



15

*Fundraising for rhinoceros conservation  
by J.C. du Toit*

## CHAPTER 15

# Fundraising for rhinoceros conservation – J.G. du Toit

There are more than 270 *fundraising organizations* in the aid of rhinoceros conservation: nearly one organization for every three rhinoceroses killed every year. The frightening aspect is that in the current state of poaching, funds are diluted and donor fatigue is created in the process. Everyone against rhinoceros poaching is united by a common goal, *to protect and save our rhinoceros species*. The main problem is that there is not a structured and coordinated approach between different organizations to achieve the main goal; successful protection of the species. Panic is the main reason for this phenomenon. Therefore everyone jumps in proactively without coordination of existing programs knowing of duplication in the process. This chaotic situation should be taken charge of and prioritizing the different actions and liaise with the different parties to work in a coordinated way. More egos are hurt in the process than rhinoceroses get killed. No entity is going to 'save the rhino' on its own – it is a group effort.

The types of projects funded can be classified as follows: the pro-active part is to put systems in place that are once-off but will decrease poaching, example to apply databases to the industry, educate the public and law-enforcement officers. Secondly the reactive part is more expensive and is based on the training of field rangers to combat the poachers in the field. Therefore expensive equipment and labour is necessary to execute this part.

### What must the donor look for when he/she wants to donate money for conserving rhinoceroses?

- Make sure that the organization is a registered section 21 company with a fundraising number. If not, half of the money will be paid to taxes.
- Make sure that a well-defined project, with a budget, is identified.
- Look at the fund raiser's track record.
- Give money to proactive rather than reactive projects.

### What makes fundraising successful?

Fundraising that is based on emotions use photographs to cause a panic among the public. Give money where you can participate or receive something concrete, such as a poster. Money spent on projects with a positive outcome and where good feedback is given by the fund raisers will encourage the philanthropic public to give even more. Smaller organizations spent less money on administration and the rhinoceros will benefit more.

### Methods of fundraising

*Peer to peer:* Big companies give money to big structured fundraising organizations such as EWT, WWF and WESSA.

*Private communication:* Letters, e-mails and phone calls. People are usually very willing to donate money for the conservation of wildlife, but are forgetful. Make the process user-friendly.

*Publicity:* Use local papers or company newsletters to run success stories on your projects. Add your contact details and / or a link to your online fundraising page.

*Online fundraising:* This is the easiest and quickest way for people to sponsor you. You can now raise your sponsorship money without even leaving your chair. No more dealing with cash or cheques, no more hassling friends and family. All you do is create your own internet sponsorship page, email it to all your friends and get them to donate online with a credit or debit card. You can add the URL to the bottom of all your emails, and it is an easy way to monitor the amount you have raised. Plus, online donations from UK taxpayers are automatically Gift Aided, and secure servers mean all card information is totally safe. There are two options.

## Examples of projects run by different fundraising groups

### SA Veterinary Foundation



#### *Educational Books*

The Veterinary Foundation has for the last two years been proactively involved in rhinoceros conservation projects. Two booklets have been published on rhinoceros management and capture; they are available for free downloading from their website. ([http://www.savf.org.za/Book\\_Home.aspx](http://www.savf.org.za/Book_Home.aspx)).

#### *Veterinarian donates ZAR 50 000 to the Frik du Preez Rhinoceros Fund*

Additionally the abuse of game capture drugs in the spate of rhinoceros killings the last two years, has resulted in two initiatives to assist government departments in combating the problem. The first step is setting up an electronic scheduled medicines register on which veterinarians in future will be able to report their game capture drug purchases. Data recorded will be the dosage used, where it was used and for what animal it was used. This register will only be accessible to the veterinarian, for their use. At the end of each year the collective information will be made available to the Department of Health. Additionally major drug suppliers like Novartis and Wildpharm have indicated that they will require this database to be completed every three months before again supplying game capture drugs to veterinarians. The second problem addressed is to determine which drugs are used in rhinoceros poaching. The SA Police Service laboratories cannot do this work but the Jockey Club is able to forensically analyse carcass specimens to determine which drugs were used. The Foundation had raised funds for the standardization of these tests. Dr. Cobus Raath, a veterinarian well known in the wildlife industry, has made a very generous donation of R50 000 to the Rhino Conservation Fund to assist in making these forensic tests possible. ([http://www.savf.org.za/Pro\\_Rhino.aspx](http://www.savf.org.za/Pro_Rhino.aspx)).



*Dr. Cobus Raath with baby rhinoceros calf.*

### *Databases*

The project was done in conjunction with SA Breweries (Refer to Chapter 8).

### **Veterinary Students**

A group of veterinary students hosted the *Run4Rhinos* event at the L.C. de Villiers sports grounds in Pretoria on Saturday, 28 July 2012. The aim was to raise awareness and funds for the RhODIS™ project of the Faculty of Veterinary Science's Veterinary Genetics Laboratory (VGL), managed by Dr. Cindy Harper. In order to help with the plight of the rhinoceros, the laboratory collects DNA samples of each individual rhinoceros across the country to create a database using the unique DNA profile of the individuals. So far, the database has grown to include over 3500 black and white rhinoceroses from South Africa in just over a year.

An official 5 km and 10 km fun run/walk formed part of the event that took place at the LC de Villiers sports grounds of the University of Pretoria, while a life-sized fibre glass rhinoceros with a slot hole – built with financial assistance of Wildlife Pharmaceuticals – will be officially introduced as the 'piggy-bank' for the project.

About R50 000 was raised by *Run4Rhinos* and donated to the RhODIS™ programme which is run by the VGL at the Onderstepoort Campus of the University of Pretoria. It costs about R600 for each rhinoceros to be added to the database (excluding darting and sample

collection costs). The goal of the VGL, is to include all rhinoceroses on the system. This will deter poachers and assist in forensic prosecutions.



*The fun-run organized by students from Onderstepoort*

### StopRhinoPoaching.com

StopRhinoPoaching.com was launched in July 2010 as an independent web-based platform, dedicated to raise awareness and support for the war against rhinoceros poaching. Although independent, StopRhinoPoaching.com enjoys a close working relationship with many recognised role players, their opinion and experience proving invaluable when establishing projects and allocating funds. Support for rhinoceroses in Provincial Parks is the primary objective and as such, the majority of our resources are channelled in this direction.

#### *Mission*

We actively pursue this mission in the following ways:

- By seeking out, identifying, initiating and coordinating supportive projects for the safety of larger rhinoceros populations.
- By supporting, wherever possible, existing rhinoceros protection projects which fulfil our necessary qualifying criteria.
- By drawing on the input and guidance of respected rhinoceros specialists and colleagues, while at all times working within the guidelines of the National Needs Analysis.
- By pursuing opportunities, encouraging like-minded sponsoring partnerships and broadening our areas of impact for the greater good of South Africa's rhinoceroses.

### *Aims and objectives*

- To encourage continued public awareness and support for rhinoceroses in South Africa.
- To convey current, factual content with regard to rhinoceros poaching. The Home Page will reflect the latest available poaching figure and the ticker-tape utilized to communicate fresh developments as they are released.
- To act as an online reporting system for rhinoceros poaching-related activities. Intelligence and tip-off emails are routed directly to the SAPS Endangered Species Desk via the online form.
- To offer an online communications platform to all credible stakeholders, available via secure login to all rhinoceros owners in South Africa. The Rhino Owners Login page contains important documentation specifically for rhinoceros owners.
- To act as an online information-gathering system that supplements existing databases. Online forms include a helicopter registration for pilots/aircraft owners and a poaching incident submission form for rhinoceros owners.
- To rally financial backing from both corporate and private donors, the proceeds of which will be put towards rhinoceros protection in South Africa, with special focus on protecting rhinoceroses in Provincial Reserves. The Home Page will display the latest total amount donated to StopRhinoPoaching.com, and in the interests of transparency, all funding allocations will be available to view on the website. For security reasons the reserve name or benefactors' names may sometimes be withheld.

