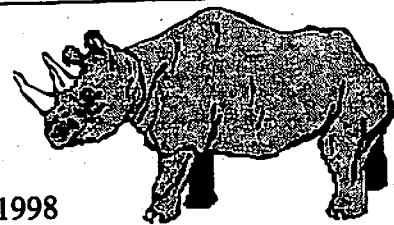


REALLY, RHINOS!



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VAN GOGH HORNS IN!

from The Guardian Manchester, October 13, 1997.
Author: Nancy Banks-Smith.

Van Gogh is a rhinoceros with attitude. His attitude is, 'If in doubt, give it a clout.' Wildlives (BBC2) is devoted to that endearing species, the camcorder-carrying conservationist. Mike Hearn, a young biologist, works for Save the Rhino. He was recording the perambulations of the pitifully few black rhino in Namibia. Most were modest mothers (childbirth must be agony) but one, Van Gogh, was a big male. He's called Van Gogh because one ear was bitten off by a hyena and, if that hyena is listening, I raise my hat to you, sir.

Van Gogh was having a kip under a bush and Mike poked in the hushed tones of a birdwatcher in church: 'He's unaware of our presence but one ear is moving around.' Rhinos, he added, barely breathing, have a reputation for short temper.

There was nothing wrong with Van Gogh's remaining ear. The next frame showed him trotting purposefully towards the camera. With the curious calm that comes with perfect despair, you noticed that he had at least two of everything that mattered. Two horns, for instance. Someone behind the camera threw a very small stone at him. I think there's a proverb about that. People being charged by rhinos should not throw stones. Someone else went 'argh!' just like the comics. Van Gogh moved smoothly into a gallop. Steam issued from his ear. The whole frame filled with rhino, then - as if the intercity to Inverness had passed - there was nothing but a drift of dust. Silence fell with a crash. At last, I hope it was silence.

The strange thing was that no one said another word about this lively incident, no one described their escape, no one showed us their scars. Nothing. The next scene showed Save the Rhino taking off in a

microlight plane. They said it was a much better way of covering large areas. Of course it is. Did I say anything? Did I? Apparently Wildlives will keep us au fait with endangered species. Yes, please. I'm very worried about Mike.

OVERCITES?

The Guardian Manchester, June 12, 1997.
Author: Andrew Meldrum.

STUBBORN, near-sighted and rapidly dwindling in numbers, the rhinoceros has charged on to centre stage at the meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Harare.

Among the 139 CITES member states the discussion about how to protect the threatened rhinoceros population is as heated as the debate on conserving elephants. The figures are alarming. From a worldwide population of 90,000 in 1970, rhinos now number just 12,500 and 80% are in Africa.

Despite a ban on international trade in rhino horn since 1977, rhinos have continued to be slaughtered to meet the demand in Asia, where powdered horn is used in traditional medicines, and Yemen, where the horn is prized as a dagger handle.

The debate centres on whether limited, controlled trade in the horn should be allowed to fund rhino conservation. South Africa - which protects the rhino most effectively and has the largest population at 8,119 - wants to be allowed to begin a legal trade in horn. Animal rights groups are fiercely opposed to the proposal, and are supported by most of the conservation groups. But some scientific experts say South Africa's scheme may point the way towards a sustainable future for the rhinoceros. CITES, which has concluded that efforts to protect the animal and end the trade in horn have failed, says new approaches should be considered.

Tom Milliken, director of the east and southern