



THE CRASH

Newsletter for rhino professionals

January 2014

New Year Update for IRKA

Jane Kennedy, President
International Rhino Keeper Association

Happy New Year 2014!

As the new president of the IRKA, I am blessed to share with you the highlights of our last year. As the year ends, I would like to give an update for the past year and a look to our future.

The year began with the plight of rhinos in Africa facing their worst year in decades. To date, almost 1000 rhinos have been poached in Africa alone, and poaching has increased in Asia as well. We, as members of the IRKA, have worked to raise money for rhino protection units (RPU) by sponsoring Cinco de Rhino celebrations where over \$10,000 was raised for the IRF.

We also held our eighth Rhino Keeper Workshop in San Diego. Over 140 people attended (106 full registrations!) from 9 different countries. Topics ranged from hand-rearing techniques to pathologies of rhinos. For some, the highlight

was spending the night at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, waking up and having the opportunity to work alongside Park keepers, and learning other ways to care for rhinos.

Our 2015 RKW is scheduled to be held June of 2015, hosted by the Chester Zoo in England. The Board of Directors knows most of us will need funding assistance to get there and are working on ways to help. While exact fees are not confirmed registration will be \$300 USD or less. Room rates will be similar to our 2013 rate near \$150 a night. Of course plane fares will vary greatly depending on your location. You can help by letting us know if you are interested in attending. We are looking into a member-speaker reimbursement to help partially fund keepers and get more of us to present at future workshops. With this we are hoping to provide scholarships or reimbursement assistance to as many members as possible. Please contact Wendy Shaffstall or me if you hope to attend or have any questions. Calendar sales are again a big hit with keepers; both the 2013 and 2014 calendars were sold out. All profits from these sales go directly to rhino conservation in the field. Thank you for making this a success, and thank you Sara Wunder-Steward for organizing this.

A new venture is almost ready for launch here and overseas. Rhino bicycle racing jerseys can now be purchased with part of the profits going to the IRKA. If you race or ride, consider riding in one of these stylish racing uniforms and supporting your organization. Lara Metrione is our BOD member organizing this. Contact her for more information.

After the first of the year, a new partnership with iGive and Amazon Smile will begin. The IRKA will become one of the many charities people can give to when purchasing items through these websites. You can help by visiting these sites and encouraging your family and friends to shop here too. A portion of each sale will go to the IRKA, helping us raise important funds for scholarships, Keeper Development,

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and other discretionary needs. Jonnie Capiro and Lara are working on this for you. A portion of the proceeds from sales of custom-made animal belt buckles from Barbies Basement Jewellery also goes to the IRKA. This initiative is thanks to Angie Snowie.

Becoming a Rhino Buddy is another way you can help. By sponsoring a fellow keeper, you can help expand our membership and its influence around the globe. We have a list of rhino keepers in other countries for you to choose from, hopefully developing not only new members but new friends as well. Sara is also heading this program.

The website is still in need of updating and has become one of my priorities for the New Year. I hope to work with Dave Clawson on developing a team whose goal is to have our website more user-friendly and offer a member's only section. If you are savvy with websites or want to be involved, contact Dave or me.

Earlier this year the Board approved purchasing BOD insurance. We have been operating without this needed protection but are finally able to provide this coverage; we hope to finalize which company to go with in the next few weeks. For those of you who may have held back serving on the Board, no more worries, you will be covered for basic liabilities.

Other highlights include our expanded Correspondence Committee which is trying to personalize your membership. I know I appreciated it earlier this year when we lost one of our breeding cows and received a personalized note to the team. Thank you Alissa Sandor for creating and heading this project. Jonnie Capiro has done a great job with our Facebook page. As members we all have access to use the secret Facebook group for discussion. In early December a member asked for advice on their rhino. If you have advice, go to our page and share your experiences! Also Jonnie would welcome any pictures or stories for the public Facebook page.

New for 2014 is a trial Training Committee that is being headed by Joe Hauser. For more details see Joe's article in this edition of the Crash.

Finally, I'd like to thank Adam Felts for his leadership of our organization. His years as president helped develop our foundation. He has not stepped down, just moved over to the vice-presidency while he works diligently in his new capacity as Associate Curator for the Columbus Zoo. Adam is spending the next 2 years helping develop a new African Exhibit from the ground up. While he may not work directly with rhinos anymore, we know he will continue to serve on our board doing all he can for our organization. Thank You Adam....

If you have any needs, concerns, or just want to talk, feel free to contact me or any member of the Board. We hope you have a prosperous and blessed New Year, and that the rhinos you care for prosper as well.

Jane Kennedy
President, IRKA
Lead Keeper, San Diego Zoo Safari Park
NA Regional Studbook Keeper, GOHR
jkennedy@sandiegozoo.org or janeKennedy_rka@cox.net

Learn Share Save

Fight With Mike

My Name is Mike:

Currently, I am an active member of the IRKA, and a Mammal Keeper at an IRKA supporting institution. Over the last four years I have been working with the various species of rhinos, and more recently I have had the privilege of working with two of the last northern white rhinos, Nola and Angalifu. I have decided to take my dedication for the conservation of species, as well as rhino poaching awareness to another level by joining a Rhino Protection Unit (RPU). In March, I will embark on a three month journey of rigorous training and active duty species protection training in South Africa. In passing this five week boot camp (involving intense physical and mental challenges) I will be fully admitted and move onto active duty patrol. During regular patrol I will be responsible for all active and passive anti-poaching measures; this includes wire snares, foot-tracking, and armed response to poachers. To help alleviate my costs, I am selling “Fight Poachers, Fight Extinction” T-shirts. Each shirt sold acts as a walking awareness campaign – an active advertisement to stop poaching. Every shirt purchased will also contribute to the donation of the very same t-shirt to local villagers. In doing so I hope to further local awareness and make a positive connection between native South Africans and RPUs. After costs, I will be donating all remaining funds to the IRKA. If you’re interested in joining my awareness campaign and help actively fight against poachers by purchasing a shirt, join me on Facebook at “Fight with Mike, Direct Anti-Poaching and Conservation.” Because of the credible threat to me and my family I will not be using my real name on this Facebook page. As fellow members of the IRKA, feel free to share my page.

I thank you, as do the rhinos.

Respectfully,

Mike



New IRKA Training Committee

Joe Hauser
Buffalo Zoo

The International Rhino Keeper Association (IRKA) would like to add a training committee to help us work together and achieve training goals at each of our institutions. As keepers, we come across many obstacles with the care of the different species of rhinos in captivity. With training, we can overcome these obstacles and enhance the lives of the rhinos under our care.

There are many variables with rhino training, and there is not only one right answer. Every institution has its own unique situation with different species, rhino personalities, barn, exhibit, and chute designs. If we share our ideas and success stories, other institutions may learn and benefit from it. Personally, I have learned a great deal of my training knowledge from colleagues, and hopefully with this committee, others can do the same.

The IRKA Board of Directors is hoping to have at least 2-3 training articles from different institutions in each quarterly CRASH newsletter. We can choose one subject for each newsletter and show how a few places trained the same behavior to come up with the desired result. For example, we can decide on how 3 places trained their rhinos for voluntary blood draws. Each facility may have had a different technique than the others, which will give us more than one option from which to learn. It would also be good to incorporate some pictures of the training process that we used to help give a visual aid.

I am looking for people that would be interested in joining the training committee for the IRKA. These people would be contacts to help give training advice and contribute articles for the CRASH. Further down the road, if the committee is a success, we may incorporate it at the rhino keeper workshops. If you are interested in joining, you can contact me by email at jhauser@buffalozoo.org. Hopefully, this is yet another step to continue to make this organization the best it can be!



Running For Rhinos!

Sean Ramsdell, Busch Gardens

Hello fellow rhino keepers and enthusiasts! My name is Sean Ramsdell and I am a rhino keeper at Busch Gardens, Tampa. I met some of you at the last IRKA workshop in San Diego and I am looking forward to meeting more of you at future workshops. It was in San Diego that we listened to Cathy Dean, the Director of Save the Rhino International, describe her organization's work including their fundraising efforts of which the London Marathon caught my attention, since I have recently become an avid runner.

In 2012, I began the Couch to 5K program to better my fitness. I had been an athlete in high school, but my activity level tapered off in college and continued to dwindle once I started my career. But I decided, NO MORE! I began to run....first, minutes at a time, then eventually half hours and then more. My first major goal was to run a half marathon – at Walt Disney World, Florida! Soon after, I set my sights on another – at Disneyland, California. Then, I heard about the London Marathon from Cathy Dean. I knew when she presented that slide that this was my next goal. I introduced myself to Cathy during a break and said I was thinking about running. Mind you – I've never run a marathon and I've never been to London. Cathy and I continued to discuss the London Marathon during the rest of the workshop, and by the last day, I was ready to commit. I am running the 2014 Virgin Money London Marathon for Save the Rhino!



I am running the 2014 Virgin Money London Marathon for Save the Rhino! I'm obviously very excited for the marathon and to see London for the first time, but more importantly, I am excited to do more to help wild rhinos. I am already the Bowling for Rhinos coordinator for Tampa Bay AAZK and I give the best keeper chats and tours I can at Busch Gardens, but this is definitely an exceptional opportunity to have a global impact.

Please take some time and read more about my journey on my blog RunningForRhinos.com. I discuss my training, include fun photos and more importantly, a donation link. I am doing all this work to raise money for rhinos. 100% of the money I raise is going directly to Save the Rhino International. The blood (a little),

sweat (a ton), tears (once I finish) and plane tickets (yikes!) to London, are on my own. ;)

Rhino Open Mouth Behavior

Jade Tuttle
North Carolina Zoo



Here at the North Carolina Zoo keepers are training our herd of white rhinos an open mouth behavior that will help with preventative dental care.

Several years ago we were challenged with conditioning our females for artificial insemination procedures. In an attempt to make it as smooth as possible for all involved, keepers started training all four rhinos for behaviors necessary in the process. While originally feeding loose alfalfa as a reward we ran into frustrations with both timing of reinforcements and body condition concerns. To limit the calories and better define the moment of reward the loose alfalfa was replaced with compressed alfalfa cubes and eventually timothy cubes. Initially the cubes were placed on the floor at the time of the bridge but our hungry girls quickly learned to take them from our hands out of greed.

Around the same time staff was dealing with a geriatric female who we eventually lost. The necropsy revealed several worn and loose teeth that, although unrelated to her terminal condition, were probably very uncomfortable and could easily have led to infections and weight loss. With this in mind it was a short jump of capturing the hand feeding behavior and, by prolonging the reward, increasing the time the mouth was held open. At this point a keeper will station the rhino facing them, touch the middle of the upper lip while saying “open” and the rhino will hold it’s lips wide for roughly 30 seconds.



“Open” has been great for meet and greets with our rhinos. People can now not only touch them, but safely feed them, too, by tossing a cube to them. We are also able to get some photos of the teeth to check for any points, although it’s limited to the upper arcade. Our next goal is to condition the animals to allow a pvc sleeve to be placed in their mouth that will house a laparoscope which will provide better lighting and more flexibility to view the lower teeth as well. We hope to be able to monitor dental health in our whole herd and arrange necessary veterinary care accordingly and address any points or infections that could compromise overall health.

2014 Rhino Conservation Calendar Sales

2014 was the best year yet for the sale of the Rhino Conservation Calendar! In 12 weeks, we SOLD OUT of the 600 calendars printed & raised \$10,426. Thank you to everyone who purchased the Calendar & thank you to Busch Gardens, Tampa & the Oklahoma City Zoo for sponsoring the printing costs of the calendar. 100% of the funds raised will go to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) to assist with the resources needed to improve rhino surveys, security & monitoring of the Sumatran rhinos.



There will be a Rhino/Elephant Workshop at the Plankendael Zoo, Belgium, Feb. 20-21, 2014. This Workshop is being presented by AFSA (France) & de Harpij (Dutch & Belgian).

L'AFSA vous invite au

**WORKSHOP
ELEPHANTS - RHINOCEROS**

ZOO DE PLANKENDAEL DU 19 AU 21 FEVRIER 2014

- limité à 60 personnes

Workshop AFSA Plankendael

Keeper Professional Development Program

Chaz Moxley, Albuquerque BioPark
October 2013

From the first moment I saw the giant step out of his crate I was hooked. I had seen rhinoceros before, but never that close and certainly not one that was going to be partially in my care. He was the first rhino our park had the privileged of giving a home to and for all of us working there it was love at first sight. Personally his arrival sent me down a new path in my career that I hope to keep on for a long time.

Since that time a lot has changed, where I live and work, but I am still fortunate enough to be working with rhinoceros every day. Subsequently I'm always looking for more information about rhinos and their care. I often have husbandry questions and until recently I didn't always know where to turn to for help in answering them, so I was ecstatic to find IRKA. It has been great to find an organization of knowledgeable people who have the same passion for these amazing creatures that I do and enjoy sharing what they have learned.

Within a couple of months of joining I attended my first workshop in San Diego and that's where I found out about the Keeper Professional Development Program. As I looked into it more I realized how helpful being able to participate would be. It's a great chance to meet fellow keepers, see what they are doing in their programs, see how different facilities function, and learn as much as possible to take back to my facility. While still at the conference I got in contact with Christine Bobko from the Denver Zoo and asked about going there as part of the program. In October, with much help from Christine and my supervisor I was on my way to Denver to work in their rhino area for three days.

Though they have different species than we do, I felt there would still be a lot of information I could pick up and I was right. Not only did I get to see the layouts of the buildings, yards, and gate systems I got to participate in helping to move the animals through them. I was able to compare diets and get some great ideas for possible new ingredients to try. Also I had a chance to see different kinds of equipment and how they operate. One of the highlights was the opportunity to help with an enrichment project, hanging a street sweeper brush, which got me excited to get something similar up at my facility.

Overall it was fantastic. The staff was welcoming, friendly, and professional. They really went out of their way to show me a lot and answer my constant questions. I can't say enough good things about the Keeper Professional Development Program. It is a great opportunity that we are lucky to have. I know many keepers working with different animals that would love a similar program, but they don't exist. Thank you to IRKA for creating the program and thank you to everyone in Denver for the great experience.

Chaz Moxley

Albuquerque BioPark



Photo by : Denver Zoo





“Rhino Buddies”

Sponsor an IRKA Professional Membership for an International Rhino Keeper!

For \$25 a year, you can sponsor a Rhino Keeper from around the World whom may not have the means to pay for their own IRKA Membership. If you sponsor a Rhino Keeper, you will be connected to the Rhino Keeper you are sponsoring via email so you can keep in touch, share ideas, learn about other countries and cultures, and in particular, learn about each other's rhinos!

If you are interested in Sponsoring a Rhino Keeper, please email Sara Wunder Steward at Sara.Wunder@BuschGardens.com with your name, email address, institution, and species of rhino you care for.

*Note: Please be aware that English may not be your sponsored Rhino Keeper's first language! If you do speak a language other than English, please let us know. Otherwise, please be understanding of the language barriers and remember- you are both share a passion for RHINOS!

Michael Skidmore at Lincoln Park Zoo sponsored Melle van Iperen from Rotterdam Zoo! Thank you Michael!



Photo by: Cathy Jacoby

New and Renewing Members to IRKA

Carly Barron	The Maryland Zoo, Baltimore	Addy Watson	Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Amanda Schaffner		Melanie Friedman	Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Paige Wiggins	Baton Rouge Zoo	Nerida Taylor	Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Natasha Ryles Walker	Monarto Zoo	Jake Williams	Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Anita Scalf		Sasha Brook	Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Jillian Huwe	Kansas City Zoo	Joe Hauser	Buffalo Zoo
Robyn Johnson	The Maryland Zoo	Barbara Hammershoy	
Henry Opio	Uganda Wildlife Ed. Center	Susan Lemley	
Jayne Hoffman	Little Rock Zoo	Louis Keeley	
Jennifer MacNaughton	Busch Gardens Tampa	Michele Huck	
Todd Schwenk		Amy Rose	
Pascale Benoit	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Mark Marquardt	
Nick Hanlon	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Roxane Losey	
Katie Boyer	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	David Backus	
Jennifer Conaghan	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Erik Storjohann	Tulsa Zoo
Ian Anderson	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Emily Hartman	Tulsa Zoo
Karen Ellis	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Mike Connolly	Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum
Simone Low	Taronga Western Plains Zoo		
Mark O. Riordan	Taronga Western Plains Zoo		
Linda Matthews	Taronga Western Plains Zoo		

Correspondence

The Wilds	birth
Zoo Basel	birth
Tampa	birth
White Oak	birth
Minnesota	AZA Achievement in International Conservation
Houston	3 acquisitions
World Rhino Day	23 International Participants!

Our Condolences to:

Little Rock
 Memphis
 Montgomery Zoo
 Lee Richardson Zoo
 SDZ



Institutional Supporters

The Supporting Institutional Membership is for any conservation organization, or zoological institution which supports rhino conservation in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the IRKA. These memberships are available for \$100, \$500 and \$2000. Why should your zoo be interested in joining on this level? If your institution contributes on the \$500 level then all rhino keepers membership fees at your zoo are waived! It is important that as the IRKA grows that we continue to garner the support from all facilities that are responsible for the protection and management of all species of rhinoceros. We would like to extend our appreciation for this substantial support to the following institutions, and hopefully we can add your zoo to this growing list! If you have questions about institutional memberships or any other questions please contact us at

internationalrhinokeeperassoc@gmail.com.

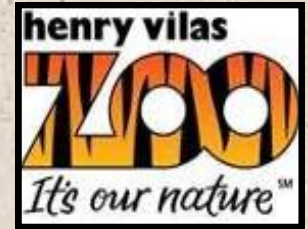
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2014 Sponsors at the \$250-\$1500 level



2014 Sponsors at \$100 level

