

Protecting the Earth's largest free-ranging black rhino population

It's 23 January 2013 and a new day dawns for Save the Rhino Trust in several different locations over the vast rhino range in the Kunene and Erongo regions of Namibia.

Sue Wagner | Fundraising and Communications Manager, Save the Rhino Trust

In Puros conservancy, north-west Namibia, Save the Rhino Trust's Northern team, under leadership of Principal Field Officer, Lesley Karutjaiva, is up at first light. After a quick breakfast, they pack their vehicle, pick up two Community Game Guards and head out on patrol. This joint patrol forms part of an incentive-based training programme for Community Game Guards.

After 25km of rugged 4x4 driving, rhino tracks are spotted. At a very fast walking pace, the team follows the tracks. All are on high alert, knowing the dangers of a rhino charge. After trekking for an hour across rocky terrain where well-honed tracking skills are essential, they spot

two grey specks in the distance. They check the wind direction and, being careful to stay downwind, they approach silently to within 150m of the rhino

“ Staying downwind, the team approach silently to within 150m of the rhino cow and her calf ”

cow and calf. They hide behind rocks to remain undetected and not disturb the

rhino. Their job is to complete the rhino identification forms accurately. They record the age, sex, ear notches, horn size and shape, tail shape, condition of animal and injuries, along with the time, GPS location and distance from the rhino. They photograph the rhino taking front-, side- and rear-view shots. This information is recorded in the database and compared against previous sightings.

With the first sighting for the day behind them and the temperatures rapidly rising, they return to their vehicle and head for a nearby spring where they hope to make further rhino sightings, but the spring is deserted, with no rhino or spoor to be found.

Later that day they come across a dead rhino – a natural mortality with horns still intact. The trackers record the details and remove the horns carrying them back to the vehicle to be handed to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) for safekeeping.

The trackers find some shade for lunch. When it starts to cool down, they're off again and manage to record a further two sightings of a bull and a cow. They return to their temporary tented camp just before sunset, hot, tired, but satisfied with the day's patrol effort.



Top: A cow and calf is a wonderful discovery for the tracking teams

Right: A metal snare presents a danger to all wildlife

Elsewhere across the 25,000km² rhino range...

The Mounted Patrol team set out on donkeys in terrain inaccessible by vehicle. When they find spoor they tether their donkeys and follow on foot. Today they record two new rhino calves with their mothers and also find a drumlid and cable snare which they break down and remove to hand to MET after the patrol.

At Mai Go base camp, Simson Uri-Khob (Director of Field Operations) plans next month's patrols and meets with a Conservancy chairman to discuss the problem of two 'wandering about' rhino close to a village.

From Desert Rhino Camp trackers find a rhino named Ben, who is unaware that he is being observed by tourists 150m away. Later, over lunch, the team shares their rhino knowledge and amusing tracking stories with the Wilderness Safaris guests.

From Wêreldsend base camp, the Southern team led by Sebulon Hoeb, sights Misty and her calf and is shocked



ALL IMAGES DAVE HAWMAN PHOTOGRAPHY UNLESS NOTED



to find an airfield under construction. They immediately report this and MET officials, accompanied by Simson Uri-Khob, join the team to undertake a full investigation.

Ugab base camp trackers spend the day retrieving and replacing SD cards in four strategically placed stealth cameras. They find one camera damaged by a hyena. On return to camp, they find the elephant have been through the campsite and destroyed water pipes so a quick repair is necessary as water is very scarce.

SRT's pilot and Director of Special Operations Bernd Brell carries out aerial surveillance using a logger to find rhinos fitted with transmitters in their horns. He also reports road construction in the rhino range; this security threat will require close monitoring. From the air he also spots eight vehicles and 18 people camping illegally east of Ugab base camp and reports this to MET, which promises to investigate further.

In Swakopmund, the financial and administrative work to support the field operation continues. Donor proposals and reports are nearing completion before the looming deadline and wages are being prepared for month-end.

And this is just one, typical day in the life of Save the Rhino Trust

In 2012, SRT tracking teams made 710 rhino sightings, travelled 27,989km on patrol, plus 312 foot tracking hours. They recorded seven mortalities (two as a result of one poaching incident) and 11 new rhino births. Now in its thirty-first year, SRT continues its mission of protecting the largest free-ranging black rhino population on earth.

Grants

Our thanks to Save Our Species, which gave the second instalment (US\$40,000) of its \$100,000 grant; to Krefeld Zoo for its award of €2,000, and to all our donors who made our grant last autumn of £10,748 from core funds possible.



Changing currency

Zimbabwean ten trillion dollar banknote £5

One supporter recently filled his wallet with authentic Zimbabwean ten trillion dollar notes to take to colleagues overseas. Change the way we see currency, and give this as a gift for those friends who have almost everything.

A day in the life of our merchandise

As I look upon our neatly folded merchandise stored in the corner of our office, I do wonder where our rhino goodies will go and what lives they will join. I've picked a few of our favourite stories for you to enjoy.

Josephine Gibson | Michael Hearn Intern



Show your style and support

Save the Rhino's logo T-shirts have crossed continents with work and travel trips. Our black T-shirt is seen in sunny Mauritania, whilst our bright blue T-shirts are similar to those worn by our amazing marathon runners in the London Marathon. Help spread the word of Save the Rhino by purchasing your very own logo T-shirt today.

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■ Black ■ Blue ■ Khaki
Sizes: S, M, L and XL

Kids' T-shirts £7.50

■ Safari only*
Sizes: Ages 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

■ Bottle green only†
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ONLY A FEW LEFT!

Limited edition 'Moonlight rhino' T-shirt £20

White only. Sizes: S, M, L, XL

Designed by British artist Mike McInerney and donated by musician and producer Morgan Nicholls to celebrate the launch of his single, *Moonlight Rhino*. Whilst enjoying a night out, one supporter sported the trendy Moonlight rhino T-shirt.



Save the Rhino ranger's cap £12

■ Khaki only
One size fits all adults (adjustable)

The well-worn ranger caps are a useful additional in the burning sunshine in Kenya for the rangers. Whether you're seeking out protection from foreign sun or the sunshine of a British summer holiday, why not wear a ranger cap?

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