



## A rhino's best friend is... a dog!

OI Jogi is a 60,000-acre private wildlife conservation area in Laikipia, Kenya, home to a wide variety of wildlife including Southern white and Eastern black rhinos, elephants, 22 species of ungulates, five species of large carnivores, three species of primates and 310 avian species. But it's for the rhinos that we have had to evolve our security to such a high degree, and all other wildlife is protected by default.

**Jamie Gaymer** | Warden, OI Jogi

**D**espite our security force being technologically advanced (including thermal-imaging equipment, night-vision, aircraft, automatic weapons and intelligence software), our dogs comprise an intricate and critical part of our security 'toolbox' here at OI Jogi.

We first imported Bloodhound tracker dogs from the US in 1989 to track people. They were such a success that we have since donated trained dogs to eight other conservation organisations in Kenya; the only prerequisite is that the recipient organisation has the capacity to look after and train the dogs, and that they will be used exclusively for conservation.

When not working, we train with our dogs seven days a week: they will be made to follow hot trails (less than 48 hours), cold trails (48 hours to one week), different scent media in a multitude of different scenarios, and finally for line-ups (where they will identify a person from a line-up based on scent alone). We can retain scent indefinitely and use the dogs to identify suspects at a later date.

The dogs are used at OI Jogi and also in the neighbouring communities. Every year they contribute to the arrest of criminals, the recovery of illegal firearms, the recovery

of stolen goods and ultimately crime in our district has significantly reduced. Our rhinos, though they don't know it, are indebted to these dogs!

More recently, in 2012, we acquired Belgian Malinois 'attack dogs'. They are accompanied by Kenya Police Reservist rangers and used to patrol and ambush different locations at night. The same rules of engagement apply to these dogs as those imposed on our men who carry firearms; deploying the dogs on a suspect will likely result in serious injury, at the very least. They are a formidable weapon and a huge deterrent to would-be poachers. We have advertised widely that we are in possession of these dogs and poachers have therefore been warned!

At OI Jogi, we feel very strongly that dogs are an invaluable asset to rhino conservation. They are a proactive conservation tool by virtue of being a tremendous deterrent to poachers, but they also get the job done when required.

### Grants

OI Jogi is a member of the Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries, a Kenyan private sector organisation. SRI supports various APLRS initiatives, including the black rhino Emergency Fund (total grant £4,564, including £1,350 from Nature Picture Library and Bluegreen Pictures), the Intelligence and Informers' reward fund, and a Scene-of-the-crime training course, due to take place in November 2013 (£6,110 from Chester Zoo Act for Wildlife and \$7,000 from our Operation Stop Poaching Now appeal).

