

Tanzania:

Translocation, Translocation, Translocation

In May 2009, we took delivery of three black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) from the Dvur Kralove Zoo in the Czech Republic. A translocation such as this takes at least two years to organise and prepare for. Logistics, practical preparations, bureaucracy, transport and funding have to run simultaneously with preparation of the rhino to undertake the journey. The rule of thumb is that nothing can be left to chance at any stage of the game.

Tony Fitzjohn

Field Director

George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust (GAWPT)

We are fortunate enough to work with arguably the best rhino vet in the world and his team. Dr Pete Morkel has been involved in the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary since 1993, both in surveying and assessing the area, advising on its construction, carrying out the first translocation of rhino from Addo National Park in South Africa and attending to the growing population of rhino over the past 13 years. He and I have notched up many years working together in the field and in the air.

Dr Dana Holeckova, the Director of the Dvur Kralove Zoo, had worked closely with Dr Hamish Currie of Back to Africa and selected Mkomazi as the destination for these rhino. Their tireless efforts in promoting and helping fund this translocation were admirable. Suzuki Rhino Club in The Netherlands agreed to support, organize and fund the translocation, most significantly the transport on a Martinair 747 aircraft.

Save the Rhino and Chester Zoo responded immediately to our cry for help, covering the international flight and visa costs for Pete Morkel.

The physical hard work in the field was carried out by Semu Pallangyo (Rhino Sanctuary Manager) and his team, with back up from GAWPT's personnel and equipment. Elisaria Nnko and Wilfred Ayo, our Tanzanian Trustees, also played a key role in the translocation. Elisaria had to spend nearly four months in Dar es Salaam trying to get the revenue authorities to allow the rhinos into Tanzania free of import duties. Overall, that is a very small team of dedicated people who were able to carry out a massive translocation.

The safety of the rhino once they arrived back in Africa was a priority throughout the translocation process and continues to be a priority today. Now that poaching, with ever-better armed and aggressive poachers, is on the rise again, security remains paramount and systems have to be maintained to the highest level. As reported in the last issue of *The Horn*, The Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary is 45 sq km with 31 kms of 10-foot electrified and alarmed fencing, patrolled by armed guards, fence gangs, mobile anti-poaching gangs and trackers. We have also built peripheral security outposts which are manned by armed guards. The fence is built along standard

Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary is 45 sq km with 31 kms of 10-foot electrified and alarmed fencing.

IMAGES: GAWPT

1

Tony and his team had to extend the Sanctuary in order to accommodate the new rhinos.

2

The rhinos are unloaded from the transporter plane at Kilimanjaro Airport.

3

Vet Pete Morkel implant horn transmitters to the new arrivals.

4

The Massey Ferguson tractor tows the rhinos in their crates to the bomas.

specifications both to stop rhino from breaking out, but also to stop armed poachers from breaking in and to protect the dedicated personnel who risk their lives every day to protect these animals.

When the Czech rhinos arrived at Mkomazi, their keepers Berry White and Honza settled them into their new lives and trained Emmanuel, Evans and Penieli in zoo techniques on caring for them in the compounds. They were then introduced into ever-increasing-sized paddocks until they settled into their own large sections. Pete Morkel returned to fit telemetry transmitters into their horns.

The three rhinos have been at Mkomazi for nearly a year now and they have adapted to their new lives well. We supplemented their feed with lucerne, horse-nuts and carrots during the prolonged dry season, whilst they adapted to the conditions and the vegetation. We now only give them carrots and they are thriving on the browse. Tsetse targets were set up every 200m in a 2km radius by Dr Idrissa Chuma of TANAPA (Tanzanian National Parks) within and around their sections, to allow them a gradual adaptation to the tsetse fly.

We have recently had to construct a second, third and fourth separation fence to keep a resident bull (James) out of their section. He had worked out how to weaken the fence posts and then pull them down with his horn without giving himself an electric shock on his lip. Plans are underway to move the Czech rhino to another separation area further north in the Sanctuary.

And just as we are drawing breath from this translocation, discussion is now underway to bring in more rhino to add to the Mkomazi population. We are very grateful indeed to Save the Rhino and Chester Zoo, which support the general running of this Rhino Sanctuary, the systems, the personnel, the security of these animals and great undertakings such as a translocation.

Maggie

We are delighted to announce that a calf born at Mkomazi in August 2009 to Lee, one of the original four females, has been named "Maggie", after Chester Zoo's Education Programmes Manager, Maggie Esson, who has done so much for Mkomazi's education programme, *Rafiki wa Faru*.

I worked with the Laikipia Wildlife Forum in 2000-1 and have been a keen supporter since then. Laikipia is important to rhino conservation, as its conservancies protect over half of Kenya's rhinos.

Hassan Sachedina

Alarming, in spite of a good run of successful protection, in recent times most sanctuaries in Laikipia, including the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (which had its first rhino poaching incident on Boxing Day 2009), have suffered rhino poaching losses. The problem is very local and very real.

The effort - dubbed the 'RhinoRide' - aimed to raise awareness about rhino conservation in general, and rhino conservation in Kenya in particular. My solo and unsupported ride began in San Diego on 2 November and took me along the US / Mexico border through California, Arizona, and New Mexico before being stopped by unseasonable snowstorms in Texas. Highlights (!) of my adventure included being shot at, experiencing sub-zero temperatures and sleeping in drainage ditches on the side of highways. The experience was fantastic and I met some wonderful people.

In total to date, I've cycled 1,350 miles and raised over \$5,000 which will, through Save the Rhino, go directly to Laikipia Wildlife Forum. Initially I aimed to raise \$4,200 - \$1 for each black rhino left in the world - but due to the generosity of donors, even in a recession year, I've beaten this target.

The challenge isn't over yet; I will finish the RhinoRide! Later in the year, once it has warmed up, there's a very good possibility that I will continue to ride starting in Del Rio, Texas and heading for the Atlantic Coast. Bring it on!

Thanks

We are really grateful to Hassan Sachedina for all that he has achieved so far and wish him the best of luck with the continuation of the RhinoRide. You can read chronicles of Hassan's trip at www.rhinoride.org and on Twitter at [hsachedina](https://twitter.com/hsachedina) (Keyword: #rhinoride). Additional donations can be made at www.firstgiving.com/rhinoride

DIY

If you fancy doing your own DIY challenge and raising money for Save the Rhino, then please e-mail fiona@savetherhino.org



HASSAN SACHEDINA

SAVE THE RHINO, SAVE THE CHEERLEADER!

That was the subject heading of the email that I sent out to my entire address book, after deciding that what I needed for 2010 was a challenge and that challenge should come in the shape of scaling Africa's highest peak for Save the Rhino.

Emma Chandler | Rhino Climber Kili

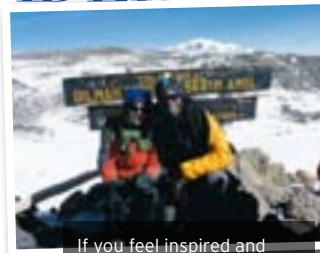
Somewhat predictably, the affirmative answers came only from the gutsiest in my circle; the competitive cheerleaders. Already Guinness World Record holders and National Champions, we were no strangers to the 'no pain, no gain' maxim but Kili, or the push for Kili, would prove to be our greatest challenge yet.

Fundraising for something like this takes up a lot of time and energy and as only recent converts to the rhino cause, we had to work hard to convince our nearest and dearest that 'Rodney' as I had christened all rhinos by this point, was indeed in danger and yes was very much worth saving. Of course it wouldn't be until almost five months later when we visited Mkomazi post climb that we would see for ourselves just how much the funds are needed for this amazing project.

Sitting in the company of Tony and Lucy Fitzjohn, hearing and seeing for ourselves the very real and sometimes dangerous struggle they go through for these amazing creatures' survival, what we'd done suddenly didn't feel like nearly enough.

Six cheerleaders left London on 19 February for an adventure on Kilimanjaro for Save the Rhino. Four summited, one reached Gilman's Point and another was so severely affected by altitude sickness that they were told they could not continue with the climb. We could not have achieved all we did, if not for the porters from Summits Africa nor without the support from Save the Rhino.

Next challenge? Something about trekking in South Africa?



If you feel inspired and fancy climbing Kili then call Fiona on 020 7357 7474 or e-mail fiona@savetherhino.org

IMAGES: EMMA CHANDLER

