



THE RHINO RUBBING POST



SNIFFER DOGS

Update:

The sniffer dogs have made considerable progress in the three months since the new dogs arrived. Although Rico has been training in the warehouse for some time now, Renaldo, Heddi and Condor started off with their imprinting on rhino horn in scent pipes. Once they had mastered finding horn in the pipes, they were moved on to a mock cargo set up. Now all four dogs are training in the warehouses. Rico and Renaldo are working very well with very good intensity and focus – so much so that there is considerable rivalry amongst the ACTS and EWT staff as to which is top dog!!

Heddi had her first season, which meant she missed out on a few weeks of training.



Left: Renaldo waiting for ball reward

Right: Cargo set up search



Above: Renaldo and scent pipes cropped

To regain their focus and boost their confidence, the training methods for Condor and Heddi were tweaked, and the results are already there to be seen. Heddi should be deployed in the near future, and Condor will follow shortly after that.



Above: Waiting for the ball from handler George

We are taking Condor and Heddi a little slower. Their focus and intensity is not yet where it should be. Condor is still very young and is mentally very immature and needs time to grow into the job.

One of the constraints to fully deploying the dogs was a shortage of vehicles. The two Toyota Avansa vehicles donated by Bidvest Magnum are in the process of being branded and are going to make an AWESOME statement!



Above: Car wrap design

The cages for the cars are sponsored by Ridgeway Independent Primary School – many thanks for all your efforts on our behalf!

Sniffer dogs out and about:

Renaldo did his first demo a couple of weekends ago, with great success. He was very excited to see all the children at the function and we had a hard time getting him to focus at the start of the search. Once he was focused, the searches and indications were perfect and he received great applause from the crowd.

target scent on a vehicle. The rhino horn was hidden in the car chassis, but they are not clever enough for our Rico - even though he had to crawl under the car to get to the horn, he made his indication, much to the enjoyment of the crowd. Rico also completed the fun walk. He was so tired from the weekend of activities that on the Monday he spent the entire day sleeping.



Above: Rico runs for rhino at Ridgeway school

Rico has also done demonstrations for Bidvest Magnum in Middelburg, and at the Ecologics Awards at the Cradle of Mankind.



Photo: Run for Rhinos ridgeway 2012

Rico once again this year went up to Ridgeway Independent Primary school in Louis Trichardt to attend their "Run for Rhinos" and was once again a hit and the centre of attention. He did a demo search with someone from the crowd hiding the

International Rhino Day

Rico also featured on International Rhino Day. With trainer Warwick and Rico we visited two schools on September 21: the Louw Geldenhuis Laerskool in Linden, and the Meredale Primary School in Meredale. We gave talks on rhinos as well as on sniffer dogs, followed by Rico doing a search of suitcases. The learners were very interested, asking really good questions. Initially, many of the learners at Meredale Primary School were very scared of Rico but they soon warmed to him, and as usual, he LOVED it!



Wildlife trade training programmes

The illicit trade in wildlife specimens and their parts and derivatives continues unabated worldwide. South Africa in particular is not immune to the illicit trade in wildlife specimens and the country is conveniently located as a gateway for the importation and/or exportation of wildlife specimens. The enforcement of illegal wildlife trade at our ports of entry and exit remains an ongoing challenge largely as a result of poor awareness around policies that prohibit or regulate the trade in wildlife specimens, including the inability to recognise some of these specimens, parts and derivatives.



Photo: Training the trainers

In order to address these issues, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) implemented four wildlife trade enforcement training programmes during 2012, two of which were in August and September. In August, 26 officials from O.R. Tambo International Airport, including SAPS, SARS and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries officials attended the five day training course at the EWT head office. Guest speakers included Marilè van Heerden (State Prosecutor), Lyn de Jong (DIRCO), Lindsay Mudaly (SARS) and Amanda Steyn (DAFF). The Johannesburg's Zoo-to-You van also paid a visit and our attendees were introduced to a few live specimens that are commonly traded.

Lindsay Mudaly from SARS requested a training course for SARS officials not based at the airport and in September 19 SARS and 6 SAPS HAWKS officials attended the five day training course at the EWT. Guest speakers included Lyn de Jong from Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindsay Mudaly (SARS), Eliza Grobler (SAPS) and Amanda Steyn (DAFF). During the training course our attendees from the SAPS HAWKS team were informed of an illegal abalone consignment found at the cargo area at O.R. Tambo International Airport. The rest of our attendees were invited to visit the crime scene to experience firsthand how a crime scene is managed, the forensics work that takes place and the follow-up action. The SARS Auditors who were part of our training group were overawed at actually being allowed to visit a fresh crime scene.

Species identification practical training:

On the 5th and 6th of November 19 attendees joined us at the Johannesburg Zoo Gardens to meet the wild animals face-to-face. Guest speakers included Adam Pires (EWT), Wendy Wilson (NSPCA) and Louise Matschke (Jhb Zoo). Attendees were guided around the zoo and were introduced to large carnivores, pachyderms, primates, reptiles, amphibians, birds and invertebrates. The attendees were exposed to the smells and sounds of the animals and where possible allowed to touch a live wild animal. Some of the attendees had never been to the zoo and one of them remarked that they did not think that lions were quite that big.



Photo: Captain Hattingh holding a skink

SCHOOLS DO IT FOR RHINOS AGAIN AND AGAIN

As indicated above, Rico helped us celebrate International

Rhino Day on September 21 by demonstrating his sniffing ability at the LOUW GELDENHUYS LAERSKOOL in Linden, and MEREDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL in Meredale.

But other schools also did their bit for rhinos in novel ways....

HEELS FOR HORNS: Bloemhof Girls' High School (Hoer Meisieskool Bloemhof), Stellenbosch

"Heels for Horns" is an innovative initiative in collaboration with the Footwear Design and Technology School of South Africa and dedicated to collecting funds for the Rhino Orphan Response Project.

Basically, young people were invited to enter a competition in which participants could design "rhino-inspired" high heeled shoes. See the YouTube link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYo5KNTaWpk

With the co-operation of the Footwear and Design Technology



School of South Africa, the 3 best designs were manufactured and then auctioned at a special gala-event, which the girls from the Hoer Meisieskool Bloemhof eco – committee organised.

The event was a roaring success, with more than R55 000 raised! It just shows what can be achieved by people who have the determination and commitment to make a difference – and these



girls are still at school! To Emily van der Merwe and team, a huge THANK YOU!

LAERSKOOL UNITASPARK, VEREENIGING

Laerskool Unitaspark, in collaboration with Rhino Linings, held a

coin placing day on 2 November for the EWT's "Save the Rhino" project. An amount of R4045.00 was raised during this event. "The number of rhinos murdered in 2012 exceeds the number of scholars in our school. This is what led the Parkies to the decision to add our weight and voices to the war against the murder of our rhinos. Laerskool Unitaspark is one of only three Afrikaans speaking primary schools in the Vereeniging area, and we are not just proudly Afrikaans but also care a great deal for



our environment and issues close to our hearts" was the Parkies comment! Baie Dankie Julle!

Sacred Heart College, Observatory and St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Pretoria

Both these schools also raised funds for the EWT Rhino Project, with the donations finalised in December. Due to the schools

imminent closing for the year, details of these very kind and generous campaigns will be in the first newsletter in 2013.

SUPPORTING PROVINCIAL STRUCTURES

Several provinces in South Africa are severely constrained by a lack of resources and funding. In some instances, this makes it challenging for the conservation officials to effectively fulfil their mandate – which includes rhino monitoring and crime scene investigation.

The EWT's, through its Rhino Project, is seeking to assist the provinces in obtaining the required resources and equipment, such as training courses, crime scene equipment (including metal detectors), various items of equipment and uniforms. In order to do this, the EWT requests either a financial contribution that will allow us to purchase the required items, or a donation of the actual item/s.

Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA)

The MTPA received grant funding from the US Fish and Wildlife through WESSA for the dehorning and microchipping of two rhino populations in the province. However, there were shortfalls in the budget amount applied for – specifically, funding was not received for IDENTIKITS. In order for the project to be meaningful and complete, the population data, individual data, photographs and monitoring data is usually contained in individual IDENTIKITS. The EWT was able to provide funding to cover the costs incurred for these IDENTIKITS. The EWT is in discussion with MTPA regarding their other funding and resource needs in order to protect their rhinos.

EWT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TRANSFRONTIER AFRICA WORK TO PROTECT THE FREE-ROAMING RHINOS OF THE ASSOCIATED PRIVATE NATURES RESERVE AND THE GREATER KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Balule Private Nature Reserve is a component of the Greater Kruger National Park and is therefore the custodians of free-roaming black and white reno-sceros as well as a substantial component of the Western Boundary Fence of the Greater Kruger National Park.

Due to the poaching pressure on the rhino in this region, Transfrontier Africa solicited the services of Adam Pires: Senior Training and Development Officer of EWT to establish a training seminar that will empower their wardens and rangers to become effective barriers against poaching and illegal wildlife trade. On 27 – 30 August 2012 the EWT, Transfrontier Africa, The National Prosecutions Authority and Balule Nature Reserve joined forces to provide specialist anti-poaching training for the Balule wardens and rangers.

14 wardens and anti-poaching rangers from Balule took part in the three day training exercise that included training on search and seizure techniques at a crime scene, court procedures and the giving of evidence from the National Prosecutions Authority and the investigation of a crime scene.

As part of the training, Balule Wardens investigated the scene of a poached animal in the field. The clues found at the crime-scene lead them to a vehicle search which further led to the search of a staff compound on the reserve. Rangers

were tested in their abilities to find clues and secure them as evidence. Shortly after the training course examinations, the skills learned had to be put to the test when camera-traps in the Eastern Sector relayed images of armed poachers entering the reserve. The reaction team set up an ambush and arrested two rhino poachers with weapons and rhino horn.



Photos: Balule staff being trained

The carcass of a Kruger rhino was discovered the next day and the crime-scene investigation commenced. The level of skills received during the training was applauded by the management of Balule and rangers managed to secure all evidence and conduct the operation from start to finish with perfect diligence, from the arrest procedures, search and seizure, crime-scene investigation and maintaining the chain of custody of evidence.

Following this major success, the doors were opened at senior management level to pursue a more intensive multi-pronged anti-poaching strategy that included the need for sniffer-dogs to man the access and exit points, compound searches and vehicle road-blocks.

Once again, EWT came to the rescue and secured a donation for a Belgian Malinois/German Shepherd cross that will be sponsored by Perdita and Ralf Lübke-Scheuermann of the Hunde-Akademie in Griesheim, Germany.

The training that Balule personnel received from the EWT was catalytic in proving the value of empowering their staff. The successful arrests and management of the crime-scene shortly after the training, led to the development of a comprehensive rhino anti-poaching strategy being developed for the region and through this the need for a specialist sniffer-dog was identified. The value that EWT has added to the conservation efforts of the western extremity of the Kruger rhino population has seen dividends and has been catalytic in the development and implementation of the anti-poaching strategy.

Craig Spencer
 Director: Transfrontier Africa (Ltd UK)
 Warden: Olifants West Region

The Rhino Orphan Response Project

The Rhino Orphan Response Project has had a very busy period since the previous newsletter in August. The systems and networks which have been developed are now showing results. The project has been approved and endorsed by both the Private Rhino Owner's Association (PROA) and Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA).

While the training has (of necessity) had to take a back seat to the active Response aspects of the project, informal training has taken place. For example, the black calf with the prolapsed rectum which required intensive care (see below) provided a unique situation to train veterinarians, veterinary students and veterinary nursing students. In addition, several one-on-one training sessions addressing specific questions have taken place.

The Response aspect involves the following (the response team is available 24/7):

- If a call comes in regarding a poaching incident, Karen immediately makes contact with the owner, if possible, and with law enforcement officers and the relevant anti poaching agencies to determine whether there is a calf involved. Assistance is offered, and supported with an email detailing the type of assistance that we can offer.
- If there is a calf involved, the age and condition of the calf is of immediate concern and again assistance is offered. The assistance and support that the project offers includes the following:

- Contacts for vets;
- Contacts for search and rescue;
- Contacts for crates and capture teams;
- Advice, support and facilitation of search and rescue, capture and transport;
- Advice on handling and immediate stabilization;

- If a calf is already at hand, the Rhino Orphan Response Project provides a wide range of support at different levels of complexity – from a simple email detailing diets and drug dosages to the full manual. Karen handles queries, consult on the basis of photos, liaise with vet or capture teams, and assists with providing volunteer or support staff. These consultations often take place over a two to three week period - and sometimes longer.

RESPONSES AUGUST – OCTOBER 2012:

Tswalo: update..

Tswalo, the black rhino calf who had suffered a prolapsed rectum when he was 4 weeks old, and who required dedicated nursing, has recovered fully from his condition. He is spending more and more time in the bush (with a carer in tow making sure he comes to no harm) which he is thoroughly enjoying, stopping to browse, explore and investigate the bush and its inhabitants.

Tikiwe:

The Response Team was alerted to an approximately 10 month old male calf in the Waterberg. The fate of the calf's mother was unknown, but the calf was seen running blindly, day and night. It had not joined up with any other rhinos. Due to delays in obtaining permits, it was 5 days before the Response Team were able to move the calf to the orphanage. We were finally able to safely release the calf into a boma at the orphanage, where



he took some time to settle in. Staff at the orphanage named him “Tikiwe” which means “the wobbly one” referring to his rather dopey self when he doddled into the boma while still darted! A comfort eater, he loves his food and has really relaxed. But it was obvious he was missing rhino company, as he actively sought out the free ranging rhinos, calling them to visit.

Nandi:

Nandi is the 5 month old white female calf that survived the Finfoot poaching. When she arrived at the orphanage, it was evident that she was one angry, traumatised little rhino – hardly surprising after what she had been through. She also had a cut through her lip – probably from a panga, and she had a bullet wound in the skin on her leg. She charged and attacked any and everything, even pulling a steel door off its hinges. She refused to eat or drink – in spite of the buffet on offer to her – including milk, apple juice, fruit salad and lucerne. However, after a few days she started to calm down, and decided that the milk was rather delicious, trashing her bowl the minute she finished to ensure she got our attention and she got a refill!

However, she too was clearly desperate for company, calling day and night - the most heart-rending call possible. She and Tekiwe started calling to each other, and so the decision was made to try and put them together. This carried some risks, as Tekiwe is considerably bigger than Nandi, so the first contact they had was through a barrier, which meant that they could touch each other, but not actually get to one another. This obviously sparked such desperation in Nandi for company that she tried to climb over the



barrier – and so the door was opened... Tekiwe was not sure about this and revved Nandi for some time. Nandi took it all in her stride, and in no time, they were best buddies. Nandi FINALLY has the company and comfort she was so desperate for....



Warwick Wragg was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation at the EWT “Under African Skies”.

The citation read as follows: Warwick Wragg from BidVest Magnum is a deserving nominee for an EWT Special Award. Warwick holds the position of Operations Manager (Canine Unit). He is also the head dog trainer for the unit, which provides a cargo clearing service at OR Tambo International Airport through the African Consultants for Transport Security (ACTS).

The sniffer dogs acquired by EWT have been trained by Warwick and his team to detect rhino horn and ivory, with plans to increase their scenting repertoire. From the inception of the EWT/Bidvest Magnum sniffer dog partnership, Warwick has always gone the extra mile for the project. He is happy to assist with any request to showcase the project, whether it be participating in demonstrations in his private time, in the evenings or over weekends, giving up his Friday to take the dogs to schools for International Rhino Day, or being filmed for TV – which he does even though he hates it! This has afforded the EWT/Bidvest Magnum sniffer dog project great exposure. Warwick’s standard response to any request is “No Problem”..It is a pleasure to work with Warwick, and we thank him sincerely for all he does for the project and thus for rhinos.



SPONSORS

Trusts and Foundations:

Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Administered by BOE
Felix Schneier Foundation
Mones Michaels Trust

Schools:

Ridgeway Independent School
Numerous other schools who kindly collected amounts below R5000

Events:

Modderfontein Golf Club, Modderfontein
Molly Malone's Pub, Fourways
Photo Freedom, KZN
Blue Suede Heaven Africa, Johannesburg (Official Elvis Appreciation Group, recognized by Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc)
Conscious Art Exhibition, Cape Town
Crafters Market, Gauteng
Hyde Park Exhibition and Auction
Bambi and Jade's Dance Club, Meyerton
Renosterveld Events, Western Cape

Individuals:

Albert Rona and Emily van Der Merwe
Roodepoort Hiking Club
Dr Marc Walton
Walter Hirzebruch

Partners:

African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG)
Private Rhino Owner's Association (PROA)

