

# 15 YEARS

## A passion, not a sentence



On 1 October 2016, I celebrated having been Chief Executive Officer of Save the Rhino for 15 years. Such a lot has changed since I began working for this wonderful organisation.

**Cathy Dean** | Chief Executive Officer

**W**hen I joined, we had four staff and raised between £360,000 and £490,000 a year. Now, we have seven staff, and raised £1,700,000 in 2015–16. In our first decade – we were formally registered as a charity in 1994 – we focused almost exclusively on the black rhino; now we support all five species of rhino. Back then, black rhinos were slowly increasing in number, after their all-time low of 2,100 animals in 1994. The rhino world's biggest problem in the first few years of the 21st century was finding enough space in which to put the growing population. If only that were the most difficult thing now: the poaching crisis is threatening all those decades of patient conservation work.

As I've just explained to some new members of my team, I think there have been several significant milestones since I joined the rhinos. In 2002, our entire Board of Trustees, together with our Founder Director, our then-Events Manager and a couple of willing supporters, ran the Marathon des Sables. In rhino costume, of course. They raised an extraordinary £125,000 or so, which gave us the freedom, for the first time, to expand our support to Asian rhino species.

In 2005, we successfully pitched to the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria to deliver its annual conservation campaign, which focused on rhinos in 2005–06. We budgeted to raise €350,000; we raised €660,000. Not only did we form partnerships with many zoos that continue to grow over the years, we were also able to invite field programmes throughout Africa and Asia to apply for funding. Some of the successful beneficiaries, including Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park and the North Luangwa Conservation Project, have since become long-term partners.

PAIGNTON ZOO  
In 2006, partly as a result of the EAZA Rhino Campaign,

I was invited to attend the African Rhino Specialist Group meeting, the first time for somebody from Save the Rhino. The opportunity to meet experts from field programmes, other NGOs, academic institutions and range state governments has been hugely beneficial for our understanding of, and engagement with, rhino conservation issues.

In 2012, we made our first grant towards tackling the illegal demand for rhino horn in Viet Nam. Our Managing Director Susie Offord-Woolley leads on this side, building excellent working relationships with colleagues in TRAFFIC in Viet Nam and Education for Nature-Vietnam, and securing a major grant from the UK government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund for behaviour-change campaigns.

I am very lucky to have a wonderful team here at Save the Rhino. Although there are only seven of us, we feel like a much bigger family, with former staff staying in close touch, our friends at other NGOs and zoos, and the field programme staff we have got to know so well over the years. I can't imagine ever wanting to leave.

Thanks to all of you for your support.

Bottom: Painted fibreglass model rhinos were auctioned off in November 2016 by Paignton Zoo to raise funds for Sumatran and Javan rhino conservation



**Save the Rhino International** is a UK-registered charity which raises funds and awareness for the world's five rhino species. We work with global project partners to support 17 long-term rhino conservation programmes in Africa and Asia

