

# Really



# Rhinos!

Volume 13, no. 4, 1999

## **PROFILE IN CONSERVATION: DR. WILLIAM B. KARESH**

[Wildlife News, 10(1):5, Spring, 1999]

Billy Karesh works *in the field* - literally. As the Wildlife Conservation Society's field veterinarian, Dr. Karesh has traveled to places as far away as the remote Abrau Peninsula of Russia and the rain forest of Cameroon, and along with the help of international conservationists and vets, he has rescued numerous wildlife species from the brink of extinction. Often Dr. Karesh comes in close contact with potentially dangerous animals and relies on his keen insight and intuition to problem solve when resources are scarce. His running and climbing skills, which would make physical education teachers proud, enable him to make quick escapes when necessary. Perhaps Dr. Billy Karesh can be best described as a cross between the adventurous Indiana Jones and the altruistic Jonas Salk.

In 1989, Dr. Karesh was chosen to develop the WCS's revolutionary Field Veterinary Program, focusing on three main objectives: assisting international wildlife biologists, agencies, and governments with conservation and research; conducting vital health evaluations on wildlife populations; and training international vets and biologists.

Dr. Karesh has traveled to numerous countries such as Madagascar, Indonesia, and Kenya, providing conservationists and foreign government officials with critical wildlife health information. By sharing his findings, Dr. Karesh has helped governments establish and maintain refuge areas that protect wildlife from the devastating impacts of human development and the illegal animal trade.

Dr. Karesh stresses that monitoring the health of wildlife provides essential information for successful preservation of species. He explains the process by comparing it to human medicine: "A doctor can

detect irregularities in a human blood sample because a baseline exists. We must constantly monitor wildlife and develop similar standards. We need to establish what *normal* is in order to recognize *abnormal*." Sometimes, Dr. Karesh attaches radio tracking devices to animals, enabling researchers to observe their behaviors in the field.

It might be difficult for a teacher to pacify a crying first grader with skinned knee, but it's even more troublesome for a field vet to keep an animal still enough to collect a blood sample from it. Unlike the teacher who must solely rely on innate instinct and compassion, the field vet is fortunately able to utilize special technologies. Dr. Karesh designed the skin biopsy dart, a device that is used to humanely and safely collect genetic samples from animals. When an animal is darted, its skin sample adheres to a barb in the center of the dart and falls to the ground. Prior to the development of this remarkable device, an animal had to be captured, restrained, and often anesthetized.

Since Dr. Karesh launched the first field vet program in the United States, relatively few other zoos have developed similar programs, which might make it difficult if not impossible, for prospective field vets to find employment. On the contrary, since this specialized area is still quite uncharted, perhaps the world is ready to embrace more innovative vets like Dr. Karesh.

Learn more about Dr. Karesh's exciting adventures by reading his book, *Appointment at the Ends of the World; Memoirs of a Wildlife Veterinarian*, due in bookstores this June. You can also keep up with his latest adventures by visiting [www.fieldvet.org](http://www.fieldvet.org)



## **DEMAND FOR RHINO HORN GREATER THAN EVER**

[BBC Wildlife, September, 1999, p.61]

A survey in June of the dagger-handle industry in Yemen - one of the main threats to Africa's rhinos - found 100 craftsmen in 59 workshops making and repairing the rhino-horn handles, but only one craftsman was working with new horn.

The survey carried out for the Friends of Howletts & Port Lympne and Global Communications for Conservation reports that the new horn may have come from rhinos poached two years ago in the Dem. Republic of Congo's Garamba National Park.

Esmond Bradley Martin and Lucy Vigne say that the traders are desperate for more horn. One told them, "If you have any quantity, we will buy it." the price of new horn in Sanaa, Yemen's capital, is now £900 a kilogram, 20 per cent more than two years ago - an increase, say Martin and Vigne, that is worrying for rhino conservation. So, also, is the £390 a kilogram that the craftsmen get from the Chinese and Koreans for leftover chips and powder.

Another alarming trend is that there are more Yemeni men wearing daggers - traditional badges of masculinity. this is mainly because, before unification of North and South Yemen in 1990, the government of the Marxists south had banned the practice. Now it's legal, and it's coming back, especially to rural areas.

In an interview with the Yemeni Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul Karim al-Iryani, Vigne and Martin were told that he had ordered inspections in Sanaa's main souk, where the dagger industry is centered. though the use of new horn has been illegal in Yemen since 1992, there are effectively no penalties for it. Dr. al-Iryani said he would call for penalties and would work to have the work rhino-horn trade stopped.

But, says Vigne and Martin, he needs help. In 1997, when Yemen joined CITES - the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species - Yemeni officials were promised international finance and law-enforcement training. But so far, very little such help has materialized. To view the official CITES Home Page go to: [www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

## **FROM THE UK RHINO GROUP**

### **More on Michael...**

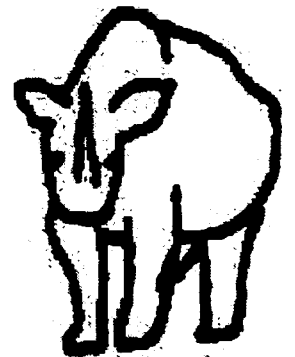
David Stirling of Save the Rhino International (SRI) gave an account of the events leading to Michael's death (he visited Michael in Mombasa Hospital only two days before he died). Michael had been beaten up a couple of weeks previously, and had subsequently contracted cholera and typhoid, probably much exacerbated by the effects of the beating. It was this illness which eventually killed him.

Two funds have been established to commemorate Michael's life. One is being administered by The Rhino Trust and will be put towards meeting the needs of Michael's two daughters who will eventually come over to England to live with Michael's brother David Werikhe in Cornwall.

The other is being administered by SRI. This Michael Werikhe Conservation fund is initially intended to be used for work in Tsavo (especially education work) and to fund scholarships for Kenyans. There are plans to dedicate the Save the Rhino Trust camp in Namibia to Michael and build an education facility, and that this might be a possible destination of funds.

### **From Blythe Loutit, Save the Rhino Trust...**

"Michael was one of our very first donors. His caring was so deeply genuine. His contribution was a patrol vehicle, financing of one entire tracking team (x4 people) with rations, boots, uniform and camping gear. He visited our project and the Kenyan High Commissioner send his aid to accompany Michael on a trip with SRT. We took him on a trip to see the Etosha and Waterberg rhino. It was a memorable trip for all, he kept up a correspondence with his SRT team sending post cards, always giving positive support to them in their work. This kept up the morale at all times."



# I want a rhinoceros for Christmas

I want a rhinoceros for Christmas  
Only a rhinoceros will do  
Don't want a doll, no dinky Tinker Toy  
I want a rhinoceros to play with and enjoy

I want a rhinoceros for Christmas  
I don't think Santa Claus will mind, do you?  
He won't have to use our dirty chimney flue  
Just bring him through the front door, that's the easy thing to do

I can see me now on Christmas morning, creeping down the stairs  
Oh what joy and what surprise when I open up my eyes  
to see a rhino hero standing there

I want a rhinoceros for Christmas  
Only a rhinoceros will do  
No crocodiles, no hippopotamuses  
I only like rhinoceroses  
And rhinoceroses like me too

Mom says the rhino would eat me up, but then  
Teacher says a rhino is a vegetarian

There's lots of room for him in our two-car garage.  
I'd feed him there and wash him there and give him his massage  
I can see me now on Christmas morning, creeping down the stairs  
Oh what joy and what surprise when I open up my eyes  
to see a rhino hero standing there

I want a rhinoceros for Christmas  
Only a rhinoceros will do  
No crocodiles or hippopotamuses  
I only like rhinoceroses  
And rhinoceroses like me too!

**ATTENTION RHINOPHILES!**

Christmas Cards Offered by RHINO RENDERINGS

- **FEATURING NEW DESIGN - BABY RHINO WITH RHINO SNOWMAN!**
- Minimum order is one dozen cards.
- Each dozen is packaged with a single design (no mix and match in a 1 dozen set)
- Cards are blank inside.
- Retail price is \$14.00/dozen (plus postage & handling of \$2.00 for first dozen + \$0.50 for each additional dozen). \$12.00/doz for 10 doz or more.
- All designs are in black & white.

- dozen - baby rhino & reflection in Xmas bulb (red envelopes)
- dozen - baby rhinos in Xmas stockings (green envelopes)
- dozen - rhino with decorated ham (matching envelopes)
- dozen - rhinos pulling Santa's sleigh (matching envelopes)
- dozen - rhino charubs with shepherds (matching envelopes)
- dozen - wisemen with pack rhinos (matching envelopes)
- dozen - baby rhinos under Xmas tree (red or green envelopes)
- dozen - baby rhino with rhino snowman (red or green envelopes)

Cards to be mailed to the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECK OUT TO MICHEL HENDERSON FOR THE CORRECT AMOUNT OF SALE PLUS POSTAGE AND HANDLING. SEND YOUR ORDER TO:  
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A PORTION OF THE SALE OF THESE CARDS IS DONATED FOR RHINO PRESERVATION.

Note: The style of artwork varies with the design. Inquiries welcome.



### More bad news...

Tragically, two further deaths of prominent Kenyan rhino conservationists have also been reported in the last few months. One was Joe Mwangi, the Rhino Ranger for the Lake Nakuru National Park (LNNP) rhino sanctuary for over ten years. He was very knowledgeable about all the black rhinos of LNNP and their family history and was responsible for the overall rhino monitoring and security work in the LNNP rhino sanctuary. The other was a lady called Eve who was living in Lewa Downs private rhino sanctuary and working on rhinos.

### The David Shepherd Conservation Foundation...

(DSCF) reports that three rhinos - Shibula, Swagger and Dundi - have been moved from Vaalbos National Park to Addo National Park near Port Elizabeth, Eastern Province S. Africa. There had been appalling drought at Vaalbos for a few years and a risk of poaching, so the decision was made to move them. It was suspected that Shibula was pregnant which was the case, and she gave birth in early June to a calf - sex as yet unknown. Two farms have been bought next to the Mountain Zebra National Park which means the DSCF are now half way to reaching their goal of 30,000 hectares, which will make it possible to introduce black rhino.

### Recent Research from RHINOWATCH...

Dr. Skye Alibhai and his team had an opportunity to analyze the data collected over the last 5 years of field work with the black rhino population in the Sinamatella IPZ. They have submitted for publication the following manuscripts:

- *The effects of chemical immobilization on the fertility of female black rhino (Diceros bicornis).* Alibhai, Jewell and Towindo.

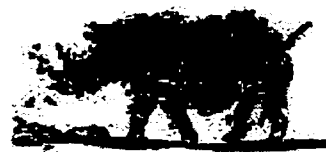
- *Radio-collar failure rates in a population of black rhino (Diceros bicornis) in the Sinamatella IPZ, Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.* Alibhai, Jewell and Towindo.

- *Censusing and Monitoring black rhino (Diceros bicornis) using an objective footprint identification technique.* Jewell, Alibhai and Law.

For more information, contact Dr. Alibhai at:  
[rhinowatch@icon.co.zw](mailto:rhinowatch@icon.co.zw)

### MKOMAZI: The ecology, biodiversity & conservation of a Tanzanian savanna...

The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is currently preparing a research monograph detailing the results of its five year environmental research program of the Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania, a unique savanna region adjacent to Kenya's Tsavo National Park. The monograph is one of the most detailed geographical studies of an East African savanna ever published and outlines the ecology and biodiversity of the Reserve, human aspects and the issues relating to future management. The monograph (608 pages) includes 12 color pages and a fold-out color map of the reserve. Contact Joanne Lyas, Mkomazi Administrator: [j.lyas@rgs.org](mailto:j.lyas@rgs.org)



### TB or not TB...

An estimated 80% of all the rhinos in Africa are found in South Africa. Alarmingly, 70% of this vitally important population occur in tuberculosis-infected areas. There is no known cure or treatment of controlling TB in wild populations. It now threatens the last southern strongholds of the black and white rhinos of Africa and may wipe out these populations completely!

It is vitally important that infected and clean rhinos be separated in order to ensure the survival of the species. The crisis is that there is no scientific data on TB in wild rhino populations and there is no means of diagnosing TB in live rhinos. To save the species, research must be done urgently. A sculpture by artist Alan Ainslie was specially approved by Dr. Anthony Hall-Martin of the National Parks Board of South Africa. The limited (30 only) edition was commissioned by the South African Veterinary Foundation to urgently raise funds for the Rhino TB Fund. Price: \$4,000. One-hundred percent of the net income from this artwork will be paid into the Fund to finance this urgently needed research. Please act now and support the Fund, even if you can't buy a bronze! TB Fund, PO Box 12900, Onderstepoort 0110, Republic of South Africa.

## Gifts for Any Season

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You love rhinos. Do you love soccer? Double your pleasure by ordering some rhino gear from the Rochester Rhinos Soccer Team. I just ordered a seat warmer (\$14) and a champs circle sign (\$35). [www.rhinosoccer.com](http://www.rhinosoccer.com)

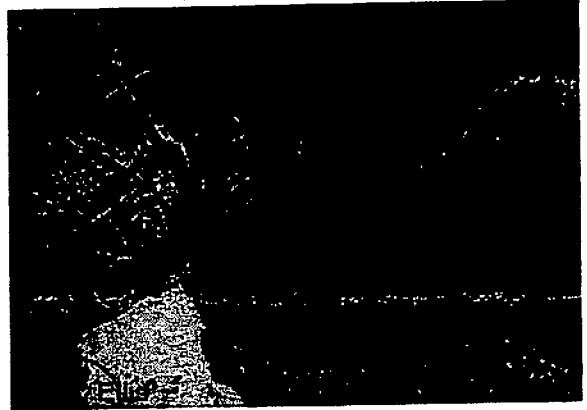
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and rhinos in  
2000!*



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**Celebrate  
Save the Rhino Day  
(February 29, 2000)**

One mo' time... A great addition to your bookshelf is the 3rd edition of Anna Merz's **Rhino at the Brink of Extinction**. Only \$22.50 (incl. postage) from: The Rhino Trust, PO Box 68805, Indpls, IN 46268-0805. Fax: 317.630.5153. [info@rhinotrust.org](mailto:info@rhinotrust.org)



**Rafiki** (friend), it is the end of the decade and century (and maybe, the millenium). Please, don't let it be the end for the rhinos. **Renew your subscription to *Really, Rhinos!***



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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.