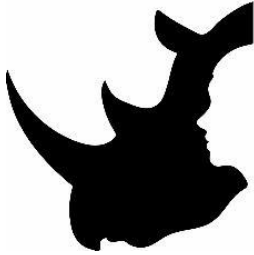


It's a NEW YEAR (finally!), and the newest edition of the Crash

1 message

IRKA <internationalrhinokeeperassoc@gmail.com>
 Reply-To: internationalrhinokeeperassoc@gmail.com
 To: rhinorrc@gmail.com

31 December 2020 at 13:45



The Crash

Decemeber 2020 "New Year's Edition"

The IRKA newsletter: the leading network connecting rhino keepers.

President's Perspective

Even though this year has been very difficult for many of us, we were able to overcome many challenges that were thrown our way. We were faced with adversity and we learned how to adapt and embrace the challenges. The IRKA community has shown many ways on how we were able to come together and conquer those challenges during this unprecedented year. The 2020 Rhino Conservation Campaign is one example on how we were able to beat many odds and still raise thousands of dollars that will benefit the Rhino Protection Units in Indonesia. As we all know, fundraising this year has been very difficult, but with the leadership of Chris Bobko, IRKA's Vice President, and Angie Snowie, IRKA BOD member, we are able to continue our support for Indonesian rhino conservation, and more specifically the Sumatran Rhino Rescue. I can't thank everyone enough for purchasing an IRKA mask and bidding on items during our online auction to make this donation possible. With the support of the IRKA membership and our Conservation Partners, we were able to donate another \$8,600 to Cathy Dryer, conservation manager at Addo Elephant National Park, in support of a black rhino project. Cathy and her team will be making a genetic profile of the small black rhino population living with AENP. I would like to encourage you to click the link provided about Cathy to learn about the amazing conservation work she has been able to accomplish. Cathy truly is a rhino warrior and the IRKA couldn't be more proud to support her work. Back in October new proposed bylaws were sent out to the professional members to vote on. After the 2 week voting period, the IRKA professional membership voted in favor of the proposed bylaws. The new bylaws will be published on our website for everyone to view. The biggest change to the bylaws were the membership categories. If you have any questions in regards to the new bylaws or on which membership category you belong to, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of the board members.



Lisa Henderson Brott, from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, has started up the new IRKA Keeper Information Exchange System to assist our professional members connect with others in the field and share the most modern practices of rhino management. I would like to thank Lisa for taking the initiative to start this program and continue the mission of the IRKA.

Since the IRKA will not be able to hold a Rhino Keeper Workshop in 2021 due to the effects of the current global pandemic, the IRKA Board of Directors started up a new webinar series to help rhino professionals continue to learn and connect. We held the first Zoom webinar this past October, and we plan to hold future webinars on a quarterly basis. The next webinar will feature the conservation work being done with the Northern White Rhino. Dr. Chris Tubbs, IRKA board member and treasurer, from the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, will be leading this discussion. We will be announcing the next webinar date on our social media pages, website, and further issues of the CRASH.

Jack Gradidge, from Folly Farm Zoo in Wales UK, is part of a 4 person team that began Dogs4Wildlife which breeds and trains dogs for anti-poaching techniques. It is inspiring to read about how Jack plays an important role in that process and how he is directly involved in getting these anti-poaching dogs ready for the field. It is proven that these dogs have been very successful in several aspects of protecting rhinos out in the wild. It is not an easy task to train these dogs to have the abilities

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to take on those abilities, so I give Jack and the rest of his team much credit for that achievement.

I hope everyone has a happy, safe, and healthy New Year!

-Joe



It is with great regret that the International Rhino Keeper Association needs to announce the 2021 Rhino Keeper Workshop at FOTA Wildlife Park is **CANCELLED**.

Thank you!

During these unprecedented times the Board of Directors decided to postpone further plans with FOTA to move forward with the workshop in the spring of 2021. With so many uncertainties about the future of travel, public gatherings, and financial support it feels inappropriate to ask anyone to invest their efforts into such an unknown.

We greatly appreciate all the work and enthusiasm FOTA has put into this so far!

IRKA hopes to enjoy their Irish hospitality when the world returns to some form of new normal.

Members' voting results



In mid-October we ask membership to vote on changes to the IRKA bylaws in an effort to create categories that accurately represent our growing and changing association of members. With over 95% in favor, the Supporting Professional category has been merged with all professionals, and a retired professional category was created. Thank you to everyone who participated in voting!

Section 1. "Member" shall mean those persons or entities entitled to membership based on the following categories and subject to the qualifications outlined in ARTICLE IV.

- a. **Professional:** Professional Members shall be persons who have actively participated and are employed to work in training, husbandry, research, and/or management of any of the rhinoceros species within the last 4 years. Professional Members shall have the right to vote, hold elective office, chair, serve on committees, and are eligible to receive scholarships.
- b. **Associate:** Associate Members shall be persons interested in the conservation of any of the five species of rhinoceros. Associate Members may serve on select committees, but shall not have the right to vote, hold elective offices or chair committees.
- c. **Retired Professional:** Retired Professional shall be persons who have been IRKA Professional members in good standing for a period of 5 years or more, and have actively participated and worked in training, husbandry, research, and/or management of any species of rhinos for at least 10 years. Retired professionals may vote, chair and serve on select committees. They are not eligible for scholarships, but will receive Professional rate at the RKW and are able to join the behind-the-scenes tours at RKW, but shall not have the right to hold elective office.
- d. **Conservation Partner:** Conservation Partners shall be a conservation organization, or zoological institution, which supports rhinoceros conservation in accordance with the objectives and purposes of the IRKA.
- e. **Conservation Sponsor:** Conservation Sponsors shall be any corporation that does not qualify for Conservation Partner Membership, yet supports rhinoceros conservation in accordance with the objectives and purposes of the IRKA.
- f. **Voting Members:** Voting Members shall refer to Professional and Retired Members

IRKA 2020 Rhino Conservation Fundraising Campaign:

IRKA is working in conjunction with the International Rhino Foundation to support the Sumatran Rhino Rescue Program and the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary keepers. This support will be with direct monetary donations and the professional development of the keepers through shared knowledge. This will help set the SRS keepers up for success as they care for one of the most critically endangered large mammals on the planet. As rhino keepers, we could not think of a better way to involve ourselves, than to save a species that is on the very brink of extinction with less than 80 individuals left on earth.

The IRKA Board of Directors decided that 100% of the funds raised from our 2020 Rhino Fundraising Campaign will go to support the amazing men and women who ensure the safety of the most critically endangered rhinos on the planet, the incredible Indonesian Rhino Protection Units (RPU's)

We held 2 fundraising events in September to celebrate World Rhino Day 2020. The first event was a three day live auction which had 24 amazing rhino themed items to bid on, and the second campaign was the sale of a limited edition IRKA face mask featuring a custom design of a Sumatran rhino and a Black rhino.



Over 200 people will be wearing our IRKA custom masks, as they were purchased worldwide! People from the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Hungary and Indonesia will all be sporting our rhino masks!

To everyone who bid on an item, purchased a mask, or helped support the IRKA by sharing our posts worldwide, we THANK YOU!

The live auction raised \$1906.84 and the mask sales raised \$2156.26 for a total donation of \$4063.10!! The IRKA Executive felt IRKA would be able to chip in the \$36.90 needed to round up the total to an even \$4100.00 to send to the Indonesian RPU's, and this amount in Indonesia will go a very long way. Along with the funds, IRKA will be sending 30 of the custom print masks to the staff of the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary by the end of the year. We will be able to help keep this extremely hard working staff safe and stylish!!

We are really proud of our membership for stepping up and helping out during these extraordinary times we are finding ourselves living in. Fundraising is tough in normal situations, and even harder during a pandemic, and we are very excited to be able to donate this sum to the RPU's via the International Rhino Foundation. THANK YOU for your outstanding support!

If you would like to learn more about how our donations are being used, click below:

[IRF Sumatran Reforestation Report](#)

[NEW KIES!](#)
[Keeper Information Exchange System](#)

[Hello Rhino Enthusiasts!](#)

We are introducing an exciting **new** program for the membership called KIES, the Keeper Information Exchange System. KIES enables members to network and communicate without the use of social media

for the sole purpose of rhino care management. We have put a live Google document together that will be updated by members and conservation partners who would like to have the opportunity to exchange information. In filling out your name, institution, email, and area of expertise with the species of rhino(s) you have worked with you are agreeing to be contacted by other members who may have questions for your areas of knowledge! I have contacted a few keepers already and inputted their information to the shared document, but we ask that you take a look and continue to fill out your area of expertise if you would like to participate. Some professionals will have points of contact. For example, Joe Hauser will be the point person for Dr. Michael Lowder, equine and exotic animal dentist, and; Robyn Johnson will be the contact person for the nutritionist at DAK. Feel to contact individuals on the list via emails with questions you may have! Clarice (Reese) Pfalzer and I will be overseeing our KIES program so please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need to get in touch with someone specific. We look forward to this new program and hope all of you will utilize KIES as we continue to share our knowledge and learn together!

[KIES sign in](#)

IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE...



In October, The IRKA BOD voted to fund the research efforts of **Cathy Dreyer** (<https://www.tuskawards.com/cathy-dreyer/>) who is the Conservation Manager at **Addo Elephant National Park (ANEP)**.

AENP is home to a small, but growing, Key 1 population of southwestern black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) in South Africa. Given the small population size at AENP, Cathy and her Black Rhino Monitoring Team are intimately familiar with each rhino in their population are working to genetically profile each individual to better inform management through various population viability analyses. In addition, IRKA's \$8600 donation will allow archived samples and samples collected from deceased individuals to be sequenced to provide a comprehensive picture of the structure of AENP's critically important black rhino population.



[Meet the Babies of 2020](#)

There were **22** rhino calves born in 2020 and we think that is something to celebrate! We know this year has be wrought with hardships and all our members continued striving to bring the very best care and welfare for our rhinos. We wanted to bring you some joy of cuteness.

Behold: the "Calves of 2020" Centerfold



Zoo Tampa
stock



North Carolina Zoo
photo: Moriah Angott



Folly Farm Zoo
photo: Jack Gradidge



Lion Country safari
photo: Dave Backus



Dublin Zoo
photo: Kenneth Mackey



Denver Zoo
photo: Caitlin Jacokes



North Carolina Zoo
photo: Moriah Angott



San Diego Global
photo: Matt Gelvin



San Diego Global
photo: Matt Gelvin



San Diego Global
photo: Matt Gelvin



Monarto Zoo
photo: Mark Mills



San Diego Global
photo: Weston Popichak



Rotterdam Zoo
photo: Melle Van Iperen



Cincinnati Zoo
photo: Kathy Newton



San Diego Global
photo: Matt Gelvin



Zoo Tampa
stock



Oklahoma City Zoo
photo: Katie Van Sigel



Fresno Chaffee Zoo
photo: Heather Davis



Disney's Animal Kingdom stock



The Wilds
photo: Cody Cseplo



The Wilds
photo: Cody Cseplo



The Wilds
photo: Cody Cseplo

An impressive crash of calves!

NEW! IRKA ZOOM Forums



Due to the need for social distancing and continued travel restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Rhino Keeper Association has been unable to support our favorite activities. We thrive as an organization when we are able to bring keepers together to share ideas and create best practices for the rhinos in our care. The cornerstone of our work is providing professional development to our members, whether through workshops, work exchanges, or training and enrichment regional seminars.

WE MISS SEEING ALL OF YOUR FACES!

While we cannot change the new normal, we are looking for new ways to bring our membership together. In mid-October IRKA hosted our first webinar through Zoom. An email was sent out to all and 25 folks registered to spend an evening getting to know the Board of Directors and the mission of IRKA.

Thank you to all who participated!

These Zoom webinars will be held quarterly and feature topics or roundtable discussions. The aim is to include everyone in the conversations so we can help each other through challenging behaviors, health issues, or husbandry changes. Some sessions might give new ideas for enrichment while others may improve talking points when speaking with guests about your zoo's conservation message.

Your skill set may grow one webinar, and the next you will be giving the advice to help another keeper.

It is a way for us to continue to connect and learn together.

The next webinar will be held in January featuring conservation efforts and strides in assisted reproduction for

the Northern White Rhinos.

Chris Tubbs, from San Diego Global, will be leading the conversation and discussing the work of the Rhino Recovery Center at the San Diego Safari Park.

If you have suggestions for future topics please let [Robyn](#), [Cassy](#), or [Reese](#) know.

The courageous canines protecting rhinos in the line of fire

Four passionate individuals wanting to step up and use their expertise for good, established Dogs4Wildlife in the UK in 2019. We are currently formed of four volunteer directors, myself, Jack Gradidge, full time black rhino keeper at the Folly Farm Zoo in Wales, UK. Experienced dog trainers Jacqui Law and Darren Priddle of Extremus Dogs Training, Wales, UK and reserve manager Reilly Travers of Imire Rhino and Wildlife Conservation, Zimbabwe.



Our mission is to provide quality, highly trained dogs and specialist ranger training for the development of anti-poaching canine units to protect wildlife across Africa. We aim to support, inspire and motivate the next generation of wildlife protectors through the facilitation of accessible and engaging education and community projects.



Before Dogs4Wildlife was formed, Jacqui and Darren supplied nine dogs to other charities and organisations. These dogs are still fully operational in a number of rhino rich reserves, including: Save Valley Conservancy, Ol Pejeta, Mkomazi and Chuilixi Conservancy. All these dogs were trained in the UK and most of them took a visit to the local zoo, Folly Farm, to habituate to the animals they would later experience and protect. So far, Dogs4Wildlife has supplied two dogs; Murwi, at Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservation, Zimbabwe and Bane at the Renosterpan Reserve, South Africa.

We aim to produce quality dogs, rather than a large quantity. A dog that is able to be trained to reach the highest of its abilities has the chance to be the equivalent of ten rangers. The breed of dog is important, we use Belgian or Dutch Shepherds, which we find, have the adaptability and innate characteristics the role of an anti-poaching dog requires. Their abilities are simply outstanding, our dogs can track a poachers scent up to 20km at a time and are capable of running up to 30mph, they can easily outrun a suspect. There is a saying in Africa 'if you win the night, you win the war; these dogs can track at night with their super senses and win that poachers moon. These breeds are dual purpose, capable of tracking as well as apprehension, which is always a last resort if the suspect resists arrest.



We currently breed all the dogs in-house in the UK. We often get asked why we do this, but we believe the standard of dog we supply outweighs the shipping costs. A quality dog begins with breeding from healthy, proven and purposeful bloodlines we have access to in the UK. Our professional trainers are experts in selecting the best puppy from the litter that shows the highest aptitude for the operational life they will have. It also gives us

the ability to imprint the right foundations to ensure the selected dog has the best possible start to its life. It has so far brought many successes in the field and is a proven formula, seeing up to 75% decrease in poaching.

As we all know, community engagement is imperative for ensuring best results in conservation. Therefore, our dogs also play their part in the wider community. Murwi, located in Zimbabwe, frequently patrols the townships surrounding the Imire reserve, preventing criminal activities such as robbery. The local people learn to respect the dogs and see them as a great asset.



In November of this year, we were given permission to deploy Belgian Shepherd, Bane to South Africa. The 11,000-hectare Renosterpan Reserve in Limpopo, is inhabited by Southern white rhino, leopard, cheetah, wild dog and a healthy population of ungulate species. Bane's first six weeks at the reserve will be relaxed to allow him to fully acclimatise to the new environment and form a strong relationship with new handlers. A good handler is another crucial element and we always ensure that suitable handlers are chosen and taught the basics before the dog is deployed. Many rangers we work with have never worked with a dog of this calibre before, so it is imperative we teach them how best to work with the dog to ensure a positive outcome. Bane is doing exceptionally well in his first few weeks and with plenty of time to bond, he should become part of the ranger family in no time.

The demand for our work is certainly increasing as people start to realise the capabilities of these canines. We now have a waiting list for dogs, reserves desperate to protect their rhino. Our biggest hurdle is financial support. We are gradually developing a dedicated network of passionate supporters and fundraisers, of whom we are incredibly grateful. The COVID 19 pandemic has affected our fundraising progress; we have been unable to host major events due to local and national restrictions. If you think you would be able to offer your support, whether that be financial support or simply advice or idea sharing, we would love to hear from you. We also offer anyone the

opportunity to collaborate further and fully sponsor a dog. This means you or your organisation have naming rights and full contact with us to follow the process from puppy to protector.

Our latest project involves collaboration with US non-profit, Soldiers for Wildlife. Four dogs are currently being trained to form a brand-new canine unit at the Kyalala Conservancy in the heart of the most poached region of Zambia, with an area that expands over 70,000 hectares.

We are all great admirers of rhino and we are so proud that we are able to offer some hope to reserves across the African continent. Our hopes for the future are that we will be in a financial position to set up kennels in Africa and provide quality handler training courses and qualifications, enhancing the preservation of our iconic species.

To learn more about the Dogs4Wildlife, visit info@dogs4wildlife.org

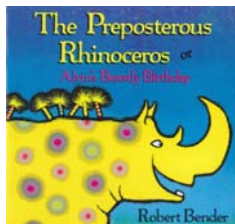
Jack Gradidge
Folly Farm Zoo



Book Review

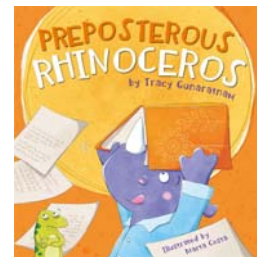
The Preposterous Rhinoceros

Two for one title



In *The Preposterous Rhinoceros (or Alvin's Beastly Birthday...)* by Robert Bender While Alvin mopes in his room because he thinks everyone's forgotten his birthday, strange things seem to be going on right outside the window. An assortment of wild, wacky beasts are parading by--a pig wearing a wig, a goat in a polka-dotted coat. Created with animator's tools, the fanciful illustrations burst with luminous color.

In Tracy Gunaratnum's *Preposterous Rhinoceros*, King Lion loses his voice and cannot read the bedtime story. Rhinoceros volunteers to take over storytime, but doesn't understand how to use a book and looks for advice from friends. Colorful, whimsical illustrations accompany from **Marta Costa**.



Did you know the IRKA has a blog?!!

We have recently added a blog spot on our website.

Stay up-to-date with the latest new from all our members, including special births, professional development opportunities, workshop details and more.

Sign up below to follow our blog!

BLOG

IRKA Membership Dues Update:

Over the last several months, we have seen unprecedented times in our country and across the world with Covid-19. All of our zoological institutions have been affected during this time with closures, lay-offs and just uncertainty facing a global pandemic. At this point in time, most of us are just now starting to re-open our facilities once again, but it looks much different than at the start of 2020. The IRKA BOD directors would like to help ease some of the stress and burden that we all have faced by waving all of our membership dues until the first of 2021. This includes all levels of membership and our conservation partners. It is our true hope that 2021 will bring peace, hope and of course RHINOS to each and every one of IRKA's outstanding members! We also extend our best wishes as our facilities re-open to our guests across the country and world. Remember we are essential, so stay safe out there everyone!!

MEMBERSHIP DUES WILL RESUME IN JANUARY!

Christine Bobko
Vice President IRKA



Correspondences

Births:

Colchester Zoo --- Male SWR
Zoo Tampa --- Male GOH "Gronk"
Cincinnati Zoo --- Male Black "Ajani Joe"
West Midland Safari Park --- Male GOH
Disney's Animal Kingdom --- Male SWR
Oklahoma City Zoo --- Female GOH "Yabi"
Fresno Chaffee Zoo --- Female SWR "Hazina"
Rotterdam Zoo --- Male black
Chester Zoo --- female black

Deaths:

Zoo Berlin --- Female black "Kilaguni"
Oklahoma City Zoo --- Male GOH "Arun"
Columbus Zoo --- Female Black "Rosie"

Transfers:

Riverbanks Zoo received male SWR "Bill" from Seneca Park Zoo
Seneca Park Zoo received male SWR "Jive" from Fossil Rim
Hemker Park and Zoo received male GOH "Tio"
Rolling Hills Zoo received female SWR "Evey" from The Wilds
Tulsa Zoo received female SWR "Mustang Sally" from The Wilds
Twycross Zoo received male black "Sudan" from Leipzig Zoo

New Habitats:

Hemker Park and Zoo have a new Greater One horned habitat.

New Members

Ben Jernigan ----- Fossil Rim Wildlife Center
Stephanie Davis ----- Fossil Rim Wildlife Center



Conservation Partners are conservation organization or zoological institution which supports rhino conservation in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the IRKA. These partnerships often provide discounts for the supporting institution . It is important that as the IRKA grows we continue to garner the support from all facilities that are responsible for the protection and management of rhinoceros. We would like to extend our appreciation for the support from the following institutions, and hopefully we can add your zoo to this growing list! If you or your institution are interested in becoming a

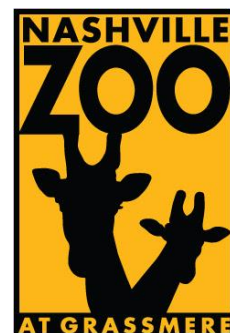
Conservation Partner, please visit:

[Support IRKA](#)

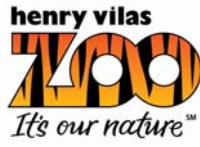
**Platinum
Conservation
Partners**



IRKA Partners



**2020 Conservation
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Conservation Sponsors



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