

## Say cheese

One of the biggest challenges we face at North Luangwa with the black rhino reintroduction programme is the adaptation phase. We take a number of steps to ensure that this phase is as smooth as possible. Capturing camera-trap images of rhinos is critical to monitoring this process...

**Claire Lewis**  
Technical Advisor, North Luangwa Conservation Programme

**T**ranslocating a wild rhino from one environment and plonking them in another is a bit like taking a Sahara dweller and dumping them in Alaska. You wouldn't know where you were; or where to find water, food, a safe place to sleep; or whether your neighbours were friends or foes!

Using a boma care specialist can assist in the adaptation phase. A boma care specialist is very important to gaining an insight into each individuals' character prior to, and post, arrival and can provide pointers on a rhino's general disposition, level of confidence and possible reactions to new and unknown surroundings. Predictions don't always hold true once the animal is released, but it certainly helps to know a bit more about each individual's personality.

The translocations to North Luangwa National Park have all taken place towards the end of May. This is the earliest after the rains have finished that a large plane like a Hercules C130 can land on the grass airstrip. Any later on in the year would push the release of the rhinos into drier and drier conditions, giving them even less chance to adapt.

In order to mitigate any drastic drops in condition, we have set up several feed sites around the rhino sanctuaries. These sites are carefully placed in areas that certain individuals frequent. We put out chopped up *Kigelia* sausage fruits and *Euphorbia spp.* stems, as well as bonemeal and salt. If we notice, from rhino scout monitoring reports and photographs, that an animal is not picking up or is losing more condition than we would like, then we also supplement with lucerne (also know as

alfalfa; a major fodder crop), sugar cane and sweet potatoes. We don't aim to offer supplementary feed for the long term, rather, just to help some animals get over their first dry season and through the difficult times. We estimate it takes 12-18 months before an animal has properly adapted to the conditions in North Luangwa. Even once fully adapted, we maintain a close eye on each animal through monitoring patrols.

Each animal is seen by the rhino scouts on average two or three times per month. The scouts take photos and estimate a condition score for each animal (ranking one for very poor, through to five for very fat). They also check dung scrapes and bites taken of vegetation, noting down the species being eaten. We try to leave the rhinos themselves alone as much as possible, so have put in place several remote sensor camera traps at the feed sites and at well-visited crossing points to capture rhinos in action. In March 2009, the dividing fence between two sanctuaries was removed. Speculative bets were placed on which species, and more importantly which rhinos, would cross the great divide. We set up several camera traps along the road that followed the fence but, to date, not one rhino has moved sanctuaries.

Just about all the rhinos have had their pictures taken at one time or another, but one female, Twashuka, seems to spend her time rooting out camera boxes and regularly shows up in pictures. She seems unfazed by the flash. Twashuka is generally one of the easier rhinos to track on foot and it's the more shy individuals, like Kango, that we'd really like to see. Kango makes an appearance about once or twice a year for a few days and then goes back to his normal daily life without



IMAGES: NORTH LUANGWA CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

the paparazzi in his face! The camera traps have been great at providing us with moments of rhino behaviour not normally seen and they have allowed us to remotely monitor rhino condition without disturbance.

## Education

For news on NLCP's Conservation Education Programme, and recent grants from USFWS and Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, please see pages 20-21.

# The Quizzogs Rhino Hero Challenge

On 24 May 2009, Clive Anderson made a BBC Radio 4 appeal in aid of three environmental education programmes - in Laikipia, Mkomazi and North Luangwa - supported by Save the Rhino International. The appeal was heard by, among many others, the Director of Quizzogs, Roy Dunmall, who has since very kindly named Save the Rhino as Quizzogs' first charity of the year.

**Cath Lawson**  
Office and Communications Manager

**Q**uizzogs ([www.quizzogs.com](http://www.quizzogs.com)) is an online quiz site designed for primary school children, based on the Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum, intended to fill the gaps created by unexpected teacher absences and act as a homework tool. Two new quizzes are available every week during term time, one for each key stage, and each quiz contains zones for maths, English, science, general knowledge and pot luck. Until now schools have had to pay for access to the full Quizzogs site, but from September 2009, access will be free and it is hoped it will become a nationwide educational tool.

The collaboration between Save the Rhino and Quizzogs, the Quizzogs Rhino Hero Challenge, will run throughout the 2009-10 academic year and will extend to any school signed up to the Quizzogs website that wishes to partake in the challenge. During term time, Save the Rhino, through the Quizzogs website, will provide primary schoolchildren with chunks of rhino-related information as well as some great photos and fun activities. Each term, one or two fundraising activities will also be promoted so as to raise funds for the three environmental education programmes that were originally highlighted by the Radio Four appeal: Laikipia Wildlife Forum's Environmental Education Programme, Kenya; Mkomazi's Rafiki wa Faru (Friend of the Rhino), Tanzania; and North Luangwa's Conservation Education Programme, Zambia.

The focus of term one (September-December) will be a general introduction to the biology, behaviour and conservation of rhinos covering topics such as the five species of rhino, the threats to rhinos, and different conservation approaches. Children will also be encouraged in term one to partake in an own clothes or fancy dress day and a Christmas rhino quiz at the cost of 10p and a clean first class stamp respectively. The Christmas rhino quiz will draw on all that the children should have learnt by following Save the Rhino's updates throughout the term and prizes will be awarded to the best performers.

In terms two (January-March) and three (April-July) the focus of educational material will shift to environmental education and wider conservation issues respectively. Save the Rhino will continue to provide information and activities on a wide variety of topics, as well as promoting links between UK primary schools and the *in situ* projects that they are raising funds to support. Participating UK pupils will have the opportunity to write to children at the education programmes being supported, and will receive written and video updates from the projects.

Additional fundraising activities planned include: the opportunity to sponsor, and possibly meet, a London Marathon 2010 rhino costume runner; a photo competition; and a 'Save the Day' which will coincide with Rhino May Day 2010.

There are over 20,000 primary schools and 4½ million pupils in the UK, so the potential for this endeavour is awesome. We are very grateful to all at Quizzogs for offering us this opportunity. It just waits to be seen if UK primary schools are up to the challenge!



## Are you up for the challenge?

If you would like your school to be part of the Quizzogs Rhino Hero Challenge, and Quizzogs more generally, please contact: [quizzogs@gmail.com](mailto:quizzogs@gmail.com)