



## Rhino Mayday – Programme

Wednesday 29 April 2009  
Huxley Lecture theatre, Zoological Society of London  
10.30am – 5.10pm

Thank you to all the speakers who have given up their time to speak at Rhino Mayday

Thank you to the Zoological Society of London for kindly donating the use of the Huxley Lecture Theatre



Raffle tickets will be on sale throughout the day

### Timetable

9.45 – 10.30 Registration and refreshments

First session chaired by Lucy Boddam-Whetham

10.30 – 10.45 Cathy Dean  
*Introduction*

10.45 – 11.10 John Gripper, Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust  
*An update on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe*

11.10 – 11.35 Robert Risch  
*Status and perspectives of conservation of the Sumatran Rhino in Borneo*

11.35 – 12.00 Martin Mulama  
*Settling experience and lessons learnt on 'same-day-release' method of black rhino translocation, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya*

12.00 – 12.35 Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager, Chester Zoo  
*Rhinos - the ultimate teaching tool!*

12.35 – 12.40 Andrew Gell, Photographer  
*Photo GPS*

12.40 – 14.00 Lunch

Second session chaired by Kees Rookmaaker

14.00 – 14.25 Gitanjali Banerjee, ZSL  
*Census Results on rhino in Nepal and issues around invasive species and anti-poaching*

14.25 – 14.55 Felix Patton  
*Botswana's rhino: history, current position and future challenges*

14.55 – 15.20 Dave Robertson, Conservation Manager, iMfolozi Game Reserve  
*Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park 1895-2009: The pleasures, pitfalls and perils of protecting pachyderms*

15.20 – 15.50 Tea/Coffee Break

Third session chaired by Fiona Macleod

15.50 – 16.15 Berry White  
*Crate training of three Black Rhinos in preparation for their journey from Dvur Kralove, Czech Republic to Mkomazi, Tanzania*

16.15 – 16.40 Bradley Cain  
*Molecular tracking of the Chyulu Hills black rhino population and its genetic status in relation to other populations within Kenya.*

16.40 – 16.50 Hollie Manuel, Imire Safari Ranch (Time to be confirmed, Hollie may speak earlier in the day)  
*Twenty two years of black rhino breeding and rehabilitation*

16.50 – 17.00 Updates from the floor

17.00 – 17.05 Raffle

17.05 Rhino Mayday ends

## **Abstracts**

### **In speaker order**

#### **Introduction**

Cathy Dean, Save the Rhino International

Save the Rhino International was started in 1992 by Dave Stirling and Johnny Roberts and in 2001 Cathy Dean took over as Director of Save the Rhino. Since then Cathy has run four marathons and two ultra marathons for Save the Rhino.

#### **Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust – An update on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe**

John Gripper, Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust

John Gripper from the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust will give an update on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe which is affecting the rhino conservancies.

He will be outlining the possible reasons for the upsurge in the illegal slaughter of rhino by poachers which has taken place in Zimbabwe during the past year

## **Status and perspectives of conservation of the Sumatran Rhino in Borneo**

Robert Risch

During the last 25 years the global population of Sumatran rhinos has been reduced by up to 80 %. Today not more than 200 - 300 individuals seem to be left. This is the sad result of decades of deforestation, poaching and habitat fragmentation. Especially the Bornean subspecies with just around 35 remaining individuals needs urgent measures. The successful implementation of projects for the Western Sumatran rhino in Sumatra shows that it can work. We therefore suggest concentrating our efforts on the Borneo subspecies before it is too late. The local government already showed its commitment to bringing the Sumatran rhino back from the brink of extinction.

In early 2009 a new group of scientists and enthusiasts experienced in working in Sabah founded the Rhino & Forest Fund. Our aim is to increase the current population by semi-captive breeding, restore the habitat by reforestation projects and build a local acceptance for the project by community outreach programmes. For us saving the rhino apart from its shrinking habitat is impossible. It will cost money, years of work and lobbying. But the reward is the survival of the Sumatran rhino and the survival of other species sharing the same habitat. Let's do it together!

### **Settling experience and lessons learnt on 'same-day-release' method of black rhino translocation, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya.**

Martin Mulama, Ol Pejeta Conservancy

A total of 27 black rhinos were translocated to Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya, in February 2007 to an area that had no resident rhino population. The rhinos were released on the same-day of their capture at 11 sites spread throughout this area in the Conservancy. Same-day release had not been tried on such a scale in Kenya. After the release, the rhinos were closely monitored through radio tracking and direct observation to record their movements and how quickly they settled in their new environment. In the first six days after release, 17 of the 27 rhinos remained close to their release sites while one individual travelled some 35.1kms. All rhinos, except one, settled within six months of release of which 16 had settled within 25 days. The rhinos moved on average 7.69kms from their release sites with 14.57kms being the maximum distance moved. With no reported fights between the rhinos and the ease of settling in their new area, the results obtained from the same-day release method of translocation used at Ol Pejeta Conservancy show this to be a useful alternative approach to translocations in the future.

### **Rhinos - the ultimate teaching tool!**

Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager, Chester Zoo

Flagship species can be used to great effect to front up conservation education programmes. Golden Lion Tamarins in Brazil, St Lucia Parrots in St Lucia and Ring-tailed Lemurs in Madagascar are good examples. The Black Rhino is an excellent example of a flagship species – a mega vertebrate, distinctive in appearance and emblematic of a region and habitat. Additionally it is a threatened species with the potential to attach powerful environmental education messages regarding poaching, pointless slaughter and human greed.

The conservancies that are represented by the Laikipia Wildlife Forum in Kenya hold the second largest population of Black Rhino *Diceros bicornis michaeli* in the country – approximately 260 individuals. This represents 45% of Kenya's national population. Tanzania's newest National Park, Mkomazi, borders Tsavo West, thus forming a 'Transpark' - one of the largest and most important ecosystems on earth with large herds of elephant, oryx and zebra migrating in the wet season. A population of Black Rhino has been established in the park through the translocation of eight individuals in 1991 and 2001. More translocations are planned this year and three of the females have produced offspring.

Environmental Education is considered a vital part of the conservation effort in both these locations. The EE programme in Laikipia has been running for five years and in 2008/9 an extensive review was

undertaken in order to move forward with increased focus and confidence. The Mkomazi programme, branded 'Rafiki wa Faru' (Friend of Rhino) started in June 2008 and is in its pilot year. The Education Division at Chester Zoo has been heavily involved in the development of both programmes and this presentation will provide an overview of progress to date

### **Photo GPS**

Andrew Gell, Photographer

Photo GPS records accurate satellite position data of where a photograph has been taken. The GPS data is recorded at the same time as the picture and stored for use later.

There are two ways in which the satellite positioning data is recorded. This is either by a camera with GPS built in or a separate GPS unit that fits into the camera's hot shoe. The latter matches the picture and GPS data in software to view the location of the photograph on Google Earth maps.

GPS position data has been recognised as a good method to accurately archive photographs, but has considerable benefits for conservation. The photo and GPS data collected may be used for database and research purposes to assess movement and habits of wildlife, territories, location of invasive species to list a few examples. It may also be useful for rangers to register the location of poacher's camps.

### **Census Results on rhino in Nepal and issues around invasive species and anti-poaching**

Gitanjali Banerjee, ZSL

ZSL has been working under a Darwin Grant with the National Trust for Nature Conservation NTNC and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in Nepal on rhino since 2007. The focus has been on establishing and improving a number of functions important to rhino conservation in Nepal: standardised census and monitoring techniques and status reporting, effective anti-poaching methods, habitat management and identification and control of Invasive Alien Plant Species and last but not least, improved public engagement in buffer zone communities. The presentation will review the progress made and illustrate the sometimes surprising results that emerge from a catalytic project like this. The talk will convince that GOH rhino despite the down-listing on CITES should remain firmly on the endangered list and continue to receive more support into the foreseeable future.

### **Botswana's rhino: history, current position and future challenges**

Felix Patton

Felix Patton is a rhino ecologist who specialises in monitoring systems and the identification of individual rhinos, particularly using photo-identification, for population management. He is currently in the final stage of a PhD with Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.

Rhinos have twice become near extinct in Botswana. Following re-introductions and breeding, there are now resident some 107 white and 7 black rhinos. Fenced areas are at or near capacity. Free ranging rhinos, released in Moremi Game Reserve, have been found to travel as much as 250 kms making monitoring difficult. Heavy poaching has occurred in South Africa and Zimbabwe which border Botswana. Botswana could be next. To counter the threat, monitoring, as part of security systems, must be as effective as possible and requires the co-ordination of all involved. A new NGO has been proposed – Rhino Monitoring Project Botswana – dedicated to rhino monitoring and research.

### **Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park 1895-2009: The pleasures, pitfalls and perils of protecting pachyderms**

Dave Robertson, Conservation Manager, iMfolozi Game Reserve

In 1895, 5 areas were set aside by the Colonial Zululand Government as reserved areas for game, and no hunting was allowed in these areas. Two of these were the 'Hluhluur Valley' and the 'Umfolozi

Junction' Reserves, which were formally proclaimed in 1897 and became Hluhluwe and iMfolozi game reserves respectively. At around this time the southern white rhino was all but extinct, save for a small population in Umfolozi. Early conservationists fought against huge odds including many calls to have the reserves de-proclaimed and the game exterminated due to the prevalence of tsetse fly-transmitted sleeping sickness or 'Nagana'. Their efforts were rewarded and by the 1960s, the numbers of white rhino had increased to the extent that they had to be removed, and it was these rhinos which restocked reserves across their former range. The emphasis later shifted to the increasingly more endangered black rhino, and an intensive monitoring program has been running for over 20 years. Several research projects are also running to assist reserve management to make sound decisions. 2008 was one of the worst years for rhino poaching in the park, and has reminded us that these animals will always need special protection.

### **Crate training of three Black Rhinos in preparation for their journey from Dvur Kralove, Czech Republic to Mkomazi, Tanzania**

Berry White

At the end of May this year three Eastern Black rhinos, *diceros bicornis michaeli*, will be translocated from Dvur Kralove in the Czech Republic, where they were born, to Mkomazi National Park in Tanzania to start a new life in Africa.

The rhino are currently undergoing two months of crate training at Dvur Kralove to minimise the stress and prevent them harming themselves in the crates during the three day journey by land and air; and facilitate access to the rhinos whilst on route to Africa for feeding and any veterinary attention they may need.

In previous translocations, the crate training of captive animals travelling back to Africa has proven to be a very important part of the process in getting them there safely and the intensive husbandry is vital in the slow delicate process of helping them adapt to a new environment once back in Africa.

### **Molecular tracking of the Chyulu Hills black rhino population and its genetic status in relation to other populations within Kenya**

Bradley Cain

Bradley Cain has been undertaking a conservation genetics PhD in Kenya, which has involved genotyping nearly 200 black rhino within the sanctuary system. In addition to the work on admixed enclosed populations, he has also been involved in a molecular tracking project on the Chyulu Hills black rhino in collaboration with Antony Wandera of the Kenya Wildlife Service and Phil Watts of Liverpool University.

The Chyulu Hills population is one of the few remaining non-admixed relic populations of black rhino remaining in East Africa. The steep terrain and thick vegetation of Chyulu Hills coupled with the secretive nature of the few remaining rhino means that monitoring of this population has predominately relied on indirect sighting data. In 2007 Antony Wandera started a molecular tracking project on the Chyulu population as part of his MSc in Conservation Biology at Manchester Metropolitan University under the supervision of Bradley Cain and Phil Watts. Using DNA extracted from faeces, we have determined the minimum population size, sex ratios, level of inbreeding and levels of genetic diversity and distance in relation to the 200 rhino genotyped as part of the larger PhD work.

### **Imire Safari Ranch: Twenty two years of black rhino breeding and rehabilitation**

Hollie Manuel, Imire Representative

In 1987 Norman Travers, who ran Imire Safari Ranch, became the custodian of seven orphaned black rhino. Travers had been operating in the South East province of Zimbabwe since 1972, pioneering the

integration of cattle ranching and commercial farming with wildlife management. His work won him the Natural Resources Annual Award in 1978 and the prestigious award of Top Conservationist in 1998.

The seven rhino were hand raised for eight years and became, by plan, a semi domesticated herd from which a breeding program could be established. Imire Safari Ranch then established worldwide recognition as a safe nucleus for breeding black rhino herds.

Since the rhino became of breeding age Imire has raised fourteen and released ten black rhino into the Matusadona National Park Zimbabwe. Sadly Imire, like many conservation based projects in Zimbabwe, has had to face a series of devastating events that have meant that the program needs all the help that it can get in order to survive.