

EAZA Rhino Campaign 2005/6: Save the Rhinos – Selected conservation projects –

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Project A: Rhino monitoring equipment for Kenyan National Park - Kenya

Good-quality monitoring data is used to decide on management actions (especially translocation decisions) to maintain healthy and productive populations. The information also allows field managers to assess progress, as part of the national conservation strategy.

The main aim of this project is to improve rhino monitoring activities in six KWS National Parks (Aberdares, the Chyulus, Nakuru, Meru, Nairobi, and Tsavo west) by providing essential monitoring equipment and training of field staff in their use, thereby enhancing the quality and accuracy of the data input for the management decision-making process.

Funds raised through the Campaign will be used to buy 30 pairs of binoculars, seven digital cameras and accessories, 20 GPSs and accessories.

Project B: Environmental education programme at the Laikipia Wildlife Forum - Kenya

Laikipia is the one district in Kenya that continues to record increasing or stable wildlife populations, in contrast to the declining trend throughout the country. Wildlife population densities in the Laikipia region now rank second only to the internationally renowned Masai Mara ecosystem in Kenya.

The Environmental Education (EE) programme, which has been running since January 2004, recognises that the long-term sustainability of conservation efforts in Laikipia is linked to the environmental awareness of local school children. The great majority of Kenyan children have never seen wildlife in their natural environment. Through the efforts of the LWF, Laikipia school children have begun a process that sees the gradual reversal of this situation. There are 231 primary schools in Laikipia District, with an enrolment of more than 70,000 pupils, and a further 10,866 pupils in 43 secondary schools. The LWF education programme aims to link these schools with existing environmental education initiatives across the District.

The EAZA Rhino Campaign will fund the LWF's Environmental Education programme during the calendar year 2007.

Project C: Re-establishment of Black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)- Zambia

In 2003, five black rhinos were reintroduced to a 55 km²-fenced sanctuary. This reintroduction was just the first step towards the goal of establishing a population of at least 20 founders in the Park within three years.

Security and monitoring of the reintroduced rhinos is obviously a very high priority and the expansion of the current sanctuary to enclose an additional 150 km² requires additional personnel and equipment. A very cost- and personnel-effective way of adding to the security offered by traditional foot patrols in the sanctuary and wider Intensive Protection Zone is the use of observation posts on high ground.

The EAZA Rhino Campaign will pay for two more observation posts, together with the equipment needed to monitor the new section of the sanctuary. In addition, it will pay to re-issue conservation education materials.

Project D: Lifting crane for capture truck - Zimbabwe

Over the years, the capacity and resources for sound management of the rhinos in the Lowveld Conservancies have been built to universally accepted levels. They have one rhino capture vehicle, but the geographical scope of this vehicle is limited to the Lowveld. This truck is now 13 years old and, because of its age, spares are difficult to source. In addition, the increased size of the black rhino population in the Conservancies has created a situation where each year more rhinos require translocation than is actually possible to achieve given the available resources.

The equipping of a suitable vehicle to undertake capture and translocation operations will improve the national capacity to attend to all animals that require translocation. When the project was received, they even did not have the capture truck. I had an email from the project's coordinator saying that US Fish and Wildlife Services was about to assist with a truck. The EAZA Rhino Campaign will then pay for it to be fitted out with a Fassi lifting crane.

Once operational, the truck will be used to fulfil the currently unachievable needs for rhino translocations within Zimbabwe, but may also be deployed for rhino capture operations in adjacent countries (such as North Luangwa National Park in Zambia, which lacks capture capacity).

Project E: Rhino translocation equipment - Namibia

Apart from increasing the risk of losing animals through reduced fecundity and increased mortality as the population approaches ecological carrying capacity, there is a real risk that the carrying capacity of Etosha National Park could be depressed in the short to medium term, as a result of heavy browsing pressure. The risk of this would be higher if high population densities coincided with a period of low resource availability during drought. In other countries, translocations of surplus rhinos from one National Park to another have helped to improve the overall growth rate.

With the biggest single population of black rhino in any protected area, Etosha National Park is in need of equipment to load and translocate rhinos in emergencies but also during planned capture and translocation programmes, as approved by the Hon. Minister as part of the rhino work plan of the Ministry of Environment & Tourism of Namibia (MET).

Funds provided by the Campaign will pay for the purchase of: a specialised capture vehicle fitted with a mobile fire fighter (water to cool down immobilised animals), a generator for power tools, for transmitter implants, and general equipment; for the modification of an existing truck so that it can carry rhino crates and be fitted with a lifting crane; for the modification of two existing rhino retrieval trucks; and the construction of six light wooden rhino crates: four for black rhinos, two for white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*).

Project F: Rhino security equipment funding - South-Africa

The success of rhino conservation in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve is largely due to two factors: community outreach programmes and effective law enforcement. Law enforcement is largely carried out by field rangers based at picket camps throughout the Reserve, supported by a more specialised anti-poaching unit. In order for staff to perform successfully and efficiently, it is imperative that they are well equipped to perform any task that may be required.

Funding from Save the Rhinos will pay for rifle safes for the safeguarding of field rangers' rifles. This is a requirement of the Reserve's management, as well as now being mandatory due to new legislation in South Africa. Funding will also provide camping equipment, such as tents, backpacks, hiking mattresses and torch batteries. These will enable field ranger patrols to camp out in high-risk areas and to be active during high-risk times of the day - mainly late afternoon and at nighttime during the full moon.

Project G: Rhino horn-fingerprinting project

The initial horn-fingerprinting project could reliably identify the species of horn. The first results were very encouraging. But sample sizes were too small per park in order to be able reliably to determine the source of horn by analysing its chemistry.

The aim of the AfRSG's horn fingerprinting project is now to complete the final experimental phase of the project and in particular to determine the degree to which one can successfully identify the source of rhino horn as well as to determine the number of horn samples per park needed and the successful discrimination between regions and parks.

Being able to source horn recovered in consumer states or illegally in transit would assist with identifying illegal trade routes for rhino horn. If the approach works for rhino horn, then similar approaches could be used for other threatened species such as elephants.

This work is momentarily partially completed. Funding from the campaign is required in order to be able to complete the rest of the work.

Project H: Combating the illegal trade in and demand for rhino horn - Yemen

Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne have been studying and reducing trade in rhino horn to and within Yemen since 1978 and 1986 respectively, with regular visits to Sanaa and other parts of the country around every two years. In the late 1980s and 1990s, they succeeded, with the support of the Prime Minister of Yemen, in banning imports of rhino horn and exports of horn shavings to the East. They also prohibited the internal trade in rhino horn, as well as banning the making of new rhino horn jambiya handles. This crackdown on trade, supported by efforts to lower the demand by encouraging substitutes for the horn, reduced the quantity of rhino horn entering Yemen considerably. After many meetings, Yemen also finally agreed to join CITES.

The grant from the EAZA Rhino Campaign will pay for a further visit by Martin and Lucy to Yemen. The objectives of the trip are to monitor Yemen's rhino horn trade, and to promote the use of substitutes for rhino horn jambiya handles being made in Yemen, thereby reducing the demand for rhino horn.

Project I: Indian Rhino vision 2020 - India

Kaziranga currently contains 93% of Assam's rhinos and an estimated 67% of the species total. There are currently only nine breeding populations in two countries. Moreover, only two of these (Kaziranga and Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal) have more than 100 individuals. This restricted distribution, renders the species very vulnerable.

The Assam Forest Department and the various NGOs interested and involved in conservation of the greater one-horned rhino have therefore agreed that range expansion through translocations from Kaziranga and Pabitora to other appropriate Protected Areas in Assam is a prudent direction for future efforts. Such translocations have produced initial positive results in Nepal and have had long-term success for the Southern white rhino.

The goal over the next 15 years is to increase the total rhino population in Assam from about 2,000 to 3,000 individuals and, as significantly, to expand the distribution of the rhino so that there are at least six Protected Areas with populations of 50 to 100 individuals. This goal will be achieved by a combination of rhino translocations and improved protection. First steps towards the 15-year goal will be to improve rhino protection at all source and target Protected Areas and to translocate 20 to 30 rhinos from Pabitora and Kaziranga to Manas NP, where they will be protected and monitored.

Funds from the Campaign will be used to pay for Year 2 (July 2006-June 2007)

Project J: Conservation of rhino in India and strategy framework to reduce rhino poaching in range countries - India

The specific objectives to be met by this project are to:

- Monitor each case of rhino poaching to find out the modus operandi and investigate the culprits involved with such crimes
- Prepare revised sets of guidelines for rhino-bearing areas in Assam regarding requirements to prevent the illegal entry and exit of poachers from the rhino-bearing areas
- Maintain updated database of rhino poachers and traders operating in Assam, and other parts of Eastern Himalaya.

- Offer non-financial assistance to rhino-bearing areas in Assam in terms of equipment and transport to enhance rhino protection
- Offer annual awards to the five notable rhino protectors in Assam, to be selected from the field forest staff of rhino bearing areas.
- Provide training to forest staff with regards to wildlife crime and legal assistance for them in their fight to combat it
- Provide education initiatives to local people on the importance of the rhino
- Bring out a publication at the end of this project on the “Rhino Conservation beyond 2000”

Funds raised by the EAZA Rhino Campaign will be mainly used to pay: salaries; for the purchase of a patrol vehicle and rental of other vehicles and elephants as needed.

Project K: Rhino protection Units for Javan rhinos (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) and Sumatran rhinos (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) in Indonesia

The continuous strong demand for rhino horns for traditional Chinese medicine encourages poaching; while pressure from expanding human settlements reduces the size and quality of the remaining habitat. With so few animals surviving, the loss of even a few individuals may easily become fatal for the species. Therefore, it is vital that all surviving rhinos receive the strictest protection achievable in the wild and that, through evacuations from unviable situations, translocations and captive breeding, the existing populations can be reinforced and new ones established.

This project is part of a coalition effort between conservation organisations and the Indonesian government to continue the programme of Rhino Protection Units (RPU). They are highly motivated anti-poaching teams, which intensively patrol rhino areas, destroy traps and snares and identify and apprehend poachers. This basic work is augmented by a law enforcement and advocacy program that facilitates prosecution of poachers.

This programme has been very successful, both in Sumatra and Java. Indeed, both the Government of Indonesia and the global conservation community have recognised the RPU programme as one of the most effective and successful conservation programmes for megafaunal species in southeast Asia and indeed the world. With good protection and active management, both species can and will recover to viable levels, if funding for this project is continued for future years.

The funds from the campaign will help pay for ranger salaries, uniforms and equipment, ongoing training, vehicle fuel and maintenance costs, rations, intelligence gathering exercises and law enforcement.

Project L: Establishment of two additional rhino protection units - Malaysia

By securing the assistance of the stakeholders, the RPUs can more effectively monitor and patrol the Reserve and cut off all potential entry or exit points utilised by encroachers.

In addition to assisting the Sabah Wildlife Department with these anti-poaching measures, SOS Rhino's RPUs have helped gather important demographic information on local rhino ecology. The RPUs continually assess the Sumatran rhinos' distribution and population density and this information is incorporated into the region's wildlife management and protection plans. SOS Rhino has established a multi-dimensional, multiple-stakeholder collaborative programme that requires units to be highly mobile and responsive.

With the funds from the Campaign, SOS Rhino will be able to purchase supplies and equipment to support two additional RPUs: a new unit based in the south of the Reserve, which is urgently needed to cover the many plantations and villages along the southern border and thus complete the protection coverage of Tabin; and a new roving RPU to supplement and support SOS Rhino's existing patrol teams.

Project M: Enhanced community outreach programme - Malaysia

Accordingly, since 2000, Tabin Wildlife Reserve's Rhino Protection Units have directly engaged villagers and oil palm plantation owners and employees in the effort to protect the rhinos through SOS

Rhino's Community Outreach Programme. This programme helps to secure Tabin Reserve boundaries by developing incentives for local communities to become involved by raising awareness and establishment of alternate income sources. Rangers are recruited from the villages and SOS Rhino is building the foundations for eco-tourism in the Reserve. The RPU's are responsible for various aspects of the Volunteer Programme, which generates funds for both the Community Outreach Programme and the villages around the Reserve. Without advertising, the Volunteer Programme has captured the support and participation of individuals and organisations around the world. These individuals come from diverse backgrounds. Zoo staff, for example, is able to gain valuable conservation experience and return home with a greater appreciation for the global conservation perspective. They can become more effective in promoting the sustainable conservation message to both visitors and donors to their zoos.

With a Grant from the EAZA Rhino Campaign, SOS Rhino plans to create additional facilities to accommodate more volunteers and visitors to Tabin. Specifically, the funds will pay for the construction of two more chalets for volunteer accommodation, bedding, mosquito nets, cooking and eating utensils and equipment, five water tanks, two generators, two boats and four boat engines.

Additional projects

As mentioned before, there are also eight projects on the waiting list. Those very good projects will get a chance to be funded if our target of 350.000 euros is reached.