

S.Africa:

Introductions and reintroductions

Colchester Zoo's charitable arm, Action for the Wild, was first developed in 1993 in order to protect endangered species, aid conservation, research and education projects, as well as promote projects that benefit local communities.

Rebecca Perry
Conservation Officer
Colchester Zoo

Over the years, Action for the Wild has provided support to a wide range of conservation projects, helping to protect a

RHINO FUND UGANDA RHINO FUND UGANDA



Colchester aims to release white rhinos into the wild in 2008

number of different species including African hunting dogs, golden lion tamarins, Komodo dragons and – of course – rhinos. In August 2004, Action for the Wild became a registered UK charity and, since achieving charitable status, has donated over £150,000 to conservation efforts.

Action for the Wild focuses on the protection of endangered species in the wild, tying in its conservation programmes with animal species at Colchester Zoo. The charity is also dedicated to supporting the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) conservation campaigns, including the 2005/6 Save the Rhinos Campaign. Action for the Wild raised £25,000 for this campaign and chose to divide its funds between two worthwhile projects based in South Africa: a horn-fingerprinting project

(see page 26) and funding for rhino security equipment for the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve.

Colchester Zoo's four Southern white rhinos Simba, Flossie, Cynthia and Emily, helped enormously with fundraising efforts. Special feeds, talks, stalls and adoptions were all on offer during 2005-6 as part of the Campaign, and we certainly could not have raised £25,000 without the help of our rhinos, who acted as perfect ambassadors for their wild counterparts.

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi is particularly close to our hearts, as Flossie originally came from this Reserve back in the early 1970s, and was named 'Flossie' after 'iMfolozi'. We also chose it because Action for the Wild also has its own reserve, the UmPhafa private nature reserve, based in the same province as Hluhluwe, in KwaZulu Natal.

The UmPhafa private nature reserve has become Action for the Wild's primary focus. The reserve encompasses 4,000ha and numerous species already inhabit the area, including kudu, impala, jackal, warthog and waterbuck. Evidence of leopard and caracal have also been seen. Action for the Wild is now establishing a translocation programme to rehabilitate the land by returning native species which have disappeared due to farming, aiming to recreate the historical mammalian assemblage and help secure the future of these species. Eight species have already been released: serval, zebra, giraffe, red hartebeest, blesbok, waterbuck, common reedbuck and python.

Our goal for 2008 is to introduce Southern white rhinos to UmPhafa. Save the Rhino has been incredibly supportive in helping us to plan this release by introducing us to Dave Robertson of Hluhluwe and Richard Emslie of the African Rhino Specialist Group. Anthony Tropeano, Colchester Zoo's Zoological Director, and I travelled to UmPhafa last November to meet Richard and Dave and we are extremely grateful to them for the advice and help they have given us with relation to rhino security,

COLCHESTER ZOO



Cathy Dean and Petra Fleischer of Save the Rhino receive Colchester's cheque for Hluhluwe from Rebecca, on Save the Rhino's annual staff outing to the zoo in January 2008.

release numbers and management of the reserve. We are also very grateful to Save the Rhino for providing us with these vital contacts.

Action for the Wild hopes to continue its relationship with Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve in the future and, in January 2008, donated a further £5,796 to the Reserve to help increase the effectiveness of its important anti-poaching and monitoring activities and to ensure the continued and increased competence of field rangers in the Reserve. This, we hope, will help contribute directly to increased security of their large rhino populations and, one day, we hope we can play a part in helping conserve black rhinos on our own reserve too.

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Grants

Our thanks to Colchester Zoo's Action for the Wild for its grant of £5,796, and also to Safari Club International (London Chapter) for the £6,500 raised at auction last September. A further US \$2,000 is due any day now from Safari Club International Foundation to buy new tyres for Hluhluwe's Landcruisers. We're really grateful to all the donors for this wonderful support.