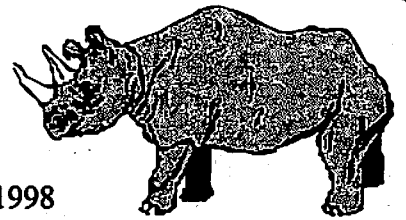


REALLY, RHINOS!



Volume 12, no 1, 1998

MICROCHIPS USED TO PROTECT RHINOS

[Africa Environment & Wildlife, 6(1):13, Jan/Feb, 1998 Monica Hilton-Barber]

Microchips are now being used to deter potential poachers from exploiting illegally obtained rhino horn. Recently South Africa's Mpumalanga Parks board began implanting tiny microchips into the horns and under the skins of rhinos in its reserves. Information on each rhino, including the chip number and genetic particulars, will be entered onto a national computerized database, enabling wildlife law-enforcement officers to identify immediately the origin of the rhino horn when they are investigating smuggling cases. The required data is read by simply swiping a sophisticated sensor along the length of the horn. It will now be possible for officials to positively identify the exact origin of the horn and make it easier to prove cases in a court of law. Mpumalanga Parks board's head of Field and public support, Jan Mullet, said a similar technology had worked very well with wild cicadas and had led to a spate of successful prosecutions.

The rhino are darted from helicopters and a highly qualified ground team, led by well-known veterinarian Kobus Raath, works quickly on the selected animal once it has been drugged. Each horn is drilled and a microchip inserted and sealed with silicone. Over time, as the horn grows, the insertion mark will be very difficult to detect with the naked eye. The entire operation on each animal including the drawing of blood samples and marking each ear, takes less than 15 minutes.

Mullet said he believed it was the first time high-tech had been called on to help rhino conservation in South Africa.

HEY, Y'ALL COME DOWN AND SEE US, HEAR?

Montgomery Zoo is finishing its new Indian rhino exhibit in preparation for receiving their first rhino this spring. If you are down south, check out the zoo, located at 2301 Coliseum Parkways, Montgomery, AL 36110.

RHINO TRACKS

At the 1997 National AAZK Conference in Houston, TX, a rhino workshop was held. Information Coordinators for 3 species (white, black, Indian) were recruited. Delegates at the workshop proposed the following list of topics:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Gestation | Labor and delivery |
| Pregnancy | Calf health & development |
| Neonate | Social groupings and management |
| Illnesses | Social & solitary behavior |
| Introductions | Behavioral conditioning |
| Shipment | Diet and browse |
| Enrichment | Breeding behavior |

The Information Coordinators are:

Black Rhino:
 Kristin LaHue
 Riverbanks Zoo
 500 Wildlife Pkway
 Columbia, SC 29210

White Rhino:
 Patty Shoemaker
 Houston Zoo
 1513 N. MacGregor
 Houston, TX 77030

Indian Rhino:
 Natalie Mashburn
 Ft. Worth Zoo
 1989 Colonial Pkwy
 Ft. Worth, TX 76110



- Which language? Rinoceronte _____
 Nashorn _____
 Rhinoceros _____
 Rhinocéros _____

WWF HIGHLIGHTS FOR 1997

[Focus, 20(1):4, Jan/Feb, 1998]

The endangered black rhinos of Kenya, once indiscriminately slaughtered for their horns, are on the comeback. Government-run and private rhino sanctuaries have proved so successful that Nairobi National Park actually exceeded its rhino carrying capacity last year. WWF has helped support the relocation of 14 rhinos to Tsavo East National Park. WWF has also purchased vehicles and equipment for park staff, funded research, and supported private rhino sanctuaries. And in neighboring Tanzania, WWF has hired a rhino expert to help the government develop a countrywide conservation program. Finally, WWF is supporting rhino conservation activities in Asia (\$27,000). Check out their web page: www.worldwildlife.org

RHINOS KILLED.... AND NOT BY POACHERS!!

[Time, October 13, 1997, p.68]



You may have seen this article last fall. White rhinos in Pilanesberg National Park in northwestern South Africa were being killed at the rate of once a month. In Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park in the southeastern part of the country were also experiencing rhino losses. Was it poachers? Not this time. It was rogue elephants - aggressive, young bull elephants that did in the rhinos by knocking them over, kneeling on them and goring them. Game wardens posit the bulls were depraved because they were deprived (Gee, Officer Krupke!). Becoming orphans after the murder of their parents, these young ganstas were no longer part of a tight-knit social group.

With no exposure to adult elephants or the hierarchical social structure, the long-term effect of this isolation appears to be a generation of juvenile delinquents. This is compounded especially during the "musth" period when testosterone levels go through the roof. Without adult chaperons, the bulls are going into musth sooner and the episode is lasting longer. Elephants aren't immune to stress and when they pick on an unsuspecting rhino, it's more a crime of convenience. The rhino is just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Two years ago, Kruger Park stopped elephant-culling program and began to move entire families of elephants to their new homes. It will be some time before the effects of these efforts are known. Until then, the white rhinos

of South Africa had better watch their backs. [ed note: Amazing how the human world so closely mirrors that of the animal world!]

GOOD NEWS FOR RHINOS!

[Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne, SWARA, 20(5):13-25, September/October, 1997]

After decades of decline, black rhino numbers are slowly recovering. Private sanctuaries have proved an effective way of protecting Africa's remaining rhinos. Four main factors have contributed to a continent-wide decline in rhino poaching:

- Increased government protection of remnant populations generally in fenced-off reserves.
- Government encouragement of private wildlife sanctuaries.
- Improved local law enforcement.
- A drop in international demand for rhinoceros horn.

Now that black rhinos are being protected effectively, and if the above strategies are sustained, the numbers should continue to rise.

Nowhere in the world is new rhino horn so blatantly open for the public to see as in Yemen's capital Sanaa. This illegal trade in Africa's rhino horn continues and is a great threat to both black and white rhinos. Since 1993, Yemen has imported probably more rhino horn than any other country. The price for rhino horn reaching Yemen has remained stable since 1985 at around US\$1,000 a kilo, even though the supply has been gradually falling. This indicates a decline in demand for rhino horn.

Since 1990 the economy of Yemen has been dropping and the living standard of the average Yemeni has fallen. Fewer men can afford to buy *jambiyas* (the traditional Yemeni dagger) with rhino horn handles today. Richer men choose the older, more valuable ones which sell for about US\$1,400 each; they do not want *jambiyas* with newly-made rhino horn handles - which sells for about US\$285 - as these are considered inferior.

As the middle class shrinks, the demand for *jambiyas* with new rhino horn handles is falling. *Jambiyas* of water buffalo horn, plastic, camel nail wood are more affordable, priced from about US\$10 to as little as US\$4. However, after several years of international pressures on Yemen to join CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna), the president

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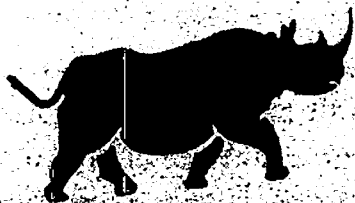


Pacific Products Gallery
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Artist:

Stephen Herrero

the Republic of Yemen signed a degree on January 5, 1997, giving his approval for the Yemen government to join the treaty. Then, on April 23, 1997, Yemen's foreign minister sign the final accession document to join the Convention. Finally, Yemen appears to be serious about stopping rhino horn imports.



STOP THE TRADE IN RHINO HORN

ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS

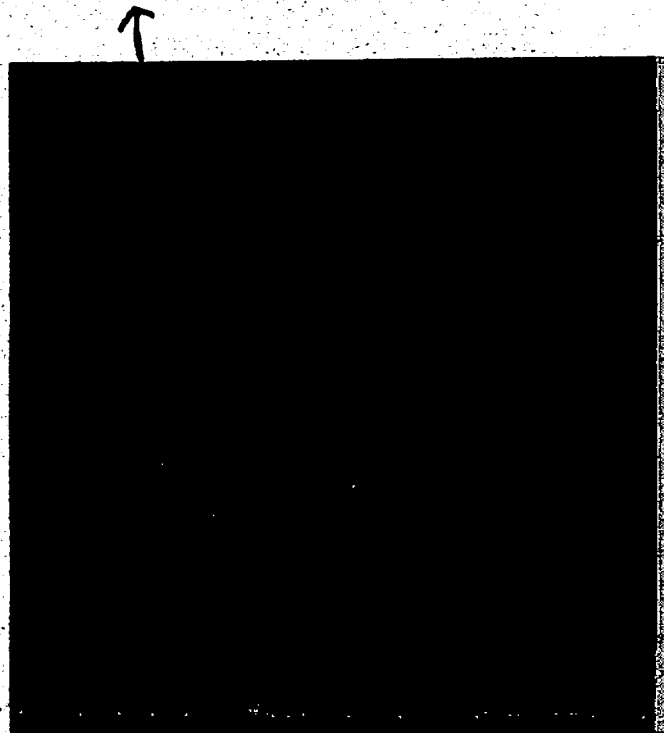
Black rhino raku fired pottery. Beautiful crackle gray, white horns with prehensile lip. \$306. Write to Lynda Alcamo, PO Box 1211, Lakeside, AZ 85929 (520-537-0150). I bought her Indian rhino and it is terrific. Lynda will send you a Polaroid before you buy.

Rhinos made of obsidian & glass available from Sun-Moon. Carmen Gallegos-Allen, 1754 Sinaloa Rd #176, Simi Valley, CA 93065. (805-520-1624) Reasonably priced.

Remember the stamp worth \$250,000 in the movie, "Charade"? Some stamps have more one use too. Contact Willow Summers and she can make you pins or magnets which have actual rhino stamps on them. Unless you are a philatelist you probably haven't seen these stamps from around the world. And WHYIS IT the U.S. doesn't do a rhino stamp?

Junk Mail by Willow Summers, 135 Fiesta St, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505-988-5777)

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TOY STORY

FAO Schwartz sells an American Museum of Natural History rhino stamp.

How about a rhino puppet that can stick out its tongue? Call or write Puppet Planet: PO Box 202524, Arlington, TX 76006 (800) 615-7681. \$12.95+ shipping. They even give you extra tongues. Wheeeeeeeee!

RHINO READING



Internet Bookshop is a great place to find rhino books not available in the U.S.
www.bookshop.co.uk

Here's a sample...

Hunter-Jones, Georgina. *The Story of Nola the rhinoceros*. 1996. London: Flying Fizzios. Ever meet a rhino who loves math? Meet Nola and see how she teaches the other animals of the savannah how to calculate.

Willans, John Talbot. *Black Rhino*. 1993. London: Janus. A combination of Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels and the Jungle Book; part fantasy, part fable, part farce.

Powell, Rhiannon. *Ruby, the car-boot rhino*. 1995. London: Hamish Hamilton. Ralph and his parents go to a flea market to get rid of stuff and wind up buying a rhino for a mere one pound. Ruby even fits into the back of the Volkswagen! She becomes not only a great friend but a rescuer as well.

Harman, Amanda. *Endangered! Rhinoceroses*. 1997. New York: Marshall Cavendish. The physical characteristics, habitat, and behavior of the five species of rhinos left in the world.

Mysterious Dependents of the Black Rhino

[Daphne Sheldrick, SWARA, 20(5):25, Sept/Oct, 1997]

Through millenia, in conjunction with this ancient species, parasites have evolved that are specific to rhinos. Tiny flies known as *Lyperosia* breed in rhinos' communal dung piles and swarm and alight on the animal in soft clouds, particularly during the dry seasons. Another parasite is the *Gyrostigma* which resembles a wasp and is a beautiful metallic blue fly with scarlet legs and head strip, but devoid of mouth parts. Once this fly has hatched from a pupa in the ground it must find a living rhino within its five-day life in order to begin its mysterious life-cycle anew. Most of the *Gyrostigma's* life-cycle is spent in the form of a large beetle-like 'bot' that shares the rhino's food resource actually inside its stomach in a seemingly symbiotic relationship.



A one year quarterly subscription to *Really, Rhinos!* is \$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

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If you find errors, please know they are printed for those who always look for them. We try to print something for everybody.

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Bowling For Rhinos '98 has begun!