

Reading past the headline

Writing in Dick Pitman's book (see Book Review on page 6) Lee Durrell, Honorary Director of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, tackles the 'unfashionableness' of single-species conservation:

Cathy Dean
Director

"The problem is the current perception that working with particular species - rhinos, elephants and cheetahs in Dick's case - deflects attention from the more important matter of whole ecosystems and their processes. What an oversimplified view! Good species conservationists do their utmost to bring attention to the factors which threaten their target species, to create an understanding of the context which explains the species' parlous state. **"**

It's a problem we often discuss. Our name, Save the Rhino International, couldn't be clearer about what we do. Our logo is easily recognisable. Our rhino costumes are world famous through the TV exposure our marathon runners have had. So although we're not quite up there with that panda organisation, we're pretty well-known: our brand packs a bigger punch than our weight. It's an enviable position to be in.

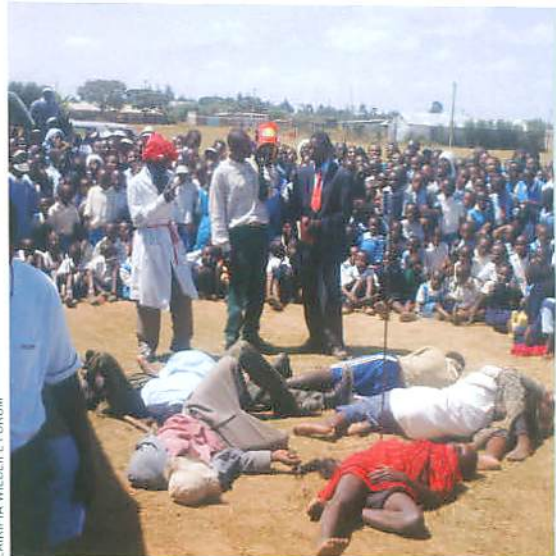
But I can't tell you how many times, when pitching to potential funders for grants, we receive a reply - often so quickly they must be speed readers to have read the proposal - saying, "Sorry, we don't fund animal charities" or "Sorry, we focus on the sick and deprived." I'd understand if we were operating an animal orphanage or rescue home, and we were asking for money to pay for the animals' feed and accommodation, but virtually all the proposals we submit to trusts and foundations deal with community conservation and environmental education. Even the proposals dealing with anti-poaching and monitoring work focus on salaries for rangers or game scouts, who in turn support families.

I am minded to conduct an experiment: to send the same proposal to the same funder, but with two headings. One copy would be on our stationery, called "Community conservation in Laikipia". The other would be on plain paper, and

called "Poverty reduction in Laikipia." Apart from that, no other changes. I wonder which is more likely to be successful? I am an honest person, I like to present things straight. Perhaps I need to be more tactical, if I'm to get people to read past the headline.

"Sorry, we don't fund animal charities or Sorry, we focus on the sick and deprived.**"**

LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM



Events Schedule:

ING New York City Marathon
Around the Horn comedy night
Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro
Rhino Climb Mount Kenya
The Sixth Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture
3 Peaks 3 Weeks film show
Flora London Marathon
Rhino MayDay
Rhino Cycle Namibia
Clay-pigeon shooting night
3 Peaks 3 Weeks
Rhino Trek India

Sunday 4 November 2007
Monday 21 January 2008
Dates to suit
Dates to suit
Wednesday 12 March 2008
Wednesday 19 March 2008
Sunday 13 April 2008
Wednesday 14 May 2008
9 - 21 May 2008 and 23 May - 4 June 2008
Friday 30 May 2008
October 2008 / January 2009
14 - 30 November 2008

For more information about any of these, please email events@savetherhino.org or alternatively call + 44 (0)20 7357 7474.