

Wildlife

MATTERS



Wildlife in Crisis

The escalation of poaching threatens many of the species we protect - find out how we are working to save them

New Prints for 2012

From three generations of the Shepherd family and guest artist Nathan Bye exclusive to the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Extraordinary People

The amazing and wonderful things that DSWF supporters do for wildlife!

Fulfilling the Art of Conservation

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DAVID SHEPHERD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
SAVING CRITICALLY ENDANGERED MAMMALS IN THE WILD

www.davidshepherd.org

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Welcome to Wildlife

If I were asked to sum-up 2012 with just one word it would be 'proud'; proud of how Britain faced its critics and put on one of the greatest Olympic and Paralympic Games ever; of how we all, as a nation, threw ourselves behind the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and became a truly united Kingdom.

I was also immensely proud of our fifth Wildlife Artist of the Year exhibition (more on page 22 & 23) which was a triumph both in terms of the quality of the art and the amount we raised for wildlife. I'm already looking forward to an equally magnificent 2013! And, although it's a few weeks away, I know that I will glow with pride at our black-tie event at the Dorchester on November 23rd because of the brilliant opportunity it offers to raise awareness and funds for our projects.

Of course, I have always been proud to be British and I was delighted to be the first artist ever to receive the True Englishman Award from the St. Georges Day Club earlier this year.

But, above all, I am proud of you, the Foundation's loyal supporters. Even in these testing economic times you have risen to the challenge and given what you can to save the endangered wildlife we all love so passionately.

But, the facts remain stark and your continued support is needed more than ever before. Since the beginning of the year over 381 rhino have been killed in South Africa for their horn; an estimated 100 elephants die every day because of their ivory and tigers and snow leopards continue to be hunted for their coats and body parts.

Without your amazing and generous contributions to the work of the Foundation the dire statistics and the potential impact on the environment would be so much worse. So my sincerest thanks to you all.

Finally, one thing that has made me exceptionally proud is the way that my daughter, Melanie, has led the Foundation as its CEO for the last 22 years. She has worked long and tirelessly, and with extraordinary drive through difficult times, to raise funds and awareness for wildlife. I know she is looking forward to being a trustee and advisor and remaining fully engaged especially with the projects that she is so passionate about.



A proud moment; presenting the top prize of £10,000 to Karen Laurence-Rowe at the this years' Wildlife Artist of the Year event at the Mall Galleries in London with chairman of the judging panel, Mark Carwardine

Having worked closely with Melanie for more than seven years Fundraising Director, Jill Inglis, has also decided that this is an appropriate time to move on to her own new opportunities. I know that the team at DSWF share my admiration of what they have achieved and wish them both well in their new roles.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Foundation's new CEO, Sally Case, who joins us from the RSPCA where she was head of prosecutions. I am certain that she too will do us proud!

David Shepherd



After 22 years at the helm Melanie Shepherd (left) is handing the reins to Sally Case who became CEO this October

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Of calves, collars and cameras

As the threat to wild rhino intensifies we catch up with the Save the Rhino (SRT) team in Namibia - where the remoteness of the landscape helps protect the precious black rhino - and discover that it's not all doom and gloom... *By Sue Wagner, Simson Uri-Khob and Bernd Brell*



MEET TUESDAY... a remarkable rhino

Tuesday is almost 40 years old and SRT, with the help of long-standing support from DSWF, has been monitoring and protecting her all her life. She's been a brilliant breeder and has produced no less than seven calves - four females and three males.

Her first calf was born in October 1984 and thereafter her calving intervals were approximately every three to four years with her subsequent calves born in March 1990, October 1994, March 1997, March 2001, January 2004 and then a six year gap with her last calf born in November 2010.

Black rhino calves generally spend a minimum of two to two-and-a-half years with the cow in

a specific part of her home range before being weaned. The calf becomes well orientated, learning the whereabouts of water, mountain succulents and other food sources. The cow weans the calf and then moves out of the area to another part of her home range to give birth to her new calf. The weaned calf may join up periodically with the cow and new calf. These visits are not prolonged and the sub-adult rhino returns to the area which is familiar to it.

SRT's Northern team, led by Lesley Karutjaiva, was sent out in search of Tuesday who had not been seen for more than a year. This skilful team of trackers were very happy to find her as Simson Uri-Khob had feared the worst for Tuesday and her calf both because of Tuesday's age and condition and the fact that they had not been seen for so long. "I was amazed to see the calf looking so healthy and now I know the calf will make it," Simson said.

Tuesday is unmistakable because of her unusual horn shape which seems to be a distinguishing feature of her family. Both her sister and mother had similar shaped horns.

SRT congratulates Lesley's team on a job well done and thanks DSWF for their on-going support of SRT's trackers.

With such dire news about rhino poaching - over 381 have been poached this year to date in South Africa - it is so heartwarming to be able to report these breeding successes. With your continued support we hope to be able to bring you this great news as generation after generation of rhino calves are born and thrive!



Rhino births make daily tracking worthwhile

SRT has been celebrating the sighting of no less than five new rhino calves in the past four months. Two of the cows who produced calves recently are Hoagedi and Inka.

Hoagedi was born in September 1993 making her nearly 19 years old. She has produced three calves. Her first, a female called Pensi, was born in June 2004 and her second, Harry, was born in March 2008. Earlier this year, SRT trackers were very excited to find her with a third calf, a male. It is estimated that he was born in March 2011.

The sighting of Inka's calf (pictured above) was somewhat unusual as the calf was very young - probably only a few days old. It is rare to see such a tiny calf as the mothers usually keep them very well hidden from predators in the early months and even our seasoned trackers have difficulty finding them. The mother, Inka, was born in November 2001 so is almost 11 years old and had her first calf, a male called Icarus, in 2009. The new, as yet unnamed calf, is also a male.

Foot collaring and stealth cameras aid rhino monitoring



SRT has been pioneering some new tools in the monitoring of rhino in Namibia. In August they assisted Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism by fitting satellite tracking 'foot collars' - also known as 'ankle bracelets' - to rhino in the Kunene region (above right). This trial will help the team monitor rhino in remote regions but how successfully the signals are received from the mountainous terrain remains to be seen.

Stealth cameras are also proving to be a cost-effective tool in monitoring rhino in some of SRT's more inaccessible areas, especially where low densities of rhino occur. Saving the cost of tracking teams the cameras are capturing photos and video footage increasing the teams knowledge of rhino in the area and capturing transgressions by some self-drive tourists too!



ADOPT
Dundi and help
save the rhino in the
wild. See page 25
for more details.

SASHA

a survivor's story

by Lucky Mavrandonis and Sue Downie



Sasha has an amazing story which began when she was moved from Namibia to South Africa in March 2003 with two other black rhinos, a young sub-adult female and a bull.

After a couple of weeks in holding bomas, which allowed the rhinos to adapt to different conditions and browse, Sasha surprised everyone by giving birth to a tiny female calf. Unfortunately Sasha and her calf were separated during the cold night and there was concern that the calf would be rejected. The calf, named Thandi, was flown by helicopter to a rehabilitation facility. Sadly mother and baby were never reunited.

Sasha and the other two rhinos were moved to a small 400 ha. enclosure and got on with their lives in a new home. Two years later the three rhinos were moved to a larger area and, while she was immobilised, a transmitter for tracking her was implanted into her horn. Luckily the exercise was complete when she unexpectedly

woke up, scattering about twenty people and it took another thirty minutes to recapture her. Sue got it all on video and at no time was any person, vehicle or the helicopter hurt or damaged!

Three months later Sasha gave birth to her second calf, another female we called Nonny, which is an abbreviation for a word meaning 'lucky'. She was lucky for several reasons; lucky to be born safely after her mum received three doses of immobilising drug, lucky that she could roam free and stay with her mother; and we were lucky because she was a female.

Sasha and Nonny met the resident rhino, adapted to the new area and they have been able to be wild rhinos again with minimal interference from people.

Today, more than nine years since arriving in South Africa, Sasha has had five calves, three females and two males, and Thandi (sent to the

rehabilitation centre at one day old) is now living in the wild and made Sasha a grandmother when she gave birth to a calf in October 2010. This is another remarkable story on its own, making all Sasha's traumas worth the effort.

We wanted to share Sasha's story with you because, even though you may never see a black rhino in the wild and they may have no meaning or relevance in your day-to-day life, these magnificent ancient vegetarians deserve a life on this planet. Rhino horns don't belong on a wall or in a misguided pharmacy. They belong on a healthy rhino living in its natural habitat.

Please continue to help us save Sasha and all her kind.

Our sincere thanks to DSWF and all its supporters for your contribution to help all endangered wildlife, including these precious rhinos.

Rhino Update 2012 ...

2012 has been another horrendous year for the rhino. As Wildlife Matters went to press there were reports that 381 rhinos had been killed in South Africa since January - 100 in less than two months. The current rate of slaughter is likely to mean that the final tally this year will pass 2011's 448 animals.

The devastating escalation in poaching is blamed on increasing black market demand for rhino horn where it is worth more than its weight in gold with some sources quoting figures as high as £41,000 per kilo. While many heightened security measures have failed to stop the criminal syndicates that officials say are responsible for the killing, DSWFs monitoring and security measures continue to keep the rhinos in our projects safe, with no reported losses to date.

"The situation is dire and it is almost impossible to put into words how angry this futile waste of life makes us," says DSWF's Melanie Shepherd. "That people continue to believe in the curative powers of a substance that is made of keratin (the same material that makes our own hair and finger nails) is preposterous and we will continue to work hard to change attitudes and save the rhino."

The DSWF supported rhino projects continue to provide excellent protection for the animals in their care. PLEASE continue to support us in this desperate fight for rhino survival.

Managing human-elephant conflict

by Vivek Menon, CEO of the Wildlife Trust of India

It was a casual remark by Wildlife Trust of India's (WTI) trustee Dr. P.C Bhattacharjee (PCB) that led to the birth of the novel idea of the DSWF supported Grain for Grain scheme in 2005. During a visit to the park a local villager came wielding a machete in anger demanding compensation for his crop that had been destroyed by elephants the night before.

Luckily, the villager only vented his anger on a forest department signboard but PCB made a passing remark that the elephant did not pick the man's pocket so why should he be given money? The elephant took their grain so rightfully only grain should be given in return. The idea stuck and the Grain for Grain scheme was born as a means to protect the interests of the locals as well as the elephants.

Launched for communities living at the fringe of Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary in the northeast

Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh the scheme provides relief to farmers and helps reduce retaliation against the elephants. In May this year, in an event hosted by WTI and the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department, DSWF supported the distribution of 10,000 kilograms of grain to 100 farmers as compensation for the crops they had lost to elephants. Apart from providing relief, the scheme also acted as a way to improve the relationship between the local Forest Department and villagers.

It measures like the Grain for Grain scheme that help alleviate further strain in the relationship. It is one of several projects on human elephant mitigation that DSWF supports. From installing electric fences, generating awareness on critical issues, to equipping and training guards in elephant and tiger reserves to looking at the welfare of individual animals, DSWF has proven that the often quoted

proverb "a stitch in time saves nine" holds true and continues its vital commitment to save wildlife in India.



Letting grain take the strain between farmers and elephants - and a paddy field destroyed by elephants

THAILAND: The tigers we know so well



Striding out; one of the tigers regularly caught on camera by the FREELAND team

Despite the monsoon, tiger surveys and camera trapping continues as normal in Dong Phrayayen, Thailand. With most of the tigers becoming well known to the team they are always eager to see them again - to know they are safe and well.

"Despite the rains the poachers do not stop," explains Tim Redford of DSWF supported FREELAND. "In fact, they appear regularly and predictably, such as before major holidays and when seasonal contract work on farms is completed - when the rice is growing the poachers return. For many poaching is the only supplementary source of income they know."

As part of the fight against poaching FREELAND's community outreach team presented its tiger conservation message to thousands of children in schools around Dong Phrayayen in the first eight months of 2012 and met hundreds of villagers.

"The younger generation seem to understand the conservation message and the general perception is that they will not follow in their parents illegal footsteps. But, for some older, forest-hardened folks they feel it is their right to take what they want, even though they know it is breaking the law," adds Tim.

This is where the anti-poaching patrols become crucial and, to assist with tiger protection, DSWF has been supporting the enforcement training and field equipment to ensure that the rangers have everything they need to protect the tigers that the team is starting to know so well.

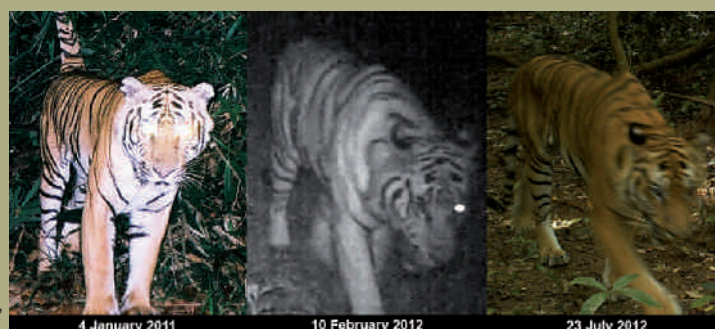
"Please keep the support coming," says Tim. "Protecting this crucial tiger population is as important as ever."

A tiger's life caught on camera

A tiger's life is always on the edge - they have to remain constantly vigilant. Apart from the constant threat of poachers tigers have to defend their territories and this is when they are most likely to sustain a life-threatening injury. Often, after two males have been recorded by camera traps at the same location and time, we see that one or both are wounded - injuries range from small scratches to large open wounds. Amazingly all seem to heal rapidly, often without leaving a trace.

Recently, in Thap Lan, we were horrified to see that one of the males familiar to us had apparently lost an eye. We recorded him

with an eye closed, possibly missing, and not long after that he disappeared altogether. An injury such as this would affect his binocular vision and ability to judge distance, essential to successful hunting. Luckily, after three months he re-appeared, this time with the eye open and apparently normal. We can only assume that it was an injury that healed naturally



Camera traps give us an invaluable glimpse at tiger behaviour and health

and although he was the loser of that particular battle for his territory he survived for us to tell his tale.

Enough is Enough

Conservation groups protest against rhino killings



Forty conservation groups held a sit-in protest against the Forest Department's failure to act over the recent rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park, Assam - the last stronghold of the one-horned Indian rhino



The news from Kaziranga is dominated by the floods this year. Forming a critical part of the rich alluvial landscape that makes the National Park in Assam so special, the annual flood has, for centuries, shaped the ecosystem. Rarities like the Bengal tiger and one-horned Indian rhino share the park with over 30 other endangered species.

This year the floods were the worst in living memory and brought with them a higher than normal death toll of animals and people including 17 rhino (of which six were poached) and 512 hog deer. No tiger deaths were recorded.

"Flood is a normal phenomenon in Kaziranga and an important part of the ecosystem," says Bibhab Talakdur of DSWF supported conservation group, Aaranyak. "The loss of animals is shocking in a human context but the floods form part of the natural selection taking infants, juveniles, the old and diseased, which in turn enriches the ecosystem."

While the floods provide vital landscape management, the poaching of six rhinos (four in one week) that were forced from the park by the floods has caused uproar culminating in a sit-in protest by forty Assamese conservation groups, including Aaranyak, on October 1st.

"The Kaziranga National Park (KNP) authorities have not learnt any lessons following the

previous spell of poaching that took place in June 2012," says Aaranyak's Firoz Ahmed who took part in the protest in Assam's capital, Guwahati. "The forest department has miserably failed to engage the support of people in the fringe areas in helping with conservation efforts and assisting with the gathering of intelligence to arrest poachers."

The protesters raised a number of demands including: the building of high land shelters for flood-hit animals; strengthening the intelligence network; filling current vacancies for frontline staff; recruiting local people as rangers; establishing better coordination with adjoining forest departments; setting up more, properly manned and equipped anti-poaching camps; better conviction rates of poachers; bringing Karbi Anglong (the vulnerable corridor area where rhinos are being poached) under the jurisdiction of the KNP authorities and setting up a dedicated veterinary centre in the Park.

"We now need to concentrate on securing these demands and increasing the wildlife corridors from the park so that distressed animals can safely move out to find shelter," adds Bibhab. "Current corridors are under huge pressure from human development which blocks open spaces and prevents the animals from moving out to higher ground to the south of the park; this, and all of the demands made by the protesters, are something that your continued support will help us address."



At the end of a hard day, Jorba's handler, Anil Das, helps him across the river in Kaziranga

Jorba increases crime-busting success

Jorba - the DSWF funded sniffer dog working for the K-9 dog squad - was instrumental in assisting the forest officials in Kaziranga to arrest 18 suspected culprits involved in wildlife crime between January and early May this year. He was able to track the scent from the scene of the crime for as far as 8km away and helped unearth vital clues.

With water covering much of the park during the monsoon season Jorba moved to Guwahati with his handler, Anil Das. Together they attended an eight day training course before returning to the field in October.

Thank you to everyone who supports Jorba and his handler. With additional funds DSWF could help expand this vital crime-busting team. You can donate by calling DSWF on 01483 272323 or online at: www.davidshepherd.org

Supreme Court Ruling

As Wildlife Matters went to press we were waiting for news from India's Supreme Court concerning the total tourism ban in the core zones of India's tiger reserves. While management of tourism is necessary, a complete ban could spell disaster for the tiger, other wildlife in the parks and the locals who rely on tourism for a living. Follow the story online at www.davidshepherd.org



Working together, non-government organizations and locals joined forces to help rescue wildlife during this year's floods. Left to right: A baby rhino rescued from the flood waters in Kaziranga; part of the flood team and a rescue in action

Photos courtesy of Aaranyak