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A close-up photograph of a rhinoceros's head, showing its thick, wrinkled brown skin and a single, pointed horn. The rhino is eating dry hay from its mouth. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor enclosure.

RHINO

WATCH

news • views • updates • debates

DIY DNA kits

The RhODIS (Rhino DNA Index System) lab at Onderstepoort in South Africa offers a standard DNA collection kit that includes everything that is needed when gathering evidence from a crime scene or samples to contribute to the database of Africa's living rhinos. The lab also offers training on how to use the kit correctly.

RhODIS is supported by Konica Minolta South Africa via its contributions to WWF's African Rhino Programme. To find out more, visit www.konicaminoltasa.com



An eight-month-old calf, orphaned in a rhino-poaching incident in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, is doing well, reports the Rhino Orphan Response Project (RORP), which has been advising the rhino's owner. In an unusual turn of events, the calf was adopted by a wild female, whose own calf was just three months old.

RORP, which was launched in March this year as a partnership between the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and rhino rehabilitation specialist Karen Trendler (above, far right), has been busy. 'When we launched the project, our primary focus was rhino orphans,' she says. 'We have realised, however, that there are also adult rhinos that survive attacks but are left with multiple wounds and severe facial mutilation. As a result, our work has extended to include these victims of the poaching crisis.'

In addition to providing *in situ* support, RORP offers telephonic and e-mail advice on search-and-rescue activities, diets and treatments, and calf capture and handling that has helped to keep calves in the wild. The project is also running a series of workshops to train conservationists in response techniques.

'The successes of the past month have not been without their challenges,' says Trendler. 'Security of the calves is a concern, as is the difficulty of accessing them. In some instances, a distrust of the authorities by owners leads to a reticence to report poaching. The project also has to contend with commercial "play and pay" facilities, as well as the black market that is emerging for rhino calves,' she explained.

For more information about the workshops and RORP, e-mail Karen Trendler at karojay@global.co.za or Kirsty Brebner at kirstyb@ewt.org.za

Ed's choice
South African shoppers who have a Woolworths My Planet card can support the EWT Rhino Fund, which funds the Rhino Orphan Response Project. Go to www.myschool.co.za to find out more.

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE The Rhino Orphan Response Project has been busy since its launch in March.

Millions donated to fight rhino poaching

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has received US\$3-million (about R25-million) from the Global Environment Facility to fight rhino poaching. According to a report on news24.com, the money will be used for, among other things, the 'enhancement of forensic-based technologies', including the DNA identification of rhino horn. *Legalbrief*

Neighbourhood watch

SanParks CEO David Mabunda has acknowledged that the rhino poaching problem in the Kruger National Park emanates largely from Mozambique. According to a June report in *The New Age*, this year 146 rhinos have been poached close to the park's boundary with the neighbouring country, whereas just three have been lost in other areas. Given that a fence will not be erected along the border, Mabunda has approached his Mozambique counterparts to create a buffer zone instead. *The New Age*



FACTS & FIGURES

(as at 17 July 2012)

281 rhinos killed in South Africa in 2012.

176 arrests have been made in connection with rhino poaching.

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs

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