

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF KENYA'S RHINOS

A participant on the scene-of-the-crime course indicates a 'find' during a search practice



The Kenyan Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries (APLRS) is a members group of private and community wildlife conservancies, collaborating to protect Kenya's rhinos.

Jamie Gaymer | Wildlife and Security Manager, Ol Jogi

Funds raised from the Rhino Dog Squad appeal will benefit the canine units at four APLRS Sanctuaries



2015 has been a busy year for the APLRS. Here are a few of our highlights...

##Late 2014 – early 2015## A technical team, in which the APLRS was represented, visited all rhino conservation areas in Kenya with the view to analyse the status of *The Conservation and Management Strategy for the Black Rhino in Kenya (2012–16)*.

##February 2015## The team withdrew to consolidate their findings and structure a paper for further deliberation at the mid-term strategy review. Once the Kenyan National Rhino Steering Committee had scrutinised and approved the document, a consortium of rhino stakeholders were invited to a workshop where the paper was presented. Further deliberation, analysis and evaluation ensued and the National Rhino office now has a representative 'way-forward' with regard to strategy implementation for the remaining strategy term.

##February 2015## After much planning, we held an advanced rhino scene-of-the-crime training course with Rod Potter and Wayne Evans travelling to Kenya from South Africa to conduct the training. Trusted individuals

were carefully selected from various APLRS areas and a select group within the KWS were also invited. We also had the opportunity to present to various members of the local judiciary, an important sensitisation opportunity that will likely lead to a more collaborative and understanding working relationship going forward. It was also fitting that in 2015, the APLRS was invited to nominate representatives to attend a regional scene-of-the-crime and RhODIS (Rhino DNA Indexing System) workshop, organised through the KWS.

##March 2015## Our first 2015 APLRS meeting was held on 5 March followed by our AGM. As per protocol, office bearers resigned their seats and elections ensued. Of particular significance was that Martin Muluma did not offer himself for re-election as Chair and later resigned as Chief Conservation Officer

at Ol Pejeta Conservancy. Martin has been directly involved in rhino conservation in Kenya since 2000, and Chair of the APLRS from April 2011. Martin is now working as manager of the WWF-Kenya Rhino Programme. The APLRS would like to thank Martin for his commitment as Association Chair and we look forward to working closely with him in the future. I humbly accepted the role of Chair of the APLRS.

SRI's Communications Manager, Katherine Ellis and two filming volunteers Steven McGee-Callender and Tom Rowland visited four APLRS sanctuaries in preparation for SRI's Rhino Dog Squad Appeal, which is raising funds for the APLRS's canine units.

##June 2015## I was kindly hosted in the UK by SRI's Director Cathy Dean and her husband Kenneth Donaldson. I presented on behalf of the APLRS at the International Rhino Keepers' Association workshop in Chester. This coincided with Save the Rhino's 'Rhino Mayday' and was a great platform for exposing the importance and value generated by the use of dogs in rhino conservation, as well as launching the Rhino Dog Squad appeal.

##Ongoing## APLRS conservancies, particularly those in Laikipia district, have continued to employ the services of 51 Degrees to further their competitive edge against the poachers. Commander's cadres, refresher courses, and medic training have continued throughout the year with the respective armed teams honing their skills. This essential training has paid significant dividends and might be considered a contributing factor to the reduced Kenyan rhino poaching statistics in 2015 to date.

This year the APLRS has nearly completed the amendments and registration of our Association's constitution. We recognised that we had been



SRI filmed the canine units at four of the APLRS Sanctuaries, to fundraise for the Rhino Dog Squad appeal



Participants learn new skills at a scene-of-the-crime training course



operating by regulations imposed upon Association establishment in 1989 and some issues were inevitably obsolete. In order that we continue to operate as a professional entity as well as to give our supporters confidence, the APLRS realized that certain amendments were necessary.

We have also recently consolidated our bank accounts for ease of reference, operation and accountability. Our two primary accounts within the APLRS are the Intelligence Fund and the Emergency Fund. The Intelligence Fund compensates members for intelligence-based operational successes, according to some prerequisite parameters. This recognises the considerable sums being spent on proactive intelligence gathering in order to prevent poaching. However there have been few claims and, as a result, we have used some of the Intelligence Fund to compensate for a deficit in the Emergency Fund, which aims to compensate members 50% of costs associated with rhino emergency interventions needed to treat rhino injuries. These situations are often unbudgeted due to their unpredictable nature and put significant additional economic burden on sanctuaries. We are indebted to SRI amongst others for their tremendous support in this regard.

##Late 2018## The APLRS intends to recruit a secretariat/administrator position. This is a mandatory requirement of the National Rhino Strategy and itself, aims to facilitate implementation of the Strategy. The APLRS is a voluntary Association comprising representatives who already have significant responsibilities within their respective conservancies. This position is again supported by SRI and Chester Zoo, and we hope that it will have a significant impact.

The APLRS is a nationally recognised Association working in close collaboration with the KWS. We are represented at Conservancy, County and National Level and have important roles to play from operational, strategic and policy making perspectives. Without the continued assistance of our supporters, the APLRS would have a considerably higher mountain to climb and we thank all of those who have made contributions to our cause.



Grants

 Since November 2014, we have made grants totalling £33,619 to the APLRS, including £6,110 from Chester Zoo, £4,610 from our Operation Stop Poaching Now appeal and other miscellaneous donations and core funds.



Hope & sadness at Ol Jogi

Ol Jogi had a very positive start to 2015 with a black rhino born on 21 January. It was devastating therefore, when a month later, the same calf died of natural causes.

Jamie Gaymer | Wildlife & Security Manager, Ol Jogi

Drama at Ol Jogi was not far away. On 12 March one of our young white rhinos had her first calf but our euphoria was short-lived in a dramatic turn of events. On 13 March the dreaded call came in that the carcasses of two young white rhinos had been identified by monitoring rangers. Standard operating procedures were enacted whilst newly acquired scene-of-the-crime skills were put to the test in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Police Criminal Investigation Department.

Since this tragedy, we have experienced births from an additional four black rhino and three white rhino. It is due reward for all the tireless hard work that our men on the ground endeavour to do.

This year I've attended an advanced rhino scene-of-the-crime course, a rhino DNA course, two National Rhino Strategy Review workshops and also travelled to the UK to present on behalf of the APLRS. The Ol Jogi Kenya Police Reservist team has undergone commander's cadre training and medic courses with 51Degrees. The safety and well-being of our men is paramount.

We have received tremendous and heart-warming support from many individuals and institutions. The 'Running for Rangers' team have donated a large amount to procure uniforms for Ol Jogi security. An anonymous conservationist philanthropist also donated a considerable sum to alleviate our security vehicle running expenses. SRI have continued to be a pillar of support and have directly or indirectly, through the APLRS, supported several core projects from which Ol Jogi benefits.

Grants

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 Since November 2014, we have sent grants totalling £65,265 to Ol Jogi, thanks to an anonymous donor.