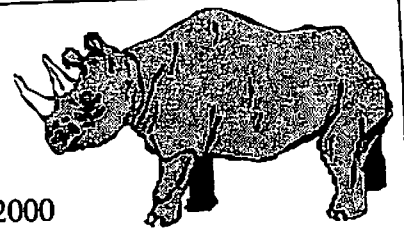


REALLY, RHINOS!

Volume 14, no.2, 2000



Your money at work!

Have you ever wondered where I donate the money raised through subscriptions to *Really, Rhinos!*? It's a good, valid question. In the past, I have donated money to Bowling for Rhinos and to Save the Rhino Trust. In November, 1999, I donated \$1,000 to a special program in South Africa. Dr. Rob Slotow was the principal field researcher. The following report comes from his colleague, Donald Sutton. Here is Donald's report.

What does Donald Sutton do for a living?

"My name is Donald Sutton. I am employed by the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa as a research technician. My prime role is to monitor the white rhinos of the Pilanesberg National Park. I also collect information on other animal species whilst monitoring the white rhinos. The Pilanesberg national Park is situated in the base of an extinct volcano, in the north-eastern corner of the North West Province, South Africa. The North West Province is a malaria free area, this making Pilanesberg a much sought after tourist destination. Pilanesberg is only a 2 hour drive from Johannesburg and is home to all of the Big 5 (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo) and much more.

Over a three year period (1995-1998) Pilanesberg National Park lost 40 white rhinos to aberrant behavior from the young elephant bulls. At the beginning of 1998 the management of Pilanesberg National Park embarked on re-locating six older and more mature elephant bulls from the Kruger national Park in order to restore some much needed discipline and adult guidance to the younger bulls in Pilanesberg.

There were two sides to the re-location project. The one side involved the monitoring of the elephant population and whether or not the new bulls were in fact making a change within the elephant population. On the other side research was needed to confirm that it was not the rhinos that were instigating the attacks. As a result of the monitoring and the data that was being collected on the white rhinos, it was decided to run the rhino project for a while longer.

The elephant project ended in May 1999 and the rhino project was to come to close at the end of November, 1999. It was through the kind donation of *Really Rhinos* that the project was able to run until the end of February, 2000.

What information is being collected on the white rhinos?

The general perception of the public worldwide is that there is a lot of literature on the white rhino. This perception arises from the fact that the white rhino was brought back from the brink of extinction (from ± 90 individuals at the turn of the century to over 5000 today worldwide). Surely, this being probably the most successful conservation story in history, there has to be a lot of literature on the white rhino? Believe it or not, there is very little literature on the white rhino. To date the only available literature deals with habitat selection and utilization by the white rhino. Dr. Norman Owen-Smith collected the bulk of this information in the early 1970's.

Through the University of Natal, under the leadership of Dr. Rob Slotow, information on white rhino demographics and socio-ecological behavior is being captured. The Pilanesberg white rhino population is one of six key populations in the world. The information gathered will assist Pilanesberg management in making decisions with regards to how many rhinos can be sold for live sale every year. Presently all the information that has been gathered is being analyzed and will hopefully be written up and published by the end of the year.

Monitoring

To monitor the rhinos, I drive the tourist roads of the Park and note down each and every white rhino seen. Most of the rhinos can be identified using individual ear markings. Twice a week I drive what is called the Telemetry Route, a route that follows the outermost roads of the Park from where telemetry work can be done. This route covers a distance of approximately 104 km, with 25 telemetry points. I then spend two days doing an Inner route, which covers the inner roads of the Park. On the inner route, telemetry work is also done but on a lesser scale.

The seasons dictate when I will see the most rhinos and at what time of day I will see them. In summer my day starts at about 5:30 am. The object here is to get half of the telemetry or inner route done before it gets hot. The hottest part of the day is spent relaxing and inputting data, which is sent to the University of Natal for updating the master and distribution files for the Park Management. The second half of either route is done during the late afternoon when it is cooler. During autumn and winter the afternoons are best for monitoring the rhinos and hence the routes are done then. Autumn and winter mornings are spent inputting data and updating the files. Weekends are spent covering roads that are not covered by either of the two routes.

As mentioned earlier I also monitor other animal species, these species are commonly known as VIS (Very Important Species) animals. VIS animals are: elephant, rhino (black & white), buffalo, sable antelope, and lion, leopard, cheetah and wild dog. VIS monitoring entails noting which species is seen, where it is seen, how many and what the interaction is if any. The Pilanesberg White rhino Project forms part of the Elephant Relocation Project and as such I also monitor the elephants, however the elephant work is done on a smaller scale and the elephants are noted down when and if I see them on my routes. The elephant monitoring entails noting down which elephant or elephants I see and doing a 15-minute focal study on those that I can see clearly. The focal study entails noting down every minute elephant habits/behavior and the reactions towards any other elephants in the vicinity and what the elephant is eating and how much the elephant ate. I also record any other phenomena (animal or other)

On the telemetry route I have 25 stops, from where I check for the signal of ± 25 radio collared animals. These are located so that they cover as much of the park as possible. The collars include elephant (7 collars), lion (10 collars), buffalo (5 collars), cheetah (2 collars) and wild dog (3 collars). On average I receive a signal from each collar at least once a week and see on average 10 rhinos a day.

One day a week is spent helping North West Park Field Ecologist, Gus van Dyk, with either the making of radio collars, the darting and capture (when necessary) of lions, vegetation monitoring, Field Guide shooting evaluations, tourist monitoring or any other monitoring tasks.

Why monitoring routes

It is not only important to see where the white rhinos or other species are, but also where they are not. Whenever VIS animals are seen, information about the sighting is noted down. However, it is difficult to record information about when they are not seen. In order to record such information, we have set areas that are covered on a regular, rigorous basis. This allows us to assess relative use of different parts of the Pilanesberg by different species.

The two routes (telemetry and inner) are designed to cover as much of the park as possible. Each route is driven twice a week. Each route is divided into sections, which allows us to estimate changes in the general game in the area. Where possible the VIS animals are identified individually. This provides information, which is then used to create distribution maps for each individual. The distribution maps allow us to monitor the following; how the distributions change with time, how changes in distribution and habitat choice are related to seasons and which individuals socialize or interact with one another and how these social associations change with time.

Donald Sutton can be reached at:

tshukudu@sunweb.co.za

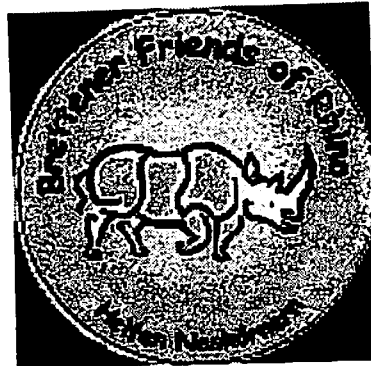


Keep those subscriptions coming! There are more projects out there than there is money to support them.



Helfen Nashörnern

Sprechen sie deutsch? Check out www.aor.purespace.de and see what some Germans are doing about rhinos. Meet Lukas Scultz, a 13 year old boy who loves rhinos. Read (in German!) about Save the Rhino Trust in Namibia (pictures too). Buy a rhino lamp (probably expensive but way cool).



PREVENT EXTINCTION WITHIN OUR LIFETIME

Since 1996 The Rhino Trust (TRT) has been totally committed to conservation and more than 90% of all donations and grant monies received by the Trust have been sent to conservancies such as Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya and Ujong Kulon sanctuary in Indonesia.

According to Meg Gammage-Tucker, President of TRT, there are less than 13,000 rhinos in the wild. All five species are endangered and rhinos worldwide "are near critical genetic crash point in which their viability as a survivable species is becoming questionable. For the Javan rhino -estimated to number less than 75 individuals - this crash point may have already been reached."

AND remember...

there is still time to organize and/or donate to a Bowling for Rhinos fund raiser. Contact your local zoo or AAZK chapter and get involved. You could win a free trip to Lewa Conservancy in Kenya (person who raises the most money gets this privilege). Funds are given to Lewa and also to Ujon Kulong in Java. This phenomenal event has been going on for more than years and it is just about all grass roots (no corporate sponsors). So put in your 2¢ (well, maybe your \$20?) and keep those rhinos safe! You can contact Patty Pearthree, national coordinator (ppear3@aazk.org) or Kirsten Christensen, BFR coordinator for the Oklahoma City Zoo (KCSCAR@aol.com)



TRT has just published a beautiful information brochure which you definitely should request. Remember to include a monetary contribution with your request so their future plans can be accomplished. As the brochure says, "Only together can we do what needs to be done - save the animals, protect their habitats, and positively impact the human lives that they touch."

Have you bought Anna Merz's highly acclaimed publication: *Rhinos: At the Brink of Extinction* yet?

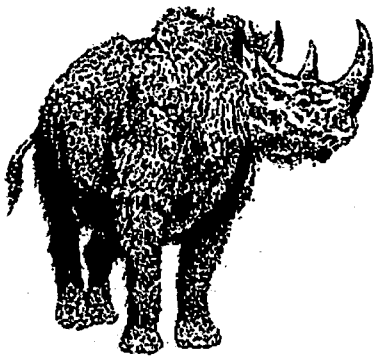
Check out TRT's web site www.rhinotrust.org (online in September, 1999) and learn of all their accomplishments and plans for the future.

OK, you're a rhinophile. Are you also an anglophile? If so, consider joining the UK Rhino Group working together to save rhinos from extinction.

Aims & Objectives

- Protection & conservation of the 5 species of endangered rhino throughout the world.
- Increase public awareness & education about the decline of rhinos and all available conservation measures.
- Act as a pressure group that would lobby Government Ministries and other bodies to obtain funding & promote action for conservation of rhinos.
- Major fundraising on a national basis.
- Exchange of relevant info between all members.
- Attendance & participation by representatives of the Group at int'l conferences & dissemination of reports & info back to members.
- Support enforcement of int'l legislation, esp. CITES relating to rhinos & their products.

Contact: UK Rhino Group Secretariat, c/o Born Free Fdn wildlife@bornfree.org.uk



Today, we need to visit Africa or Asia to see rhinos.

But, if we were out hiking around 20 million years ago, we wouldn't have had to travel farther than Nebraska! Paleontologists are still digging up prehistoric rhino remains in the western plains of the U.S. and Canada.

The following excerpts are from NEBRASKAland Magazine's *THE CELLARS OF TIME; paleontology and archaeology in Nebraska*, volume 72, no.1, January/February, 1994.

Enormous collections were made in the 1930s and 1940s from the Miocene age river deposits scattered throughout western Nebraska. There was an eroding hill in the vicinity, and on top of that hill, just below the sod cover, were the foot bones, hundreds of them, or some lost Tertiary species of American rhinoceros. It is useless to ask why we found only foot bones or why we gathered the mineralized things in such fantastic quantities -- [Loren Eiseley]

Overall, a survey of Hemingfordian fossils gives the impression that large herds of rhinos, camels and horses moved through the open woodlands and across fairly extensive patches of grassland in western Nebraska 17 million years ago. Wetter areas close to many rivers supported thick stands of trees and brush that sheltered a diversity of slower moving browsers.

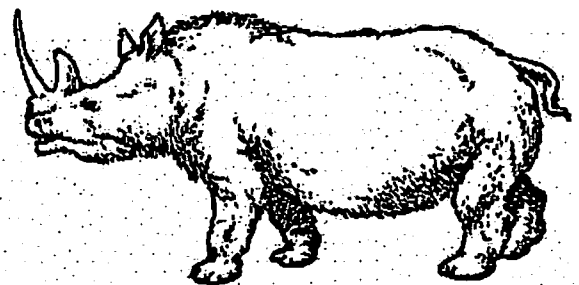
Clarendonian: 11 Million Years Ago

As an ash cloud from a huge volcanic eruption in Idaho 10 million years ago descended on a busy waterhole on the Nebraska savanna, enveloping entire herds of animals and creating a unique fossil deposit in what is now Antelope Country. Today, those herds of perfectly preserved rhino skeletons lie with their legs tucked under their bellies or stretched out on their sides as if taking a nap. They look like real animals, unlike most fossils, which need extensive repair in a museum lab before they begin to make sense to anyone but a paleontologist.

The Ashfall rhinos were buried so quickly that they were preserved in three dimensions, often with remains of their last meals inside. Because the site is the only one like it known in the world, Ashfall was set aside as a state historic park. The fossils are left in the ground exactly as found, enclosed by a 32-foot by 64-foot building called the Rhino Barn, where paleontologists can work and the public can observe.

Barrel-bodied rhinos are the largest and most common fossils in the ash bed, and their skeletons are always above the other species in the ash deposit. Smaller creatures, including camels, horses, turtles and birds, lie at lower levels in the ash, indicating that they died before the rhinos.

The Cambridge Quarry yielded remains of two kinds of rhinos. Most abundant is a barrel-bodied species similar to the one at Ashfall fossil beds with adults averaging about a quarter ton heavier. Less common but still represented by good material, including a magnificent skull, is normally proportioned but hornless rhino called *Aphelops* ("smooth face"), which is also much bigger than its Clarendonian ancestors. These strikingly different beasts, the "Mutt and Jeff" of the rhino world, continued to range over the Great Plains until the end of Hemphillian time when both became extinct.



Woolly Rhinoceros

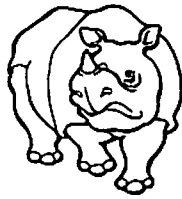
DIG THIS SALE!!

- A copy of the above issue (\$10)
- Subhydracodon rhino molar
Oligocene Period Brule formation
South Dakota (\$150)
- Rhino vertebrae (2 pieces!) Nebraska (\$125)

Check payable to me. Questions? ASK!!

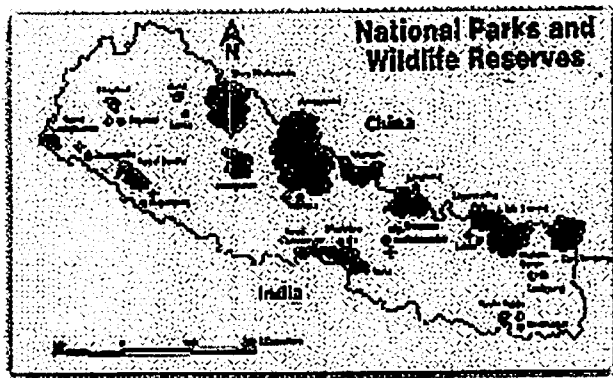
Endangered Rhinos Move Across Nepal

WWF Focus 22(3):1,6 May/June 2000



Between February 27 and March 4, park officials worked around-the-clock to relocate ten rhinos from Nepal's Royal Chitwan national Park to Royal Bardia national Park in a project that shows long-term, community-based conservation efforts can pull endangered species back from the brink of extinction. Funded by WWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the project was a cooperative effort of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, and WWF in Nepal. This was also the first project of its kind to be tracked online on WWF's web site, allowing WWF members and other site visitors to follow the daily progress of the rhinos as they made their way across Nepal. A day-by-day log of the translocation can still be found at www.worldwildlife.org/focuslinks.

Twenty-five years ago, the greater one-horned rhino of Nepal's Terai region numbered fewer than 100 animals. Conservation officials of the tiny Himalayan kingdom were desperate to stop the decline of one of the country's most precious wildlife resources. Nepal's rhinos are a source of pride for its people and they play an important role in its tourism industry.



Efforts to curb poaching and habitat loss - two key threats to most endangered species - were put into place in 1976. As rhino populations recovered, however, Royal Chitwan reached its maximum capacity as optimal rhino habitat. An increasing density of rhinos led to an increasing incidence of rhino-human conflicts in the region. By the mid-1980s, it

was evident that the rhino population in Chitwan, because of its isolation, was also vulnerable to disease or a sudden outbreak of poaching. Meanwhile, in Royal Bardia the habitat for rhinos was ideal. Indeed, rhinos had thrived in Bardia until the 1960s when malaria in the region was eradicated and rhinos were driven away or poached by new settlers.

In 1986, working with its partners in Nepal, WWF aimed to establish a second rhino population in Bardia some 100 miles to the west of Chitwan. That same year, the first 13 rhinos were moved from Chitwan to Bardia. The transfer was so successful that another 25 were moved in 1990, and then 4 more in 1999. Today both populations are thriving with over 500 rhinos in Chitwan and 52 in Bardia.

Translocating rhinos is an important tool in efforts to protect them. Conservation officials and park rangers select the best candidates for translocation - juvenile and sub-adult rhinos male and female, who are likely to breed and thrive in their new habitat.

The translocation itself is a difficult but exciting undertaking. A fully grown rhino can reach a height of six and a half feet and weigh up to two tons. Park officials, riding domesticated elephants, select a rhino for translocation, then anesthetize the animal by dart, gather physiological data on the animal, and carefully load it onto a truck. Once on the truck, the rhino is given an antidote and begins its 12-hour overnight journey in the cooler evening temperatures to its new home.

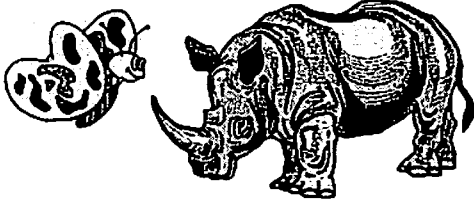
Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park not only has proven to be a showcase for effective rhino conservation, but also has provided local residents with a new revenue source through community-based ecotourism which has developed in the park's buffer zone.



"To save one rhino is to save the world's rhinos."

On the Edge of Tomorrow, a CD of instrumental music created and performed by Michel R. Henderson on Yamaha Clavinova Keyboard...melodic piano pieces interwoven with complex compositions using multiple instrument voices to create a rich musical tapestry. Michel is the artist who creates all those wonderful Christmas rhino cards advertised in previous issues and one selection on his CD, "Tears for Africa" is in memory of Michael Werikhe ("May these tears nourish the conservation effort in which he played so integral a part during his lifetime.") To order a copy of "On the Edge of Tomorrow" contact Michel Henderson, 8763 W. Star Dr. Littleton, CO 80128. \$16.99 (includes shipping/handling)

Rhino Wings is a new book by Beth and Bridget Nagy. It is a beautifully written and illustrated children's book about the relationship between a rhinoceros and a butterfly, with the moral that a balanced person needs both a tough rhinoceros hide and delicate butterfly wings.



Did you know...

if you shop online for brand-name products from retailers such as jcrew and eToys.com at the World Wildlife Fund shopping village (www.worldwildlife.greatergood.com) 5-15% of every purchase goes directly to WWF?

Really, Rhinos!
 PO Box 40503
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Want to save some money? ✓
 Buy checks with rhinos on them! Of course, you will write checks, but you WON'T write on the rhino checks (ergo, you save money...) These are WWF checks, printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks. The animals, in full-color and in their natural habitat are: giant panda, harp seal, African elephant, cheetah, *white rhino* and humpback whale. Available through Message Products, (800.243.2565) or www.worldwildlife.org/shop

The Rhino Museum is open for busine\$\$!

Check out our web page each week. All rhinos are from my private collection. Prices range from \$5 - \$5,000. All species, many media. Very unique pieces. Satisfaction guaranteed. Free rhinos with every order. Quantities are limited. If you don't see what you want, please ask!

www.rtd.com/~rinophyl

A one year quarterly subscription to *Really, Rhinos!* is still \$20 (\$25 foreign). Make check payable to Judyth Lessee. 100% of each subscription is donated to rhino conservation projects. Send feedback or rhino citations to: *Really, Rhinos!*, PO Box 40503, Tucson, AZ 85717-0503. Phone: (520) 327-9048. e-mail: rinophyl@rtd.com www.rtd.com/~rinophyl

If you feel overwhelmed, please know, they are grateful for those who always look for them. We try to print something for everyone!