab Talukdar** (Asian Rhino Specialist Group)*Rhino Conservation in Assam: Need for constant vigil*

The conservation of *rhinoceros unicornis* in Assam has been regarded as the epitome of wildlife conservation initiative with the fact that from a dozen of rhinoceros estimated to be available in Kaziranga area at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rhino population in Assam has gone to 2006 in the year 2006 for intense conservation

measures adopted so far. As such the state of Assam has a proud legacy of successfully conserving the Indian Rhino in its distribution range. While poaching is always a major threat to rhino in Assam, but there have been marked changes in rhino habitat across Assam in past few decades due to shift in river courses as well as natural and man made alteration. This paper reflects the current status and challenges in rhino conservation in Assam keeping in view the diverse renewed threats posed to rhino and their habitats in Assam.

**Hugo van der Westhuizen**

*Black rhino return to Zambia*

Extensive poaching in the 1980's and early 90's lead to the national extinction of black rhino in Zambia, one of the former regional strongholds of this species. The Frankfurt Zoological Society and the Zambia Wildlife Authority embarked on a project to reestablish a viable population of black rhino in the country's North Luangwa National Park. Extensive consultation and on-site preparations were made before the first 5 rhino (*Diceros bicornis minor*), donated by South African National Parks, were received in a fenced sanctuary in 2003. This first group settled down well, with a calf conceived and born in the Park in 2005. Additional negotiations resulted in a further 10 animals arriving in 2006. This phase of the reintroduction saw the participation of not just the South African National Parks Board, but also the Eastern Cape Parks Board and North West Parks Board in a strong regional cooperative conservation effort, an additional positive result of this project. The second phase has been more problematic, with the death of two of the young cows originating from the Eastern Cape, one with chronic feeding problems and the second attributable to trypanosomiasis complicated by factors associated with adapting to a new environment. The rest of the group are however doing well, with another birth recorded. Valuable lessons have been learnt and the organisations involved remain committed to reach the target of a founder population of 20 animals, and plans to achieve this are being pursued.

**Scott Wilson** (Chester Zoo)

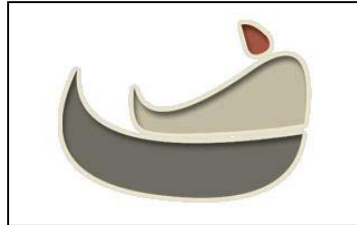
*DNA Analysis: Counting Rhinos in Chyulu Hills National Park*

The Chyulu Hills NP Black Rhino population is an indigenous population surviving after the wide scale poaching of the 1970s and early 1980s. Due to the fact it is an indigenous (none introduced) population and it is known to be breeding, it is a crucial component of Kenya's Black Rhino Management Programme.

Working with various partners Chester Zoo has supported several conservation initiatives for this important rhino population including new vehicles, accommodation and support of running costs for the rhino rangers patrolling Chyulu Hills, and the funding of water bowsters to help reduce the necessity for rhinos to move outside of the protected area.

For effective population, and meta-population, management information on the demographic and genetic structure of the Chyulu Hills rhino population is vital. Currently rhino patrols collect direct (sightings) and indirect (spoor, middens etc. ) data, but due to the nature of the terrain and methods used this data is often collected opportunistically and is limited in what it can reveal about the rhino population as a whole.

A new initiative in 2007, involving several partners, hopes to increase on this information using DNA analysis. Working with the University of Liverpool and Manchester Metropolitan University DNA will be collected from dung and analysed. This pioneering method has been proven elsewhere and will provide invaluable information concerning population size, sex ratios, inbreeding and genetic diversity, and relatedness to other rhino populations; helping to inform future management plans for this critically endangered species in Kenya.



## **RHINO RESOURCE CENTER**

*Facilitating Communication  
Across Disciplines and Across Continents*

The RHINO RESOURCE CENTER is committed to assisting research and conservation of all species of rhinoceros by collecting all publications and maintaining archives. The literature and images of the rhinoceros from Roman times to the present are accessible worldwide through our website.

**[www.rhinoresourcecenter.com](http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com)**

The RHINO RESOURCE CENTER is a registered charity  
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