

11. Rhinos are most reactive to initial stick, and are selectively tolerant of repositioning of needle if blood is not hit on the first try. Once blood is hit, 1° trainer is responsible for keeping the rhino occupied (through training or food/tactile reinforcement) for full collection (typically about 5 tubes) and holding off of the vein following collection.

**\*Individual rhino characteristics:**

-1.0 White Rhino “Stubby” is fairly easy to position for blood draw, but is very reactive. He requires distraction through the use of other behaviors (“up,” “open,” “move up,” etc.) to keep him focused and to deter him from taking a step forward or back, or breaking away from session. Use of “steady” is effective.

-0.1 White Rhino “Daisy” requires less constant attention to ensure that she stands still during collection. However, she is much more challenging to get into initial position. She is very smart and fairly suspicious, refusing to step with the proper foot to allow for access of inner right leg. Once in proper position, she stands solidly if given hay or alfalfa cubes, is brushed, or has her horn filed.



### Conservation Corner: The Land of Narayani: Dave Johnson, Denver Zoo



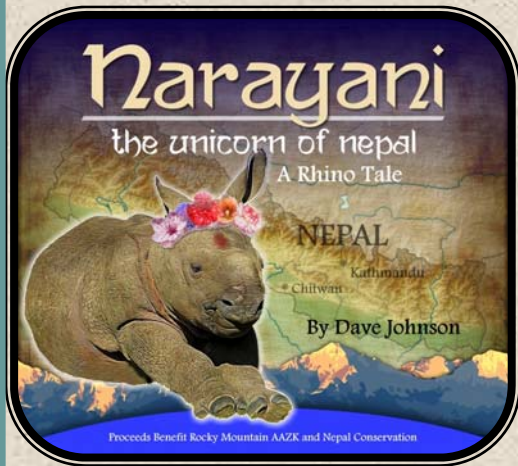
In November of last year I led a group of excited animal nerds back to a place that I have become quite fond of. This was my fifth trip to the wonderful land of Nepal. With me, I had zoo volunteers, zookeepers, interns, and other Denver community members. There were sixteen of us, including a three person documentary team working on a rhino film. We were thrown together on a mission of passion, and spent two weeks together experiencing all that this country, culture, and wildlife had to offer.

“Team Nepalorado”, and just as the name is a fusion of our two countries, we consider our mission a fusion of cultures in the name of conservation. We wanted to highlight the creation of a new Asian area in Denver. This exhibit would house Asian elephant and Greater one-horned rhino. The latter would be living in Denver for the first time in our history. Our new pachyderm exhibit at the zoo was opened in 2012, and was named Toyota Elephant Passage. Our team created some excitement about a new home for pachyderms, and continues to take our people on incredible journeys to unite them with conservation practices on a global scale. Our partnership does not seem to be slowing down any, but instead is gaining popularity and adding excitement to our zoo.

We got to see fourteen wild rhino this year, a few wild elephant, and a leopard, plus the amazing supporting cast of animals that abound in the terai. One of the rhinos actually swam across the boundary river to the national park and was grazing behind our lodge restaurant in Sauraha. We got to sit and watch him for hours as we drank our Everest beer and basked in our good fortune. Instead of leaving us after a few days and heading to India, the documentary film team stayed with us for the entire two weeks. The ninety minute film is due out sometime late summer and is called “The Price”. Our portion of the story is a feel good look at rhino conservation and the positive direction that we can head together. After two years of filming in Africa and documenting the struggles with rhino poaching as it escalates there, it was a nice change of pace for their team to be with us in Nepal. The energy and enthusiasm were contagious and continues on today. Just last month it was worldly recognized that Nepal had another year free from poaching. We were so excited for our global teammates. At a time when South Africa was losing 1004 rhino, Nepal was protecting all of their rhino, elephant, and tiger populations. Other countries should take notice.



Our group got to help with the purchase of anti-poaching motor-bikes for their military. We got to help build a solar-powered electric fence that now protects a border village from marauding elephant and rhino neighbors. My first book raised money for scholarships for the children who travel throughout the country doing street dramas about conservation. "Elephants of Denver" helped us send over seventeen thousand dollars to Nepal. We began to look into the possibility of building a new veterinary hospital for Chitwan National Park. This hospital would be taking care of the orphaned Greater one-horned rhino that we keep encountering during our travels. We have met four of these baby rhino and want to help keep them healthy and get them back into the wild. Narayani and Biru are two of these orphans who we get to see every year at the Central Zoo in Kathmandu. They survived and are now ambassadors for their recovering species. Narayani is now four years old this spring. She was named after the river from which she was found, injured and alone, and only a few months of age.



My second book just came out in December of 2013. It is called "Narayani: The Unicorn of Nepal". It is being sold in the zoo gift shop in Denver for ten dollars. We took copies of it to the Central Zoo, and made sure everyone got copies and the digital version to print out if needed. All the money made from this book goes to our AAZK chapter and into the zoo's Nepal account. We are hoping to continue the fundraising for the vet hospital and see if we can get this project going this year. This would benefit all the wild animals in Chitwan, especially the baby rhino. We are also planning on helping with the translocation of rhino from Chitwan to Bardia National Park and getting radio collars on the individuals who get moved west. Bardia has less than thirty rhino, and the country is wanting to re-establish numbers there now that protection is in place.

In our community I am hoping to create a new wave of passionate animal nerds. My book can be used as a fundraiser by schools, scouts, sports teams, or ambitious animal lovers. For each book sold as a fundraiser I will evenly split the profits. So you can make \$5 per book for your cause and \$5 for our Nepal rhino account. This is so much better than having kids out selling donuts, candy bars, or cookie dough. It's a great message for a great cause, and a rhino book lasts much longer and leaves a better impression than a chocolate bar. I am spending my weekends teaching in schools, doing power point presentations, and reading the book aloud to anyone who will listen. There are now children selling the books here, in Alabama, in Arizona, in North Carolina, and others. I hope to get these out to children in every state. My masses of helpers are now my "rhino warriors", doing their part to preserve an amazing species on our planet.

We have fourteen more people to take over to Nepal this October. I hope to have many more books sold and begin implementing the vet hospital plans with our zoo and our rhino colleagues overseas. We are creating some amazing rhino warriors on many levels and in many ways. The excitement we create is going global. Get in touch with me if you have some ideas about our partnership, if you want to become involved, or if you would like to purchase a rhino conservation book. We only have one small opportunity during our careers to make such a huge impact in the world. We need to all work together for the future of the rhinos that we all love so much! [rhinokeeperdave@gmail.com](mailto:rhinokeeperdave@gmail.com)

