

REF NEWS

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FROM THE REF DESK...

**Rare white rhino killed
Poachers
slay another
white rhino**

Mercury Reporter

- 3 DEC 1992
CAPE TIMES

**Rhino horn charges
Black rhino 'crisis'**

Rhino carcasses found

The carcasses of five white rhino were found in the Pretoriusskop area of the Kruger National Park at the weekend. Two cows appeared to have been dead for about a week. The horns of the fully grown animals had been removed.

The Star Tuesday January 26 1993

1993 will probably decide the future of the remaining black rhino population in Africa, realising that there is little time left to secure viable breeding rhino populations.

Operation Rhino Rescue will be launched this year with a limited edition print by wildlife artist and REF chairman, Clive Walker. A full-colour educational poster "Africa's Rhino" is already available from the Foundation.

If we are going to win this battle at the 11th hour against the illegal slaughter of both black and white rhino, it is important to see the conservation of rhino as a commitment and to ensure that, ultimately, Africa's rhino are still there beyond the year 2000.

We don't want to be prophets of doom and give up helplessly in a battle which looks like being lost before started. The Rhino &

POSSESSION OF RHINO HORNS

Heavy penalties have recently been imposed on convicted rhino poachers and rhino horn dealers in South Africa. This has caused concern amongst members of the public who possess rhino horns for a variety of legitimate reasons.

The Natal Parks Board has instituted a registration system and appeals to all members of the public who have rhino horns in their possession to contact the Secretary of the Board on (0334) 471961 or to

write to them at P O Box 662, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

The Board is aware of increasing thefts of rhino horn from private owners and it is hoped that by making horns easily identifiable the new registration system will assist in reducing such thefts.

Owners of rhino horn in the Transvaal can approach the Nature Conservation Division of the TPA at P/Bag x209, Pretoria, 0001 or phone (012) 3233403 for further information regarding registration.

AFRICA'S RHINO

The Rhino & Elephant Foundation has recently produced a unique, full-colour poster featuring Africa's rhino.

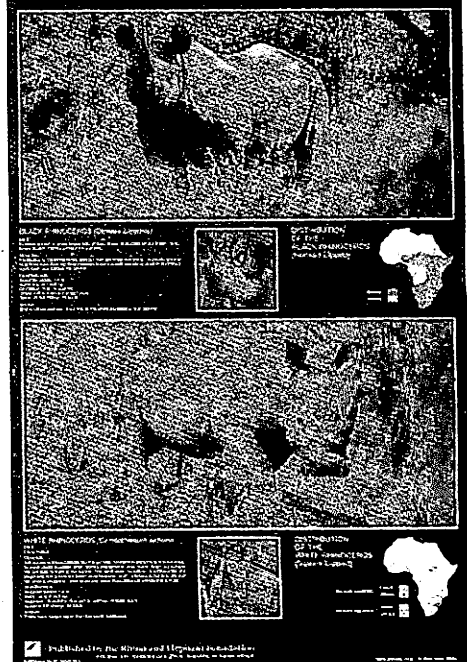
Get to know your rhino with this factual, informative poster, ideally suited for schools, educational institutions and for anyone interested in learning more about the magnificent rhino of Africa.

The poster shows past and present distribution maps, colour photographs by Clive Walker and Peter Hitchins, information on diet, general habits and descriptions of both the black and white rhino.

"Africa's Rhino" posters are available from the Rhino &

Elephant Foundation office at a cost of R5.00 plus R1.00 for package & posting.

Africa's Rhino



Elephant Foundation wants to achieve the impossible, but if we do not try and make South Africans aware of the rhino's plight, we will lose not only the rhino but other species which are ecologically connected.

If we fail the rhino then we have failed in conservation in Africa!



"Elephants suffer from the same diseases as man, and share the same emotions: Love, rage, hate, envy, pride, exhilaration, and despair..."

SACRED ELEPHANT, Heathcote Williams.



WHAT IS IVORY?

A dictionary's definition: Ivory, the creamy substance forming the tusks of elephants, is a hard solid fine-grained form of dentine—the bone-like tissue found in the teeth of many animals. Elephant tusks are enlarged incisor teeth deeply rooted in the upper jaw and projecting beyond the lips.

A baby elephant has milk tusks which fall out. These deciduous incisors, about 5 cm long, are replaced by permanent second incisors within 6 to 13 months after birth and grow continuously at a rate of 17 cm per year. A quarter of the length of an elephant tusk lies within the socket where it is held by a mass of tough fibrous tissue. Generally half the tusk is solid ivory, with the rear half to the gumline being hollow housing the large nerve.

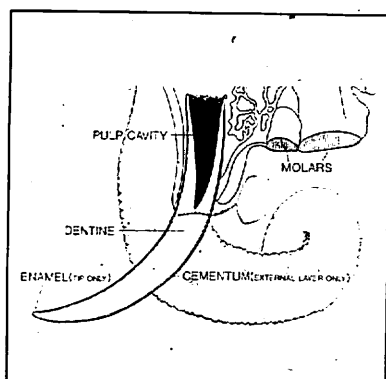
Tusks are composed of a pulp cavity, dentine, cementum and enamel.

The innermost area is the pulp cavity which extends beyond the lips. Like all mammalian teeth, the pulp cavity of elephant incisors is well supplied with blood vessels and fine nerve branches and the tusks are thus sensitive to external pressure. A thin nerve canal, known as the "heart" runs through the core of the tusk right to the tip.

Odontoblastic cells (one of a series of cells that line the pulp cavity) are responsible for the production of dentine which composes 95% of the tusk.

Elephant dentine is compact and forms successive layers of consistent thickness around the pulp cavity throughout life.

Exceedingly fine tubes spiral through the tusks giving the ivory its high elasticity. In cross section, a tusk shows a pattern of unique lines that criss-cross each other to form small diamond-shaped areas visible to the naked eye. This pattern is called "engine turning" and since none of the



other tusk carrying mammals (i.e. hippopotamus, walrus, warthog—whose tusks are canine teeth) exhibit "engine turning", the term IVORY should be applied to elephant tusks only.

Exterior to the dentine lies the cementum layer surrounding the dentine of tooth and tusk roots. Its main function is to adhere the tooth and tusk roots to the jawbones.

Enamel, the hardest animal tissue, covers the surface of the tusk and is present only on the tusk tip in young animals and is soon worn off and not replaced.

Ivory from different areas varies in hardness, translucency, ability to withstand temperature changes without cracking, and the tendency to turn yellow. The ivory of the east/southern African savannah elephant is soft compared with that of the West African forest elephant.

Once ivory is removed from an elephant body, it soon dries and begins to split unless it is stored in cool and moist conditions.

Ivory is often called "white gold" and its beauty lies in its texture.

Ivory is a material that is mythical and immortal, that people have sculpted for millennia. However, the appetite of Asians, Americans and Europeans for this semi-precious substance is responsible for the death of thousands of elephants. Ivory is the curse of elephants, too.

Reference: *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Elephants*, Salamander Books, 1991, UK.

BOOKS WANTED TO PURCHASE

REF members from the USA are trying to find Africana books for their collection and have asked for our help. Should anyone know where to get hold of these books or is willing to sell one of them, please contact Petra at the REF office.

1. Wright, Allan (1976), *Grey Ghosts at Buffalo Bend*, Galaxie Press, Salisbury, 136pp.

2. Wright, Allan (1972), *Valley of the Ironwoods*, T.V. Bulpin Publ. Cape Town, 397pp.

3. Meyer, Hans: *Across East African Glaciers: An Account of the first Ascent of Kilimanjaro*.

ENCOUNTERS OF A RHINO KIND

by Liz Stone

Black rhino are notorious for their temperament, quick to charge at the slightest provocation—for this reason it comes as no surprise that they are well-respected inhabitants of the bushveld.

One seldom has the opportunity of coming face to face with a live black rhino but, in December 1992, Liza Sutcliffe, her daughters Olivia and Georgie,* and I visited Bwana, the black rhino calf at the Animal Rehabilitation Centre (ARC), Pretoria.

The week before our visit Bwana had just settled into a new boma and it took some coaxing from Karen Trendler of ARC before he emerged to see exactly what all the fuss was about. When it became clear that he was on his best behaviour, we went into the boma for a closer black rhino inspection. Bwana good-naturedly tolerated our petting and took the opportunity to use all available knees and legs as rubbing posts—participation in this vigorous activity is definitely not recommended for anyone wearing shorts!

After a while the little rhino began to frisk about totally unaware of his tank-like strength—the bull-doing game was on! We soon realised we were no match for the playful youngster and made a hasty retreat to the safety zone, outside the boma.

The visit was both a privilege and an enlightening experience for us all. Bwana constantly made an almost pathetic bleating sound, described as "mfee", also made by adult black rhino. To the touch, the skin on a rhino's cheek is velvet-like, in total contrast to the thick, rough hide which covers the rest of its body. The prehensile lip is extremely mobile, rather like a finger, and Bwana had no problem in using it to manoeuvre a human finger into its mouth! If one considers that this young rhino weighs in at only 164 kilograms and is already so powerful, the effect of a charging



adult weighing 900-1200 kilograms is not difficult to imagine. Although reared in captivity, we were reminded that this small package of dynamite deserves to be treated with the

same degree of respect as any other wild black rhino.

Perhaps the most fascinating was Bwana's behaviour. He exhibits the typical, playful behaviour of any young animal and is obviously very intelligent—as an example, we bore witness to him "asking" Karen for his bottle (for the record, Bwana now drinks 18-21 litres of special rhino milk formula a day).

April 1993 will mark the start of another chapter in Bwana's life—he is to be relocated back to Lapalala where he was born and placed under the watchful eye of the resident staff.

*Liza, Olivia and Georgie Sutcliffe are co-authors of a delightful educational black rhino story book, "Romeo the Rhino", which they have generously offered to REF for the raising of funds specifically directed at black rhino conservation. Watch this space!

LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS

by Gary K. Clarke

It seems to me that there are a number of parallels between the management of wild animals in an African National Park and the management of wild animals in an American Zoological Park.

Both a Game Warden and a Zoo Director are dealing with animals: In the National Park it is with large populations of indigenous species; in the American Zoo it is with select individuals of a representative species. Both are dealing with people: visitors, staff, administrators and superiors, even governmental authorities. Both are dealing with budgets: operating budgets and capital improvement budgets, and usually funding is in short supply. Both are dealing with outside interested parties in a variety of projects: the news media, film crews, feature writers for magazines, students, scientists, and potential donors. Both depend upon public support, and both are dealing with difficult decisions and with emotional issues, sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

The uninitiated tend to think of animals in Africa as roaming, uninhibited and free, with nature taking its course. Wherever humans have set their foot they have left an indelible mark upon the habitat and thus the animal populations in that area. Animals

are just as managed in many National Parks in Africa as they're in the Zoological Parks of America.

I remember a situation at the Topeka Zoo when we had to make a difficult decision with an aged male Polar Bear. He was showing many signs of senility and had been under continuous veterinary treatment, possibly living another six months, but during that time he would be suffering. Death was inevitable, and that presented the following dilemma, should we euthanize the animal in his interest or make him as comfortable as possible and let him die by "natural causes"?

After much soul searching and careful deliberation the decision was made to euthanize the animal. This was not just "a Polar Bear"; it was an individual animal that we had known on a personal basis for over 20 years. It was an animal that had fathered a number of offspring in our Zoo. This made it not only a difficult, but painful decision as well.

A few months later in Zimbabwe I received word that an unusual situation had developed in Hwange National Park and I had been granted permission to be present on the scene.

At an established waterhole that had been frequented by a

wide variety of animals a half grown African Elephant had somehow wandered into the adjacent mudhole and become mired. In the animal's struggle to get out of the mudhole, it had sunk deeper and deeper. Game Management authorities had been alerted and were on the scene making every attempt to get the animal out of the mudhole. They tranquilized it so they could work safely around it, and heavy equipment had been brought to the scene.

The animal was just a little too big and a little too heavy to respond to efforts being made to help it. As time wore on the animal became more exhausted and its struggle to free itself from the mudhole, even with assistance, became more futile. Finally it had no choice but to give up.

Obviously the animal was going to die. The dilemma was: should the animal simply be left in the mudhole to die a slow and agonizing death, "where nature would take its course", or should the animal be euthanized by the Game Management staff and quickly and painlessly be put out of its misery.

I was standing next to the Game Warden and knew what was going through his mind. My thoughts flashed back to the Polar Bear decision we had faced in Topeka a few months previously.

The Game Warden's decision was to destroy the animal on the scene. With one well placed shot from a high powered rifle, the elephant was killed. The feeling I experienced at that moment was the same as when we euthanized our Polar bear—one of helplessness. You have done all you can do for the animal, but it just doesn't seem to be enough. Yes I do believe the action in both instances was in the best interest of the animal. Yes—as scientific as I try to be—I can't help but have emotional feelings about life and death decisions. Those involved in animal management—whether in the wild or in the Zoo will continue to face these difficult decisions. It truly is a cruel dilemma.

Gary K. Clarke, a REF member, was Director of Topeka Zoo in Kansas. He retired from this position in 1989 and is now owner/operator of a safari company specialising in photo safaris to Africa.

(THE ZOO CULTURIST, Winter 1992).



INTRACOR SUPPORTS RHINOS AND ELEPHANTS

Intracor Sales and Marketing Services not only joined the Rhino & Elephant Foundation as Corporate Supporters in 1992 but also made a commitment to donate a percentage from the proceeds of their guest amenity range, the "Savannah Collection", to the Foundation.

At a recent luncheon held at a Protea Hotel in Johannesburg, Ivan du Plooy, managing director of Intracor (left), is seen presenting their first contribution to the chairman of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation, Clive Walker.

Our sincerest thanks to Ivan and Intracor for their concern and commitment to Rhino and Elephant conservation and for their generous donation.

SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS

The following individuals and companies have recently made substantial contributions to the Foundation:

SA Breweries sponsored the new REF brochure.

Toyota SA provided vital vehicle spare parts for Zimbabwe's anti-poaching rhino operations at cost price.

R5000 was received from the **SA Hunters & Game Conservation Association**.

Mr Rudi Stoeger, a REF Member, who celebrated 25 years with the Phillips Group of Companies in South Africa, elected to donate a cheque to REF in lieu of a long service function.

REF was one of the beneficiaries in the **Lucky Horseshoe** competition and received R2000.

Personal donations to the Rhino & Elephant Foundation were made by numerous members and individuals from the public and by many other companies, schools, clubs and organisations.

To all of them a big THANK YOU on behalf of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation.



This 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper will be launched in March '93. Available from Haddons 493-3360.

DONATION IN MEMORIAM

In memory of Michael Cohen who loved animals and died tragically at sea in Nov 92—our sincerest thanks to Trevor Goott.

