

# The spirited search for a snared rhino bull



One Monday morning in March this year, my colleague Anthony was going through camera trap photos and was left agape. On his screen was a photo of a rhino with a wire snare round its neck. A closer look showed that he was a bull.

**Samar Ntalamia** | Programmes Manager, Big Life Foundation

Later photos showed the same rhino, visiting the water hole, with the wire snare digging deeper into his neck. A frenzy of activity soon kicked off as units of Big Life ranger teams, along with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rangers set out into the lava-strewn thicket that covers most of the Eastern black rhinos' range.

The teams had one goal in mind: find the rhino bull and then call in the vet to dart the animal and remove the wire. The bull was so strong that he had snapped the wire snare from the tree, but was left with a piece trailing from his neck.

And every time he walked, he would step on the wire and it would dig deeper into his neck. In addition to the teams in the bush, several

a sudden change of wind alerted the rhino and he exploded away. The search was back to the beginning.

Over the next few days, heavy rainfall washed away many leads, making tracking even more difficult. Sometimes, after a few hours of searching, the impenetrable bush stopped the rangers dead in their tracks; grit and determination see them go on.

It took the combined efforts of ground-based ranger search teams, as well as aerial support of a chopper and the Super Cub to eventually find and dart the rhino. By this

time, the once-rounded rhino bull, was emaciated, weak and on his last legs.

The wire cable had cut down to the bones of his neck, severing tendons and filled, by this stage, with deep infection and maggots. There was nothing anyone could have done to save him; at least his death saved us the decision of having to put him down.

## Grants

We are grateful to the following donors for recent grants for Big Life Foundation: USFWS RTCF (\$89,829); Chester Zoo's Act for Wildlife (£15,000), the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust (£5,000); Treasure Trust (£2,000); Amnéville Zoo (€10,000) and Rhino's energy International GmbH (€2,000). We also gave \$16,119 from our core funds. These grants are helping cover ongoing rhino monitoring and protection costs, as well the creation of a second waterhole, deeper inside the Chyulu Hills National Park.

The teams had one goal: find the rhino and call the vet to dart the animal and remove the wire

sentries were posted to an Observation Post to try to sight the rhino.

As the days passed, with rangers going out in dawn-to-dusk searches, it became very clear that this would not be an easy task. The excitement began to wear off in the first week, and bouts of frustration would really bite after unsuccessful day-long searches. What started off as an exciting walk turned into a trudge, only now and then punctuated by moments of excitement, when the ranger teams thought they had found the rhino bull, only for it to be another rhino.

Among the Maasai, the rhino is famed for pace, fury, strong sense of smell and aggression. When a rhino charges, it moves in a bee line, and does not return to a point after passing it. After nearly 10 days of non-stop searching, the rangers found scratch marks of the wire cable. This confirmed beyond doubt that these were his tracks, which boosted the rangers' morale. After an hour of searching, one of the trackers stopped and pointed at some dark, rounded protrusion in the bushes.

There was a hush as the vet and rangers crept forward on their bellies, inching slowly towards the rhino. Then, when the vet was just about to take aim with the dart gun,



Top: The snared rhino caught on camera trap

Far left: The dedicated search team

Centre, right: The tragic end to the rhino's life as he was found with his neck severed

ALL IMAGES: BIG LIFE FOUNDATION



REYNOLD FULCOVINS

## Stalemate in Assam

Over the last few months there have been major problems occurring in and around Manas National Park, the location of inbound rhino translocations in recent years. Civil unrest and a deteriorating security situation in the park has led to an increase in poaching and the unfortunate withdrawal of WWF-India staff from the Park to due safety concerns. Sadly five rhinos have been killed in Manas so far this year. We have set aside \$7,500 in emergency funding, which we can send over as soon as the Manas team has worked out how best to deal with the situation.

## A new CEO for Save the Rhino Trust



MARLA ANDRÉ FERBLANCHE PHOTOGRAPHY

We are delighted to welcome **Marcia Fagnoli**, (left) the newly appointed CEO of Save the Rhino Trust in

Namibia, one of our longest-standing beneficiaries. Marcia, who lives in Swakopmund, holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Environmental Studies, as well as a Juris Doctor (Environmental and International Law Certificates) and a Masters of Arts in Desert Studies. She has great, relevant experience of running an NGO, working with government and other agencies, fundraising and a strong commitment to conservation.

## \$10,000 grant for Sumatran rhinos

We would like to thank the **Taiwan Forestry Bureau** very much indeed for its two grants totalling \$10,000 to help cover ongoing costs at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary. Save the Rhino's Director went to the Taipei Representative Office in the UK in May 2013 to collect the first of these (below).



SRI

## Driving forward with Lolesha Luangwa in North Luangwa

Lolesha Luangwa, the environmental education programme we support in Zambia, has made stunning progress this year.

USFWS RCTF made a grant for the fifth year running, while Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund has made its third grant in four years. Together with funding from FZS and from Save the Rhino, these grants have not only covered the ongoing operating costs, but have paid for the purchase of a secondhand overland truck (above), to be converted into a bus capable of taking schoolchildren and their teachers into North Luangwa National Park, so that they can see wildlife (safely) at first hand.

In addition to this financial support, ZSL has provided an unimaginable level of support, mentoring and training for Lolesha Luangwa's Officer and Assistant, and delivered two workshops for teachers, to introduce them to the new curriculum developed in late 2012. We'll be reporting on this in much more detail in the next issue of *The Horn*. Our grateful thanks to all of Lolesha Luangwa's donors.



NLCP

## Staff changes at Save the Rhino

Earlier this year, we were lucky to host a Vodafone World of Difference finalist, **Meera Shah**, for two months. Meera worked on developing a corporate fundraising strategy, and we arranged to keep her on for a few months more, as it was obvious how helpful her work was becoming.

We decided to create the full-time post of Corporate Relationships Manager and, as Meera headed off to Edinburgh to do a Masters, offered a permanent post to our seventh Michael Hearn Intern, **Josephine Gibson**. We're thrilled that Josephine is staying with us.

We also recruited our eighth Michael Hearn Intern, **Rory Harding**, whose post has been generously sponsored by an individual donor.

## Congratulations to Inov

**Sectionov Inov**, or Inov as we know him, (right) has been working in rhino conservation in Indonesia for over 10 years. He has a BSc from the Agriculture University of Bogor Indonesia and has been the International Rhino Foundation's Indonesian Liaison since 2006.

His particular speciality is ecological competition between Javan rhinos and banteng, and he plans to start research on the eradication of the invasive species, Arenga palm.

Inov recently became a father for the second time – congratulations Inov!



IRF



## SAVE THE RHINO HEROES

Join us for an evening of heroics

Tickets are on sale now for our next annual dinner on **Wednesday 6 November 2013**. We will be inviting a selection of speakers to give their take on our theme of 'heroes', in under 7 minutes each. It's the perfect opportunity to find out more about Save the Rhino, and help us to raise funds for the field programmes we support – with the bonus of being a thoroughly entertaining evening! Tickets are on sale through our website now for £100 each (or £1,000 for a table of 10); you can also email [laura@savertherhino.org](mailto:laura@savertherhino.org) for more information or a booking form.

## Discover science in fiction

This year's Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture on **Tuesday 11 March 2014** at the Royal Geographical Society in London is 'The Science of Harry Potter and the Mathematics of The Simpsons' to be given

by **Roger Highfield** and **Simon Singh**. Tickets are on sale via our website for only £15 each and funds raised from the evening will be split between Save the Rhino and the Environmental Investigation Agency.



SIMON SINGH



ROGER HIGHFIELD



WOBURN SAFARI PARK

## Celebrating World Rhino Day 2013



On **Sunday 22 September 2013**, Save the Rhino joined thousands of others across the world to celebrate World Rhino Day. The aim of the day is to raise awareness for all five rhino species and highlight the threats facing wild rhino populations.

With the help of 15 enthusiastic volunteers, we took our famous rhino costumes to the streets of central London for an awareness walk, visiting the London embassies and High Commissions of the countries with wild rhinos.



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COLCHESTER ZOO

**Colchester Zoo** held a fundraising and awareness stall near their rhino enclosure, as well as offering opportunities to meet with the Zoo's rhinos raising a great **£433.15**

*Thank you to Woburn Safari Park, Colchester Zoo, Knowsley Safari Park, West Midland Safari Park, Wilherna Zoo, Zoo de la Boissière du doré and Steffi Galt for hosting fundraising and awareness events for Save the Rhino this World Rhino Day.*



WOBURN SAFARI PARK

**Woburn** also got crafty selling 'sew your own rhinos', raising a fantastic **£1,305.37**



**Knowsley Safari Park** created a nail bar encouraging the public to donate their nail clippings to raise awareness on the myths surrounding rhino horn, raising a fabulous **£404**

## Christmas carol concert



The choir of EC4 Music is supporting Save the Rhino at its annual Christmas carol concert at **7pm on 18 December 2013, St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, Holborn**. The choir is one of the leading amateur music groups in London, performing at the Guildhall, the Barbican and the Royal Festival Hall to sell-out audiences raising money for charity.

Tickets £10. Purchase by emailing [ec4music@gmail.com](mailto:ec4music@gmail.com)

## RHINO MAYDAY 2013 The best yet?

This year was arguably our best ever Rhino Mayday event, with a brilliant range of talks

on all sorts of rhino-related subjects. We were kindly hosted by the Grant Museum of Zoology for the second year in a row. Thanks to this year's speakers: **Michael Dyer, Joanne Scofield, Kate Oliver, Paul Bamford, Abigail Day, Karen Rennie, John Payne and John Ironmonger.**



SRI

## What do you treasure?

This is the question we will be asking 50 artists and celebrities to answer, as part of our next online auction. Each artist will design a canvas using the theme of 'Treasured' as their inspiration, which we will then auction online in **early 2014**. Keep an eye on our website for announcements about the auction date, and if you know any well-known artists who might be willing to donate a canvas to Save the Rhino, please get in touch by emailing [laura@savertherhino.org](mailto:laura@savertherhino.org)