

## The role of intelligence in rhino security

In April 2007, the EAZA Rhino Campaign awarded a grant of 15,000 euros to the APLRS for its Rhino Security and Intelligence Claim Scheme. This will allow the APLRS to publicise the Scheme more widely, providing funding for five years or more.

**Geoffrey Chege**  
Chairman  
Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries (APLRS), Kenya

The aim of the Scheme is to enhance the security and monitoring of rhinos in Kenya's private rhino sanctuaries by increasing the motivation and morale of security personnel through cash incentives. This is backed up by informer information that leads to arrests and the recovery of firearms and illegal equipment used to poach rhino. All APLRS members are located in security risk and banditry-prone areas, and hence they employ additional security personnel for extra vigilance, in order to offer maximum security and monitoring of black and white rhinos, to prevent poaching for their horn.

Since receiving the grant, considerable intelligence information has been gathered by credible informer networks and respective sanctuaries management, pointing to elaborate poaching plans by organised gangs targeting specific APLRS areas.

The general poaching threat was exacerbated by tension that gripped the entire country in the run-up to, and immediately after, the general election of December 2007. There was a lot of movement of firearms in the open by pastoralist communities that led to a number of bloody and fatal inter-tribal attacks among the warring communities. Unfortunately, most of the APLRS areas are located in the pastoralist strongholds and near to towns known to be transit routes for illegal horns and ivory. During this period, APLRS personnel had no alternative but to increase their patrol routines to secure their respective areas as well as intensify informer networks.

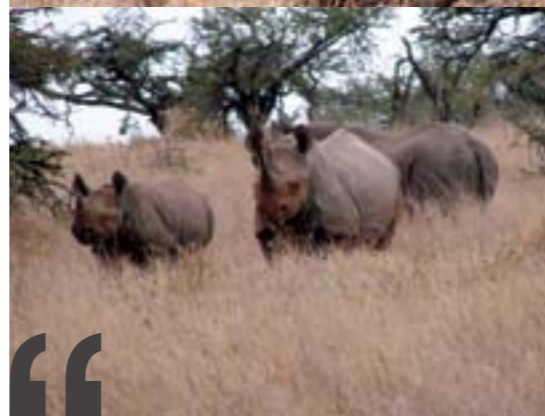
At the beginning of 2008, a new wave of rhino poaching incidences was witnessed; one black rhino was shot at night and horns removed in one member area. In February heightened intelligence gathering was instituted in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). As a result of this intelligence network, combined with several covert manoeuvres, in March, four suspects believed to have been the culprits of the February poaching were arrested. They were later released on bail pending further investigation, in accordance with Kenyan law.

At the height of the post-election violence in March 2008, increased informer networks led to a night ambush resulting to the arrest of one poacher inside the fence of one member area. The second poacher managed to escape. The men had poisoned arrows, a pot of potent poison and six steel cable snares. Information gathered from the arrested poacher indicated that the poaching gang was the same as that targeting the Laikipia rhino sanctuaries, connected to one dealer who has for long been linked to poaching incidences in the region. This particular dealer had promised to pay each poacher a whopping KSh 200,000 (£1,600) for every horn delivered to him. If such information is true, then it explains the levels of risk that poachers go to, in order to poach rhinos in some of the most heavily guarded rhino sanctuaries in the country.

Other than the above few incidents, a lot of other intelligence information were gathered in the one year of this project all indicating the vulnerability of rhinos in the entire country.



Top:  
Lewa security and tracker dogs  
Middle:  
Lewa white rhinos  
Bottom:  
Lewa black rhinos



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY EDWIN KISIO

“ This particular dealer had promised to pay each poacher a whopping KSh 200,000 (£1,600) for every horn delivered... ”

Very recent information from proven informers shows that value of horn and ivory has increased dramatically. This has been indirectly linked to a company from the Far East that is currently constructing the highway from Isiolo to Marsabit, which may be creating a link in the chain from poacher to end user. To counter this, the informer network system has been extensively expanded, and the APLRS has been forced to revise upwards the value of intelligence claim payouts.

Nevertheless, in spite of these threats, APLRS areas have continued to play a significant role in rhino conservation in Kenya. 46% and 69% of black and white rhinos respectively are currently found on private land. This has been achieved over time through individual and collaborative institutionalisation of several counter-measures that fortunately were boosted by the grant from the EAZA Rhino Campaign.

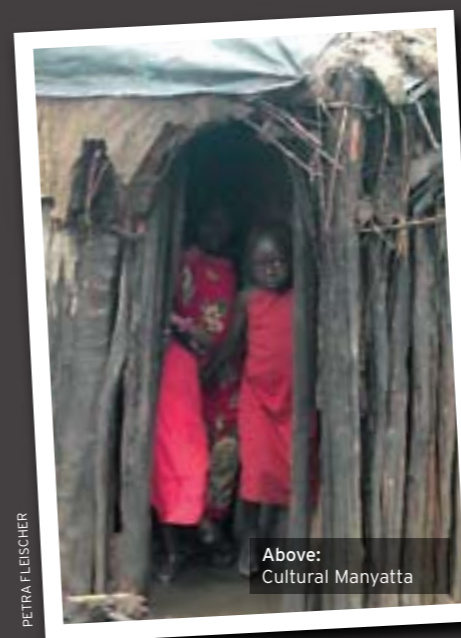


Above:  
Lewa security monitoring rhinos

## Sustainable living

Save the Rhino's aims are: to increase numbers of critically endangered rhinos; to enhance the integrity of ecosystems; and to ensure that local communities benefit from conservation activities in key rhino areas. The latter means that we are increasingly involved in people-based projects that focus on sustainable living and on initiatives that generate income to local people from nature-based activities.

**Petra Fleischer**  
Fundraising Manager



Above:  
Cultural Manyatta

PETRA FLEISCHER

This ecosystem approach ensures that the benefits people obtain from ecosystems are taken into consideration when managing an area of high biodiversity and natural resources such as the key rhino areas Save the Rhino is active in. Reflecting the close link between conservation and poverty alleviation, we are expanding our work by funding people-based projects, and at the same time widening our potential donor base.

This year we successfully secured a grant from the Body Shop Foundation's Europe, Middle East and Africa grant programme for the Community Conservation programme run by the Laikipia Wildlife Forum in Kenya. The Foundation supports projects focusing on sustainable development and their grant enables the five Community Conservation Officers at the LWF to increase the community development and conservation impact at grass-root level. They travel long distances on motorbikes in order to communicate with communities and self-help groups initiate project focusing on sustainable living methods. We are delighted to welcome the Body Shop Foundation on board!

Talking of sustainable living, there is something you can do to reduce your carbon foot-print whilst helping Save the Rhino. Switch your energy provider to Ecotricity, Save the Rhino's long-term supporters.

Ecotricity is an electricity company with a difference. As green energy pioneers, Ecotricity is dedicated to building new sources of renewable energy to fight climate change. Switching is easy and it's one of the biggest single steps you can take to reduce your emissions and protect the environment.

They take the money their customers spend on electricity and invest it in clean forms of power like wind energy. Ecotricity invests more per customer in building new sources of renewable energy than any other UK supplier. In fact over the last four years, for every £1 a customer has spent on their bill, Ecotricity has invested £1 in building new wind turbines.

Save the Rhino has teamed up with Ecotricity to get supporters to switch to a genuinely green supplier, and also to raise funds for our own work. For every supporter that switches, Ecotricity will donate £15 to Save the Rhino. They'll also match the standard price of your regional supplier with their New Energy tariff so you don't have to pay a premium for switching.

To sign up in just five minutes call free on 08000 302 302 and quote 'Save the Rhino' or go to [www.ecotricity.co.uk](http://www.ecotricity.co.uk)

