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Sebakwe News

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TAFARA and her mother TENDAI



Tafara was born on 18th February 2013 and she has grown well. Her name in Shona is WE are Happy and you can now adopt her. This is the first calf that, nine year old Tendai, has had and she has been a very good mother rearing her calf. The father, Tangarira has been very protective of his family. We are now waiting for our other young female rhino, Ronda to have a calf.

Protecting the Rhino

by David Strydom

Conservator for the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy

The Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy is 62 000 hectares, which is made up of 12 properties. Within these confines we look after our last 5 remaining Black Rhino. We protect them from all forms of poaching which includes snaring, poisoning and poachers who come in with weapons.

We were the only Conservancy with no Rhino poached for nearly 6 years until sadly in late December of 2013 our oldest bull Tsaka was poached and his horns chopped out, which was a very sad time for us all here.

We have a team of 10 Monitors who are all highly trained trackers and know the rhino's every movement. They can identify each rhino's track personally and from first light everyday they pick up their spoor and follow their tracks and stay with them for the entire day until last light. Our rhino can sometimes move up to 40 kilometres overnight and our Monitors will follow up on that spoor come rain or shine.



Nearly every one of these men has been charged by the rhino and either tossed up in the air or stamped on, including myself. Only last week another Monitor had to take evasive action to prevent him getting more seriously injured.

Unfortunately at times the rhino wander out of the Conservancy and go walk about into dangerous areas on our boundaries and it is a very difficult to turn them around and bring them home to safety. The surrounding villagers and miners know their value and it's just a phone call away to make a lot of money for themselves.

Our Monitors also come across wildlife poachers on the property and follow up and arrest them with the help of National Parks Rangers and the police wherever possible. On a daily basis whilst tracking the rhino they come across and uplift snares that are set to entrap our wildlife. So their duties include many other aspects and not only the main duty of protecting our valuable chargers.

One deterrent to the poaching of our rhino is to dehorn them and then send out a message to all the villagers, schools and community that our rhino now have no horns. We did this in 2010 which worked well and if we could raise the funds we would definitely dehorn them again, sooner rather than later.

Lately some of our rhino have been wandering away from the Conservancy where it can sometimes take days before we locate them and then days before we can persuade them to return home which is a time consuming exercise and is extremely stressful.

What we desperately want to do now is to try and raise money or get someone to sponsor the costs of a much needed rhino proof fence. This would keep them in an area where we can monitor them a lot more easily and it would reduce the risk of them wandering off and being poached. An area of 3 metres each side of the fence would be cleared and any incursion would then be quickly picked up and appropriate action taken. This fence would keep our rhino safer and our Monitors work more effective in keeping our rhino more secure.



Poisoning the horn has been discussed, but with dehorning our rhino that idea would fall away and from articles on this procedure nothing has been proved that this is a sound option. With regards to placing tracking devices in the horn, we still feel the better way is to dehorn our rhino, which also does away with these tracking devices which only last a certain time and are not foolproof. We have done this in the past and on following poachers who had killed one of our rhino the devices were not working as they had been in for a fair time.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we have done a lot of work educating and keeping the surrounding Community in the picture, as far as our rhino and wildlife are concerned. We get a lot of feedback from our neighbours especially in the areas where our Trustees and their team, help the community financially, with the building of schools and putting in boreholes. They are kept in the know about the importance of looking after, not only the rhino, but the wildlife as well, which at the end of the day is their inheritance to pass on to their children and future generations. With the help of these villagers on two occasions, rhino gangs were intercepted and arrests were made which was only done with good communications and the assistance of our local community and all the hard work that the Education Centre has been doing for so many years.

Our Monitors are a dedicated team of men who tirelessly work daily in all kinds of weather and conditions with never a complaint. Due to financial constraints we have put forward a proposal to not only adopt a Rhino but to also adopt a Monitor. The adoption would help pay his salary each month and we could then concentrate our limited funds into dehorning our rhino and putting up that very much needed fence to help secure their future. If you adopted one of our Monitors, we would be only too happy to send you his details and his history with us in the Conservancy and we will send you our Monthly Report to keep you informed. My e.mail is:- midlandsblackrhino@gmail.com