

ZIMBABWE TO DEHORN RHINOS TO CURB POACHING

Wildlife authorities in Zimbabwe have announced plans to dehorn 100 rhinos in state-run parks across the country in a bid to curb rampant poaching. Private game reserves will be given the option to either dehorn the 600 rhinos in those areas to boost security.

“Our target is to dehorn every single adult rhino and to ear-notch the young ones for record-keeping,” said Lisa Marabini, director of the conservation group Aware Trust Zimbabwe. “Poaching is a very serious problem in this country. This (dehorning) will act as a dissuasive measure and reduce the potential reward for poachers.”

At least 50 rhinos were killed in Zimbabwe last year, more than double the number of those slaughtered the previous year. However, the conservation group Save the Rhino has queried the wisdom of dehorning, saying that the procedure was risky and only a temporary measure to curb poaching. Save the Rhino pointed that the majority of dehorned rhinos in Zimbabwe’s Hwange National Park were killed just 12 to 18 months after the procedure.



GREVY'S ZEBRA CENSUS IN KENYA

Results of a Grevy's zebra census released in September estimates their population at 2,350 individuals across Laikipia, Meru, Samburu, Isiolo and Marsabit counties in Kenya. The census followed a meeting of citizens, scientists and conservationists who met in January and decided to count and collect photographic data on the world's rarest zebra, a species that almost exclusively is now found in the Laikipia ecosystem in northern Kenya. The Grevy's zebra -- easily distinguished by its thin, elegant stripes, striking frame and gait -- once freely roamed much of northern Kenya, southern Ethiopia and western Somalia.

The count, dubbed the Great Grevy's Rally, was spearheaded by the Grevy's Zebra Trust and Laikipia Wildlife Forum in collaborative effort between Lewa, Northern Rangelands Trust and the community conservancies, the Kenya Wildlife Service, Marwell Wildlife, Princeton University, county governments of Laikipia, Isiolo, Marsabit and Meru, and many others.