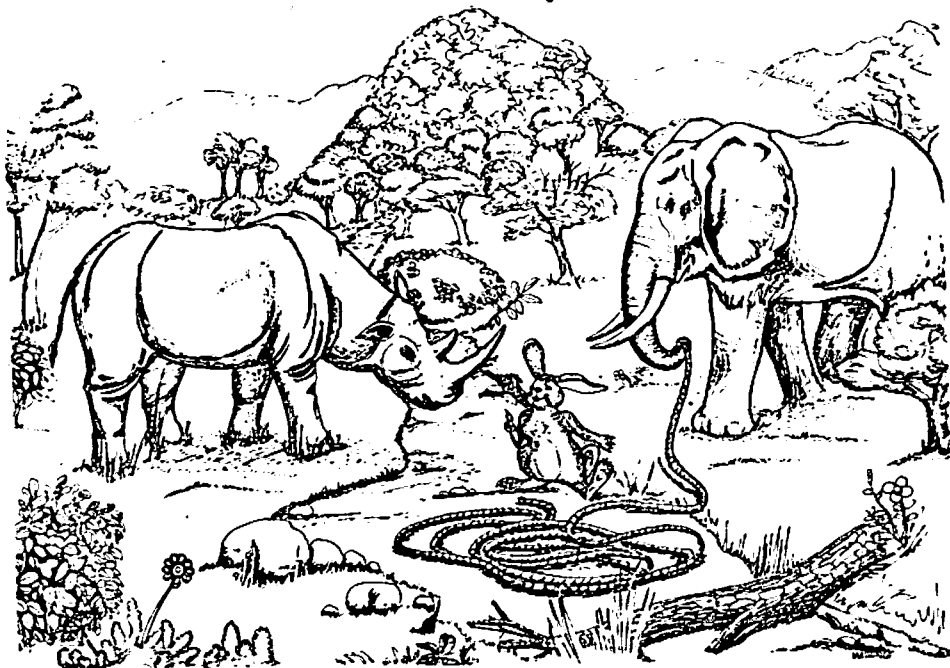


The ELEPHANT, the RHINO and the HARE

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This Kamba folk tale has been translated by Elizabeth Muoki. The drawing is by Charles Mathenge, a promising young Kenyan artist.



Once upon a time the hare was known as king of the animals—although he was so small—because he was the cleverest.

One day he invited the elephant and the rhino to his house. When they arrived, the hare said:

“My friends, I have called you because I have an urgent matter to solve.”

The elephant and the rhino asked what this was.

The hare replied:

“People have been saying that I am too small, and that I have no strength at all—and I don’t agree with this. So I would like to engage in a competition with both of you, because you are known as the strongest. And I want to invite all the animals to witness this competition and cheer us on.”

The elephant and the rhino both agreed and an announcement was made to all the other animals.

When the day came they went to a hill carrying a very long rope which they had made.

The hare said to the elephant:

“You stay on this side of the hill and I will go on the other side.”

The elephant agreed; so the hare left one end of the rope with him, then climbed up the hill and ran down the other side to where the rhino was waiting. He gave him the other end of the rope and said:

“You stay here and hold this rope, and I will go on the other side of the hill.”

As you can imagine the hill was covered with thick bush. The hare ran up the hill and stood on the very top, but nobody could see him because he was so small. Then he called out:

“Are you ready?”

The hare had arranged everything so cleverly that the elephant didn’t know he was pulling against the rhino, and the rhino didn’t know that he was pulling against the elephant.

The hare shouted: “Pull—pull—pull!” And the two animals pulled as hard as they could.

At last the rope broke into two pieces. The elephant fell down on one side of the hill and the rhino fell down on the other.

The hare started laughing. First he ran down the hill to the rhino and said:

“Are you hurt, my friend? I am very sorry. But you see, I am very strong—don’t try and compete against me!”

Then the hare ran up the hill again, and down the other side to the elephant, who was still rolling downhill, and said:

“I’m sorry if I’ve hurt you—but do you see that I’m really very strong after all? I think you’d better not play with me again!”

From that time onwards the hare has been renowned for the strength of his trickery. ■ ■ ■

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A new chance to save the rhino?

There has been much publicity on the problems facing Rhinos in recent months, both locally in East Africa and world-wide. The East African Wild Life Society is actively concerned in trying to find solutions to these problems and joined with several other conservation organisations in making representations to the President of Kenya.

Here we print the text of His Excellency’s recent directive on rhinos, followed by a press release from the Office of the President.



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“ The rhinoceros in Kenya is facing a grave threat to its very existence as a result of the illicit trade in rhino horn. Although current regulations and the hunting ban are in force and field officers of my Government are doing their best to protect the wildlife of our country, I believe extra emphasis must be given to the protection of the rhino. In consequence of this decision, I hereby direct that all rhino within the Republic of Kenya will be afforded complete protection by the Government and henceforth may not be hunted or harassed by any person.

I am directing the officers in the relevant departments of government to insure that every possible effort is made to bring to an end the killing of rhinoceros.

I am also appealing to the international agencies involved in wildlife, as well as to other governments, to join Kenya in this endeavour to save the African rhino from extinction. In particular I urge that every effort be made at an international level to curb completely the trade in rhino horns. Until this is done the task of eliminating poaching in Africa could prove insurmountable.”

PRESS RELEASE

Many populations of the Black Rhino are close to extinction throughout its range. In Africa and in Kenya, where it numbered as many as 20,000 a decade ago, it could well disappear completely next year. In order that the species should be completely protected in Kenya, His Excellency the President The Hon. Dr. Daniel arap Moi has today issued a Presidential directive that all rhinoceros within the republic of Kenya are henceforth accorded complete protection by the Kenya Government and may under no circumstances be hunted or harassed by any person.

This directive has been made to alert attention to the threat to the species and to secure further action on an international basis for its complete protection. The President has also called for international action to bring about the immediate end to the trade in rhino horn as the only effective solution to reducing the drastic level of poaching in Kenya and Africa generally. The rhinoceros is the symbol of Kenya's

National Parks and thereby the country's commitment to wildlife conservation and the President's timely action will be seen as a further example of the country's determination to conserve its wild life resources.

The President has called for immediate steps to draw up a conservation plan for the remaining rhinos in Kenya. This plan will include breeding herds, anti-poaching measures, translocation and effective management.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF RHINOS IN AFRICA AND KENYA

There are five species of rhinoceros in the world. Two of them are in Africa. All five species have suffered from the demands of man.

The Asian rhinos have already been reduced to small relict populations totalling probably less than 1,600 individuals. The African rhinos are heading rapidly in the same direction.

In Africa the southern race of the white or square lipped rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) was saved from total extinction only by dramatic conservation action, although there are still probably less than 3,000 in the world. The northern race (*C.S. cottoni*) has been hunted legally and illegally for decades and its range reduced to small relict populations probably totalling less than 1,000 individuals.

The black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) is still the most numerous and widespread. It occurs in countries from Cameroun to Somalia and south to South Africa, but because of man it is very sparsely distributed. In Kenya alone the population is probably 10% of what it was 10 or more years ago. Horns from nearly 2,000 rhinos a year have been imported to the Yemen from Kenya over the last few years. Today less than 1,500 remain in Kenya, while in 1969 Goddard estimated that between 6,000 and 9,000 existed in the Tsavo area alone. In Amboseli, the once famous long-horned population of rhinos has been reduced from probably between 55 and 60 in 1967 to 10 in 1979. Meru National Park which would once have been considered the last stronghold of rhino in northern Kenya has lost probably 90% in the last five years and now contains only about 15 individuals. Tanzania has probably lost in the region of 70% of her rhinos from Ngorongoro, 80% from Tarangire and 80-85% from Manyara, and Uganda

has apparently few remaining.

Kenya is taking the lead in conservation action for rhinos. This must be followed internationally if rhinos are to be saved in their natural state in the world. Rhinos and their close ancestors have walked the earth for over 60 million years. It is man who is causing their down-fall and only man who can save them.

The main cause of the recent declines is the value of the horn which, weight for weight, is worth more than gold. The export figures for Kenya showed that rhino horn had increased in value in 1976 to more than 400 times what it was in 1969.

Africa's rhinos are supplying a demand from people in the east. In the Yemen, where the majority of Kenya's rhino horn has gone recently, it is used for dagger handles. In the Far East the ground horn is used in medicines and as an aphrodisiac and in the past the horns were carved into drinking cups and used to detect poison.

Ultimately it is the demand and the trade, which exploits it that must be controlled for the sake of rhinos. Hong Kong has recently banned the import of rhino horn and international agreements ban the trade by countries which take part in these agreements. Other countries should also take action to control their trade. But the trade cannot be stopped immediately and the countries which still have rhinos need to take strong conservation measures for them, such as increasing their anti-poaching activities, and their protective measures and even moving rhinos from areas where it is no longer possible for them to exist. Kenya is taking the lead in action for rhinos and many people are working for their conservation. We must all ensure that success results as a good example to the rest of the world.

This important issue will be covered in the next issue of SWARA. Our Society and the other organisations concerned have presented a list of recommendations to the Government of Kenya which we hope will produce both short and long term results.

Dr Kes Hillman, who is the co-ordinator of the Kenya Rhino Action Group and Chairman of the IUCN African Rhino Group writes:

I do feel it would be valuable to emphasise the positive approach of the Government and the co-operative endeavour of all the people involved in these working groups—perhaps one of the most marvelous things to come out of this exercise. Let us hope it can be followed through with as much co-operation on all fronts in implementation and with wide international back-up. Kenya really is working to ensure that the symbol of her National Parks is a living symbol of her conservation action, not a dead one of failure.