

Tanzania:

Expanding communications at Selous Rhino Trust

As many Save the Rhino members will already know, the Selous Rhino Trust is working exclusively to protect and secure the future of the small population of black rhino remaining in Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve - miraculous escapees of an uncontrolled poaching spree that swept through the Reserve in the 1980s and reduced rhino numbers by 98%.

Louisa Muir, Project Administrator, Selous Rhino Trust

It is a challenging task. The Selous is the world's second largest game reserve stretching 45,000 square kilometers across an area larger than Denmark. A myriad of waterways and tributaries feed off the Rufiji River, which cuts a swathe straight across the Reserve, and for the most part terrain is dense with thick bush and miombo woodland.

Good quality and reliable communications are vital to the project's success, particularly considering the size of the reserve and the peculiarities of the terrain. Groups of rangers working in different areas need to maintain contact with one another. The low-flying aerial anti-poaching survey teams must be able to radio down to the ground force the instant they pinpoint and GPS-grid a poachers' camp. As the project expands its monitoring and anti-poaching activities to include more areas of the Reserve, the ability to extend the range of radio contact is becoming increasingly important.

The Trust's headquarters are tucked under Kipalala Hill, on a cliff overlooking the Rufiji River in the northern sector of the Selous. The site is beautiful and provides a secure and elevated home to at least one of the Reserve's remaining rhino, but it does have a major disadvantage. Kipalala Hill acts as a solid barrier to radio communication, meaning that large areas of the Reserve on the far side have effectively been inaccessible to the Selous Rhino Trust.

Thanks to the very generous commitment from Save the Rhino and its supporters who will dance the night away at the Chyulus-Selous party on 19 November to help raise money for the Trust, a solution is at hand.

With the money raised, we plan to install a VHF repeater station on the Hill, with a 36-metre antenna mast. The repeater station will enable the rhino team to be reachable for the first time across the entire area



ALL IMAGES: LOUISA MUIR

of the northern sector of the Selous, an expanse covering 12,000 kilometers. Solar paneling will be installed to power the station, which will need careful protecting; hyenas are inquisitive and will eat just about anything! The cost of materials and installation for the station is estimated at US\$ 13,500. The repeater station will be instrumental in helping us to effectively monitor and establish population estimates in new, as yet unexplored, areas of the Reserve.

Dance like the Maasai

Chyulus-Selous (chew-loo-sa-loo)
An exclusive evening of African music and celebration in aid of the ChyulusHills rhino project, the Selous Rhino Trust, and Save the Rhino International.

8pm - 1am, Friday 19 November 2004
The Tabernacle,
Powis Square,
Notting Hill, London W11

For the second year running, Save the Rhino is inviting you to a special project party 'Chyulus-Selous', in aid of the Chyulu Hills Rhino Project and the Selous Rhino Project. This event follows the success of 'Dance Laikipia', our party last November, where One Giant Leap raised the roof as well as awareness and much-needed funds.

This year promises to be even better with African rhythms from Rhino Drum, performed live at Notting Hill's historic Tabernacle. Tickets include a 'Dawa' Swahili cocktail on arrival, open bar all evening and delicious food by Deliverance. Each guest will also receive a goody bag on departure. Guests will also have the chance to win top-class safari prizes in the raffle.

Tickets for Chyulus-Selous are £50 each and can only be purchased in advance. Numbers are strictly limited to 400. Tickets and further information are available from:
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