



# The Crash

## June 2022 "Summer Edition"

The IRKA newsletter: the leading network connecting rhino keepers.

### President's Perspective

As we move into the summer months, the Rhino Keeper Workshop committee is hard at work planning all the details involved for the 2023 RKW hosted by The Wilds. Check out all the details in this issue of the CRASH including workshop dates, registration, hotel accommodations, and more. As we get closer to the workshop, please keep an eye out for information on scholarship opportunities. The IRKA is dedicated to the membership and strives to help get as many delegates get to the RKW so we can all share our knowledge together. More workshop information will be provided on the IRKA website, social media pages, membership emails, and CRASH newsletters.

In this issue, Jade Tuttle, from the North Carolina Zoo and IRKA Board member, writes about her experiences dealing with a horn issue on one of her large female white rhinos. I'm sure many of you have dealt with varying degrees of horn issues with your rhinos, but if you haven't, this is a great article to read about Jade's unique experience with her rhino, Abby.

The IRKA is offering an opportunity for membership to get involved with our organization as we expand our efforts in a multitude of ways. The volunteer committee will also get experience in assisting the International Rhino Foundation in different aspects of their needs which may include research, video editing, and social media. Jason Faessler from the Nashville Zoo and Jade Tuttle from the North Carolina Zoo will be running the volunteer committee. If you are interested in joining this team and getting more involved with the IRKA and IRF, please reach out to Jason and Jade.

There are many times we ask ourselves, what else can I do to help support field staff working with rhinos in Africa and Asia. Of course, we try to do our best with fundraisers to financially support the conservation efforts of these hard-working men and women. These dedicated individuals often feel the weight of the world on their shoulders as they sometimes feel like they are fighting a losing battle. This is a perfect opportunity to let them know we have their back and we are behind them 100%. Please see the article below on how you can send your thanks and appreciation of their efforts. I hope everyone has a successful and enjoyable summer season!

Joe Hauser



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# 2022 T.E.R.S.



Tanganyika Wildlife Park, in partnership with Sedgwick County Zoo and the International Rhino Keepers Association, will be hosting a Training and Enrichment Regional Seminar September 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2022

**\*\* REGISTRATION CLOSSES \*\***  
**\*\* JULY 29th \*\***



IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

## IRKA Connecting to Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary Staff and South African Rangers

I'm sure you all have heard about the significant birth of the female Sumatran Rhino calf born at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in Way Kambas, Indonesia. The IRKA has been very supportive of the Ministry of Environment and the International Rhino Foundation's work over in Indonesia and this past birth has been a huge milestone.

The IRKA Board of Directors will be inviting our members to send the SRS staff a congratulations video. We ask that you take a 10-30 second clip of you with your rhinos in the background congratulating everyone involved with the birth of that rhino. An email will be sent to you with directions on how to take the video and sending it back to us so we can compile all the videos together.



*Image courtesy of the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry*

We will also be sending a second video to Rhino Protection Units (RPU) in South Africa, thanking them for their dedicated service, protecting rhinos in their natural range. The morale of the rangers is very low due to many challenges that they face in the field, including the risk of losing their own life. This is a perfect opportunity for the

IRKA to reach out and give them our support. For this video we will also be asking for you to make a 10-30 second clip thanking them for all their hard work protecting rhinos and how much that means to us. If you can have your rhinos in the background (or next to you) during your video, that would make the video even better.



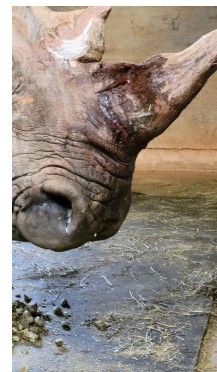
*image courtesy of South African National Parks*

**So please keep an eye out for the email invitation in the near future!  
We thank you for your support of our colleagues in Africa and Indonesia!**



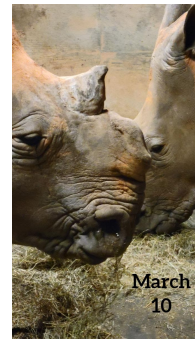
## Abby's New Profile

On a Sunday morning in late February, Grassland keepers arrived to find one of our rhinos, Abby, with a long crack at the base of her horn. From the little bit of blood we saw, it appeared she had hit the containment bollards overnight. Abby is our largest rhino who weighs 5600 lbs. That much rhino takes up a lot of space. We believe she took a quick turn while rough-housing and mis-judged the length of her horn. Whatever the cause, the injury was there. Over the next 48 hours the team worked with vet staff to make sure there was no damage to the sinus underneath. There was some nasal discharge, but no blood, her appetite was normal, and a few radiographs showed no sign of broken bone. The only noticeable symptom was that Abby kept rubbing her itchy horn and the crack slowly worked around the base with the pressure. Tuesday morning, March 1<sup>st</sup>, Abby made one last crack and took the horn off at the base while keepers watched. As we suspected, there was no damage under the horn. Abby appeared much more comfortable as soon as it was removed. The horn was documented in photos, measured, (20 inches, 11 pounds), and incinerated. Abby was happily munching away on some timothy.



As we all know, the rhino horn grows more like hair or nails, with keratin being produced from a germinal bed. This injury can be related to hitting your thumb and losing the nail. The medical term is an avulsion, and it isn't uncommon in for rhinos both in human care and in the wild. It has been noted in both African species, as well as Greater One-horn. We've all done enough keeper talks to know that it will grow back at a rate of 7 cm a year, but it surprised me to see how quickly it healed and began to grow!

She was kept off-habitat with a friend initially. Abby is a rock star trainer, and she allowed topical treatments from day 1, when the germinal bed was firm, but not solid like horn. At day three it appeared to have some horn compressed at the center, and the wound was completely crusted over in a week at which point she returned to habitat with the rest of our crash. She didn't skip a beat. What she lacked in horn she made up for with attitude. She was quick to vocalize and bluff charge over resources, which let her hold her own with the other seven girls. Her size helped as well. She learned to work enrichment devices with her upper lip or roll them with her chin. We even saw her working the wallow with her nubbin.



The silver lining to this cloud is the amplification of our message with guests. It is a tangible example of what rhino horns really are, illustrating the similarities to fingernails. Her silhouette is striking and looks incomplete, which prompts visitors to ask questions, to take a second look, and to engage more with our staff. We talk about how lucky she is it will grow back, how some of them won't grow back, and the greed that drives the illegal wildlife trade. Inevitably they ask what happened to the horn, and the incineration is used to explain that there is no real value in horn and no reason to keep it. It opens the door for our conversation to move to the incredible work the rangers are doing to protect them, and our own conservation efforts to support those rangers. Of course, just by meeting our gentle giant Abby, they take away a story to share with a personal connection, and we hopefully gain one more in team rhino.



**Jade Tuttle**  
North Carolina Zoo

## [New Volunteer Program](#)



The Volunteer Committee has been created to address the growing interest and need of members to be more actively involved within the International Rhino Keeper Association. As the IRKA evolves, offering more content, opportunities and avenues to serve the membership, there is an increased need for member help to accommodate these needs. We hope to be able to facilitate members in actively supporting, and being a part of the association in real time volunteer positions such as IT, social media, research, special projects and committee work. The majority of this volunteer work will be done virtually, via e-mail or possible zoom meetings.

In addition to meeting the volunteer needs of the IRKA, we are starting a volunteer partnership with the International Rhino Foundation. The IRF has specifically requested the help of the IRKA, because it recognizes the dedication and passion IRKA members have for saving rhinos. The first volunteer project need, identified by the IRF, is for IRKA members to research and identify the answer to the question: Can a regulated trade in rhino horn provide conservation value for rhinos? IRF is looking for the best current evidence both, for and against the rhino horn trade. This information will help them update their existing stance for public statements regarding the question of regulated trade of rhino horn. Volunteers will be

split into two teams. One team will research the Pros of regulated rhino horn trade, while the other researches the Cons of regulated horn trade. Each team will be responsible for creating a reference list of approximately 10 cited sources that provide the best evidence for their teams position. Both teams will also be asked to write a one-to-two-page summary paper supporting the opinion that team researched.



Anyone interested in volunteering for the IRKA and/or IRF should contact Jason Faessler [jfaessler@nashvillezoo.org](mailto:jfaessler@nashvillezoo.org) or Jade Tuttle [jade.tuttle@nczoo.org](mailto:jade.tuttle@nczoo.org).

## **\*\*IRKA 2023 R.K.W.\*\***

hosted by  
**the Wilds**

Join us May 7th - 11th for the Rhino Keeper Workshop.  
Discuss all things rhino with professionals from across the globe working both *in situ* and *ex situ*.



**May 7<sup>th</sup>:** Registration and Ice Breaker  
**May 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>:** Workshop presentations  
**May 11<sup>th</sup>:** Visit to the Wilds and Banquet Dinner  
*Pre and Post trips to be announced soon.*

**Early registration runs July 1st - October 1st**  
**Regular registration will run October 2nd - February 1st**  
**Late registration will run February 2nd - April 1st**

### Professional

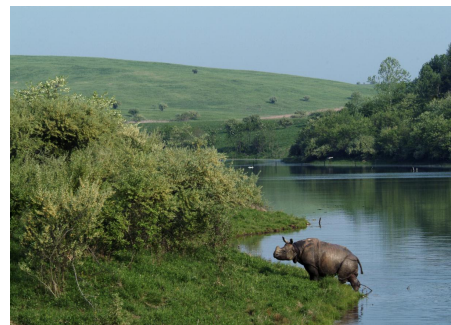
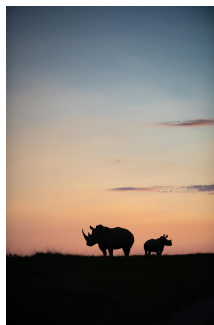
**Early** registration \$225  
**Regular** registration \$275  
**Late** registration \$300

### Associate

**Early** registration \$275  
**Regular** registration \$300  
**Late** registration \$325

### Non Member

**Early** registration \$325  
**Regular** registration \$350  
**Late** registration \$375



**Workshop will be at Salt Fork Lodge & Conference Center**  
<https://www.saltforkparklodge.com/>

Limited room block available in the Lodge at **\$115 per night**. Room block availability closes on **April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Call the reservation line at **740-435-9000** and reserve under the *2023 Rhino Keeper Workshop* block

Salt Fork State Park also has Cabins and Campgrounds available

*Several alternative lodging options available in Cambridge, OH off of Interstate 70. They are roughly 25 min away from the Conference Center*



Call for Papers open July 1st, 2022 and close February 1st, 2023

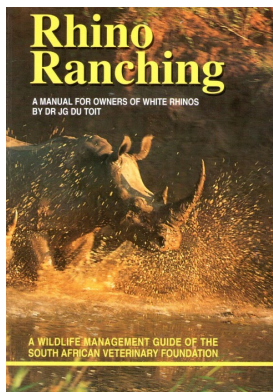
Scholarships open July 1st, 2022 and close January 1st, 2023

### More Information

#### Book Review

## Rhino Ranching

*A manual for owners of white rhinos*



*Rhino Ranching* is a book written in 1998 by Dr. JG Du Toit, from the South African Veterinary Foundation. It is written as a husbandry manual for private owners of southern white rhinos in South Africa. Even though this book is slightly dated, much of the content is still relevant to rhino management that we practice today. It reviews topics such as nutrition, breeding, social behavior, transportation, land management, and even emergency protocols. This book may be helpful for facilities managing southern white rhinos in large enclosures or pastures. It is very interesting to read a view point of a private rhino owner in South Africa that has to face some of the same challenges we face, but also some very different challenges, holding rhinos in expansive natural habitats.

**Joe Hauser**

### Correspondences

#### Deaths:

Honolulu Zoo ----- male black rhino "**Corky**"  
 Caldwell Zoo ----- female black rhino "**Christa**"  
 Lincoln Park Zoo ----- male black rhino "**Ricko**"  
 Toronto Zoo ----- female GOH "**Asha**"  
 Auckland Zoo ----- male SWR "**Inkosi**"  
 Rolling Hills Zoo ----- male SWR "**Uzazi**"

**Births:**

**Dvur Kralove Zoo** ----- male black rhino "**Kyiv**"  
**Basel Zoo** ----- male GOH "**Tarun**"

**Transfers:**

**Birmingham Zoo** received male black rhino "**Moyo**" from **Stl. Louis Zoo**  
and female black rhino "**Kesi**" from **Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium**.

**New Members**

**Celina Barbero** ----- Woodland Park Zoo  
**Maddie WeHolt** ----- Woodland Park Zoo  
**Kerian Clanahan** ----- San Antonio Zoo  
**Justin Klauss** ----- Fossil Rim Wildlife Center  
**Rebecca Lamb** ----- Wild Adventure Theme Park  
**Lori McNeal** ----- Safari West  
**Kelcie Pletch** ----- Henry Doorly Zoo  
**Ryan McCann** ----- Henry Doorly Zoo  
**Linnie Krause** ----- Henry Doorly Zoo  
**Ben Sharpless** ----- Busch Gardens  
**Kristen Spanier** ----- The Rhinory  
**Taylor Standard** ----- White Oak Conservation  
**Alexandra Zimmer** ----- Birmingham Zoo  
**Natalie Sheridan** ----- San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance



*Thank you!*

**Renewing Conservation Partners**

**Denver Zoo**  
**Columbus Zoo and Aquarium**  
**Potter Park Zoo**  
**Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium**

**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](#)

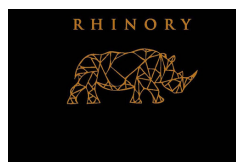
**Platinum Conservation Partners**



IRKA Partners



2022 Conservation Partners





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