

HOW DO YOU MANAGE EUROPE'S CAPTIVE WHITE RHINOS?

Within EAZA (European association of Zoos and Aquaria), there are currently 347 member zoos in 41 countries. One of the important missions of EAZA is sustainable population management.

Lars Versteeg | EAZA White rhino EEP coordinator and Curator, Safaripark Beekse Bergen

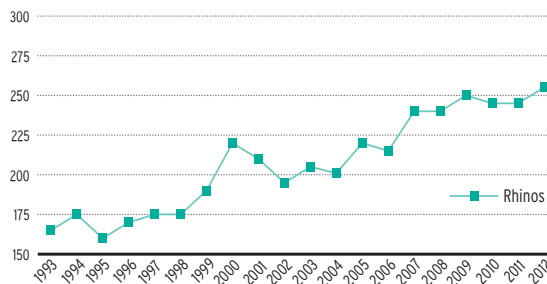
Breeding programmes for many species are used to manage populations the best way possible. Depending on different factors (status in the wild, status in captivity, and so forth) a decision is taken on what level of management is needed. The heaviest form of management is called an EEP (European Endangered Species Programme).

The White rhino EEP was established in 1992 and in 1995 the first husbandry guidelines were published. It was apparent that the species had a very sluggish breeding potential, and many animals had not bred at all. A large effort was taken to improve the breeding potential in zoos, including specialised reproduction research undertaken by the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife research (IZW). From this investigation, it became clear that 'not becoming pregnant' has huge impacts on the reproductive tract of a female rhino.

The reasons behind the difficulty in getting young adult rhinos to breed remained largely undetermined, despite the many investigative research projects. With the change of EEP coordinator, more pressure was put on those institutions with potential breeding animals. The initiative to exchange animals was slowly accepted by some institutions and young females were exchanged out of their maternal groups. It was also recommended that young males were transferred to bachelor groups, for which several institutions built new enclosures, and adult bulls were also exchanged to stimulate reproduction.

If female rhinos have not bred before a certain age, there is a high chance that they will never breed due to reproductive pathologies. In response, several institutions decided to import young animals from South Africa to 'kick-start' breeding, as at that time (1995–2009), the population in South Africa was flourishing. Import guidelines meant that these animals immediately fell under the EEP, without restrictions for recommendations in the future. This was done to build up sustainable breeding herds in the EEP and increase births to counteract the death of many of the 'old' original 1970s import animals.

Fig 1 Population growth of white rhinos in EEP programme



As coordinator of a studbook, the first step is to record all animals from participating zoos in a software programme called SPARKS (Single Population Animal Record Keeping System). It is important to have the full pedigree of all animals. The studbook records each animal's birthdate, parents' details, house name and transponder number, and all transfers are kept up to date throughout the year. This way, the coordinator knows what is happening with the population throughout the year.

To manage a population demographically and genetically, another software programme called PmX is used. In this programme, demographic and genetic data are recorded to allow the coordinator to best manage the population. Animals that have not contributed to breeding are genetically more important to breed than animals that have bred many times, and of course closely related animals should not breed together. By managing a population genetically, a sustainable population is built up.

With the new initiatives on exchanging animals, building new enclosures, and greater focus on nutrition, veterinary issues, behaviour, hormonal cycles and so forth, the White rhino EEP has entered a new decade that aims to achieve substantial population growth (see figure 1). With the horrific poaching in South Africa, there are great fears for the future of this species. All white rhino holders in the EEP are encouraged to support rhino conservation and educate their visitors about the situation, thereby benefiting the wild rhino populations.



RHINO KEEPERS OF SAFARIPARK BEEKSE BERGEN

Champions for conservation

Thank you to all of our fantastic corporate supporters who have helped support Save the Rhino's conservation work. Here are just a few of the many ways that companies have been – and can be – involved.

Josephine Gibson | Corporate Relations Manager



STEVE & ANN TOON

Corporate sponsorship

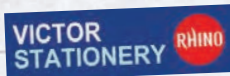


Davmark
DIARIES & SERVICES (PTY) LTD

Many of our corporate partners work closely with their customers by donating

a percentage of the sales of their products. Last year, Davmark, a South African printing company, agreed to donate to Save the Rhino for every calendar and diary sold. As part of our partnership, it also launched a special 'saving the rhino' calendar. 95% of its donations will support rhino conservation in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, South Africa, and 5% will support our core funds. www.davmark.co.za

Corporate donations



Some of our corporate partners donate directly to us, providing much-needed funds to the programmes we help support. Victor Stationery has a great range of 'Rhino Stationery' notepads and is a valuable long-standing donor to Save the Rhino. www.victorstationery.com/gb

Company match-funding

Some of our amazing marathon runners and cyclists have also maximized their fundraising efforts for their challenge events through the support of their employers who provide match funding.

Employee engagement



This has been an active year for many of our corporate supporters' employees. In addition to a quarterly donation, the team at **rhino's energy**

GmbH, the German-based global beverage supplier, spent the

autumn months training and fundraising for the Munich 10km run. They combined fun office activities and a Christmas card campaign to raise funds, supporting the Big Life Foundation in Kenya, and our Namibian 'Operation Wild and Free' appeal. www.rhinos-energy.com/en



RHINO'S ENERGY GMBH

Charity of the year



23red
DO.FEEL.THINK.

We have enjoyed working closely with our corporate partners who have selected Save the Rhino as their charity of the year. Creative

communications agency **23red** has chosen us as its charity partner for two years and is providing us with invaluable support and advice on fundraising campaigns on a pro-bono basis. www.23red.com



Pro-bono support



[FREE RANGE CREATIVE]

From fantastic designers to financial advice and free advertising, our corporate partners share their time and expertise to provide useful skills to support our work. **Red Hen** is a free-range creative marketing agency that specialises in providing marketing solutions to the charity sector. We are very grateful for Red Hen's help in designing our new corporate partnership pack. www.redhencreative.co.uk



THEYOR COTTRELL NEWTON PR

Rhino costume

In other exciting news, our long-term supporter and veteran rhino-costume runner, **Vinny O'Neill** (above), was a highlight of the new promotional campaign for sportswear brand **ASICS**. Our iconic rhino costumes can be an entertaining and unusual way for employees and customers to get involved with fundraising, whether in a race or an event.



How can you get involved?

There are lots of ways for your company to get involved, whether choosing Save the Rhino as your charity of the year, holding your own event or organising team fundraising. Our iconic rhino costumes could also bring an exciting addition to your fundraising efforts!

If you'd like to recommend Save the Rhino to your company, please get in touch with me at josephine@savetherhino.org