



No different to fingernails but rhino horn commands a high price for all involved ...



Second case of rhino poaching since 1994 puts Namibian teams on high alert...

by Bernd Brell, Director Special Operation & Services, Save the Rhino Trust

A dead Desert Black Rhino was discovered on 24 December 2012 by a member of the local community while taking his cattle to a nearby spring. The horns had been removed and a small female calf, 6 to 8 months old, was standing by her dead mother.

A joint operation was started immediately including members of the Namibian Wildlife Authority, the police, SRT and a vet all arriving in the area during the night and early the next morning.

This concerted effort, including the co-operation of the local community, resulted in the arrest of the suspect. He also showed law enforcement officers where the horns had been stashed and co-operated in retrieving the firearm used. At the same time a full Scene of Crime Investigation was carried out around and at the carcass, enabling officers to retrieve the bullet and other evidence.

The above incident was only the second case of illegal hunting of a Desert Black Rhino recorded since 1994 in the Kunene and Erongo Regions - a traditionally safe-haven for black rhino. In October 2011 a young male rhino was discovered by a joint SRT and Conservancy patrol; he had been caught in a snare.

Comparing both incidents, the recent one was far more professionally executed with the suspect knowing exactly where to find the rhino, only one shot was needed and the horns were surgically removed with a sharp object; indicating that this is possibly not his first offence.

In both cases all stakeholders in rhino conservation were on the scene in less than 24 hours, testing both the communication structures and command structures laid out in the Security Plan for the north west rhino range, as well as within the different government organizations, NGO's and Conservancies.

Post poaching meetings have been and will be held, in order to improve on Namibia's ability to combat a possible increase of illegal rhino hunting incidents which is feared as poaching statistics spiral throughout the continent.

All funds received by DSWF have been instrumental in keeping SRT field staff active on the ground throughout all the above activities, ensuring the regular monitoring of the Desert Black Rhino and patrolling of the North West Rhino Range of Namibia.

Rhino Crisis in Assam

Supporting the Kaziranga authorities to stop rhino killing

by Bibhab Talukdar, of the Aaranyak Society, Assam

As in all rhino range countries, the state of Assam has seen an increase in rhino poaching over the last twelve months. At least 21 rhinos were poached mainly from in and around Kaziranga National Park (KNP) which is home to more than 65 percent of the global wild population of the greater one horned rhino. What is more worrying is the killing of 12 rhinos in the first two months of 2013. If this trend is allowed to continue the rhino poaching figure could reach an all time high by end of this year.

To reduce poaching, the state government has put 300 Assam Forest Protection Force personnel into Kaziranga along with new self loading rifles to confront the well organised and well equipped poachers. Also assisting the forest staff is Jorba – the Belgian Malinois dog sponsored by DSWF and maintained by the K9 unit of Aaranyak. The sniffer dog has helped the forest and enforcement agencies in Kaziranga by

unearthing vital clues with its tracking expertise leading to the arrest of several poaching suspects.

Aaranyak, with support received from DSWF, has also provided 40 walkie talkie communication sets to further improve wireless networks in KNP and two new motor bikes were given to the Karbi Anglong Forest Department (adjacent to KNP) to improve protection and vigilance.

It is vital in this current up-turn in poaching that everyone involved with protecting the rhino is well equipped and able to communicate effectively. Thank you to everyone who has supported Aaranyak through DSWF, your help is invaluable and needed now more than ever.

Read more about Jorba in our supporter's story on page 8.



Killed for their horn, poaching in Assam has hit an all time high
Photo: Nicky Dunnington-Jefferson

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