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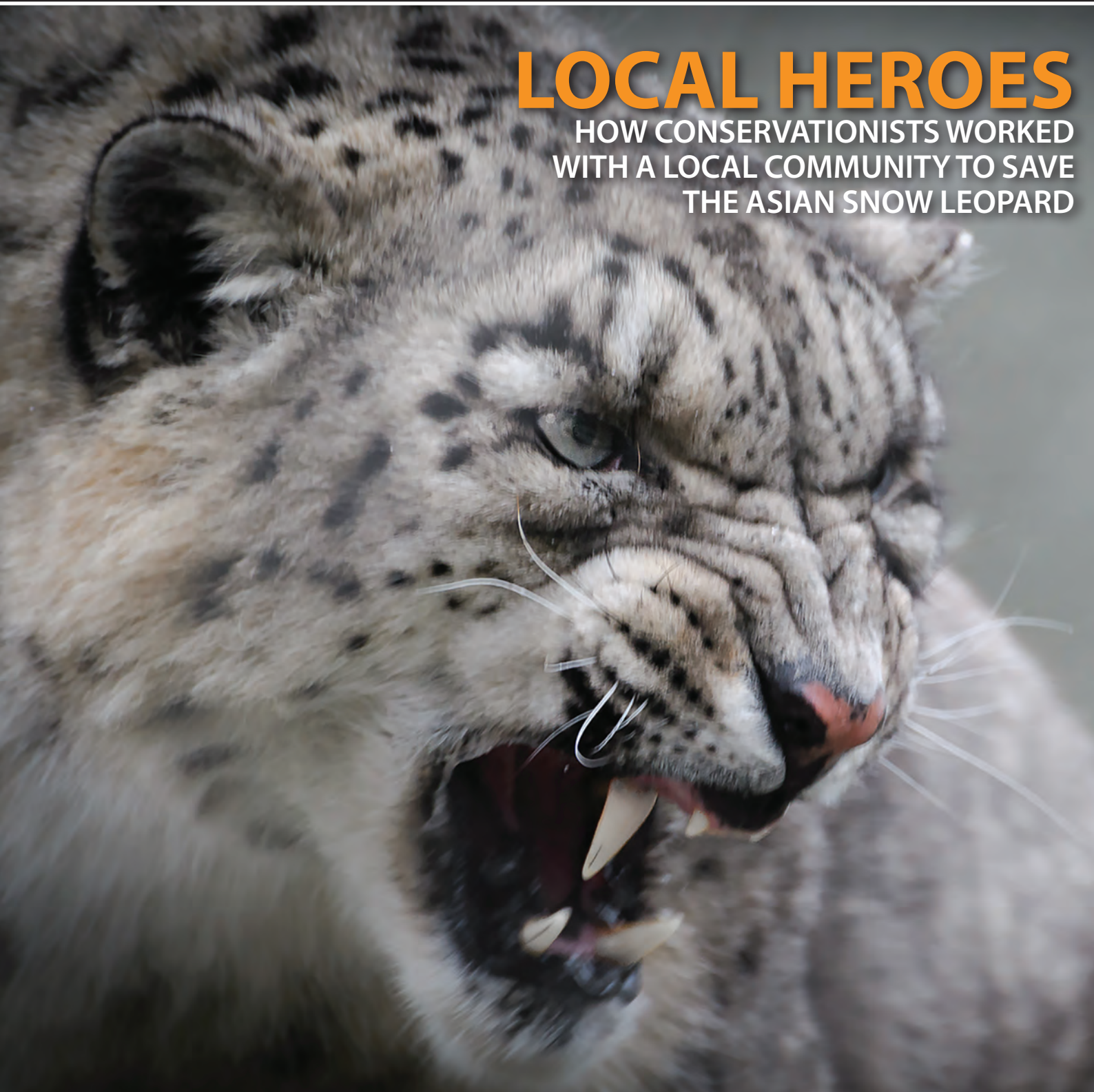
# ZOOQUARIA

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## LOCAL HEROES

HOW CONSERVATIONISTS WORKED  
WITH A LOCAL COMMUNITY TO SAVE  
THE ASIAN SNOW LEOPARD



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THE NEW EXHIBIT THAT IS HELPING TO PROTECT  
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## How to save the rhino

THE NEW RHINOCEROS TAG HOPES TO COORDINATE CONSERVATION EFFORTS ACROSS THE WORLD TO IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE MOST THREATENED RHINO SPECIES

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Within EAZA, the rhinoceros is a well-known and well-liked species that receives quite a lot of attention. The EAZA Rhinoceros TAG is a good example of the benefits of the One Plan approach to conservation, with its connections to the IUCN SSC African/Asian Specialist Groups and conservation NGOs such as Save the Rhino and International Rhino Foundation. All of these have fed into the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG Regional Collection Plan, which was published in January 2019 and is available on the EAZA Member Area. The three existing population management programmes are well established – so what new things can a new Regional Collection Plan bring?

### BLACK RHINOCEROS

This is an excellent example of a population with a direct conservation role. Through a Memorandum of Understanding between EAZA, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and the Akagera Management Company (AMC), individuals from the EAZA population are going to be supplementing the current population of eastern black rhinoceros (*Diceros*

*bicornis michaeli*) in Akagera National Park (Rwanda) with unrelated eastern black rhinoceros, which has the potential to improve the overall genetic diversity. Furthermore, it is believed that at least some of the founders of the European population came from that region of Africa and could hold some genetic diversity that is now completely unrepresented in any African population.

### WHITE RHINOCEROS

There are quite a few individuals present in range countries with private holders. However, due to increasing poaching and the consequential

increase in the cost of protecting the rhino, there is a risk that private owners will soon lose interest. The EAZA population is in such good condition that it could function as an insurance population in the future, especially as global management is developed further. The EEP wants to collaborate as much as possible to prevent the complete extinction of the northern white rhinoceros subspecies (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*). The EEP and TAG are currently supporting a collaborative project that combines Assisted Reproductive Technologies to aid population management with improvement of IVF technologies



for the northern white rhinoceros by assigning specific southern white rhino females as candidates through this EEP. The balance between white rhino and black rhino population numbers will need to be closely monitored to safeguard the established roles of the programmes for both African species.

**GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS**

The threats to this species (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) are still very much present and can result in a rapid decrease in numbers, especially for isolated populations. As there is no coordinated programme within the origin region itself, the EAZA population can

function as an insurance population. Additionally, there are several indirect conservation roles that have been identified, which makes it essential for the species to be managed within the EEP framework. For this programme, collaboration with other regions will be further explored to help fulfil the insurance role in a more robust manner.

And what about the remaining rhinoceros species? It was decided that separate new EEPs would not be established for the other African subspecies, nor for the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) or Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). This seems logical, as we do not keep these species within our region.

However, the new EAZA Population Management Structure aims to determine where EAZA can make a difference for a species, using our collective knowledge and experience. When specific expertise or advice is needed at a later stage for Sumatran rhinoceros or Javan rhinoceros, for instance, the TAG would be open to providing this. At this stage, however, there will be no need to do this within the EEP framework. Meanwhile, the TAG does want to explore potential collaborations with other zoo associations and established partners on advocacy work for positive actions for this species by the Indonesian government.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

The TAG urges all rhinoceros holders to:

- Follow recommendations for targeted fundraising from established conservation partners to ensure funds are focused and best used in the field. EAZA Members are encouraged to commit to long-term support.
- Use education materials on topics provided by our partners.
- Collect extra blood, tissue and serum samples for the EAZA Biobank whenever an animal is sedated.

This biobank aims to be a primary resource for genetically supporting population management and conservation research.

- Have their individuals registered in the RhODIS (Rhino DNA Index System) database. Profiling rhinoceros horns contributes to the identification of poaching sources and networks, fine-tuning the identification methods used as well as adding to the safety of EAZA population.

Protocols are available on the EAZA Member Area.

