

# care for the wild times

SPRING 2010



## A NEW HOME FOR RESCUED BEARS

Care for the Wild International (CWI) proudly announces a new partnership with Free the Bears Fund to provide an enclosure for rescued Asiatic black bears.

We are delighted to introduce Dinh and Lom who will soon be setting up home in their new enclosure at the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre in Laos. You may remember that this was the home of our beloved tiger Phet, who passed away in 2008. Since then, the enclosure has remained empty, but with the help of Free the Bears Fund, it will once again become a much needed sanctuary for animals rescued from a lifetime of misery.

Free the Bears Fund works to protect, preserve and enrich the lives of bears throughout the world. Since 1993, they have rescued 742 bears, including 18 in Laos. Although Laos is one of the poorest countries in the world, it has an abundance of wildlife living within its beautiful forests and mountains. Very little is known about the number of bears remaining in the wild, however it is believed that populations are in severe decline because of loss of habitat, and widespread illegal poaching to supply the Chinese medicine trade.

The Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre in Laos was constructed in 2002 after requests for help from the Luang Prabang Provincial Committee for the Care of Rescued Wildlife. Situated in the beautiful Tat Kuang Si Park, this sanctuary is now home to 12 Asiatic black bears who were rescued from hunters. The sanctuary is set in beautiful woodland with tall trees for the bears to climb, running streams and lots of twig piles for foraging.

Dinh and Lom, both Asiatic black bears, were rescued in August 2006. They had been confiscated from hunters by Lao government officials, following a high speed boat chase! It is likely they would have been sold to bile farms in neighbouring countries if they had not been rescued. Bear bile farms condemn bears to spend the rest of their lives in restrictive cages, periodically "milked" for their bile via a long needle, or through tubes pushed into permanent holes carved in their abdomens. Dinh and Lom had a lucky escape.

These two cubs were just a few months old when they arrived at the centre and were extremely stressed and malnourished. Dinh, which means 'earth' in Laos is now around four years old. A small, very pretty bear she has a distinct pencil thin crest marking on her chest and sparkling eyes. She may be tiny but she has a huge personality and is one of the smartest and most mischievous bears at the centre. She is very determined and loves extracting food from the large bear balls and can ►



# CWI welcomes a new orphan rhino



Many of our foster parents who adopted Shida will now know that he has become more and more independent from his carers at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) sanctuary in Kenya. It can be many days between his return visits to the stockades so we know that he will soon be a fully integrated wild rhino within Tsavo National Park. This is a wonderful testament to the work of the DSWT, however there is already another injured and traumatised rhino orphan in need of our help.

Say hello to Max. Two years ago, this baby rhino was found abandoned and confused. After careful observation, it soon became clear that Max's mother was not nearby, so the keepers decided to take Max to the sanctuary for his own safety. Once he had been checked over, it was discovered that Max was completely blind. Without his mother to protect him, Max could not survive alone in the wild. For this reason, he will stay at the sanctuary as a permanent resident, cared for and protected by the keepers for the rest of his life.

Despite not having his eyesight, Max is a very lucky rhino. With around 600 black and 300 white rhinos, Kenya has the world's third largest rhino population. However, back in the 1970s black rhinos numbered some 20,000 so populations have been decimated in the past 40 years. Last year saw the worst rhino poaching in recent times with 12 black

and six white rhinos killed. The illegal trade is driven by Asian demand for rhino horn used in traditional medicines. However, scientific studies have found no medicinal properties in rhino horn. The horn is made of keratin, the same type of protein that makes up human hair and fingernails. It is also prized in Yemen and Oman where it is used to make handles for ceremonial daggers.

Actions against rhino poaching will be high on the agenda at this year's meeting of CITES and you can read more about this on our website or in the CITES article on page 5 of this magazine. Rhino horn may be worth more than its equivalent weight in gold, but CWI feels that protecting Max and his fellow wild rhinos against poachers and illegal wildlife traffickers is worth so much more.

**Adopt Max and give him a new life for only £24.95 per year. The gift pack includes:**

- Personalised certificate
- Cuddly rhino toy
- Rhino factsheet
- CWI window sticker
- Adoption updates



Phone **01306 627900** or go directly to **[www.careforthewild.com/adoptions](http://www.careforthewild.com/adoptions)**

## COLLABORATIVE INTELLIGENCE TO FIGHT TIGER TRADE IN SOUTH INDIA

Our conservation partner **Ashok Kumar**, Vice Chairman of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), reports on efforts to curtail the trade in tiger products.

Reports of increased tiger numbers in southern India come as very welcome, positive news at a time when tiger populations worldwide continue to fall. Sadly, however, the reports have also generated interest amongst poachers and traders, and there has been an increase in tiger poaching and trade in the states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), with the support of CWI, has been working with Indian state and central government authorities to bring this menace to the country's national animal under control. The work involves gathering tiger-focused intelligence, and enforcing controls on the trade in tiger parts, products and derivatives.

The partnership enjoyed some success recently, with the seizure of a tiger skin from three traders by the Kerala Forest Department. Following the seizure, WTI

assisted the intelligence cell of the Forest Department in the investigation of the illegal sale of a tiger skin and three leopard skins. Posing as customers, WTI staff members identified the skins as old trophies with ownership certificates, the sale of which is still illegal in India. If they had been sold, they could have been used as cover for further illegal trade. The timely intervention of state and government officials successfully discouraged the owner from trading the skins.

WTI is now working on setting up a formal collaboration with the Kerala Forest Department and central government authorities, whereby informers are



rewarded for tip-offs that lead to the seizure of illegal wildlife products and the arrest of poachers and traders. Such simple initiatives can go a long way in controlling wildlife trade in the region.