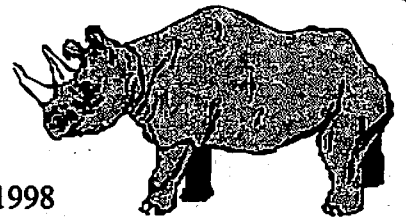


REALLY, RHINOS!



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 _____