



What does the future hold for Save the Rhino?

I have astigmatism, a common eye complaint which means that I have trouble seeing fine detail. Apparently it gets worse with age. Perhaps understandably, I'm finding it difficult to see where Save the Rhino might be in 10 years' time. **My greatest wish is that in 2020, we won't be around.** Not because we've gone bust, or because rhinos have undergone the sixth extinction, but because there are 10s of 1,000s of rhinos. That would be wonderful.

Cathy Dean | Director

Given that poaching is at a 15-year high, this is highly unlikely so, on the assumption we're still needed, here are 10 predictions.

1 With the possible exception of the Southern white rhino, all rhino species will need support

If black rhinos maintain the growth rate of the last 15 years, by 2020 there would be 6,330; a respectable number, but probably still not enough to demote them from the Critically Endangered category on the IUCN's Red List. Sumatran and Javan rhinos will need much longer than 10 years before they are out of danger. Greater one-horned should do better.

2 The current crisis in rhino poaching will continue and even escalate

Only a reduction in demand from countries like Vietnam and China will be enough to stop the illegal trade. How might this be achieved? Legalise the trade? Poison rhino horns? Run education programmes in Asia to try to change attitudes? Hope that a younger generation rejects centuries-old TCM (traditional Chinese medicine)?

3 Our funds will be needed Ongoing running costs (salaries, vehicles, fuel, kit) of basic anti-poaching and monitoring costs will need donor support. Tourism is too fickle for Park entry fees to pay for everything; and other opportunities for self-generated income are limited.

4 As the human population grows, pressure on land will increase and

so will human-wildlife conflict

Unless there is an economic value to wildlife (whether from photographic tourism, cropping or 'farming' or hunting), land currently given over to wildlife will instead be used for food production.

5 Conservation will become more expensive As the effects of climate change begin to make themselves felt, land that is currently suitable for rhinos will become not so; whether through drought (northern Kenya) or flooding (Assam). Ecological carrying capacity will decline, and even more pro-active management of rhino populations will become necessary.

I'd say blurry was comforting... Enough gloom; I shall allow myself a few positive predictions.

6 Partnerships with other funders will be vital We already work closely with our friends at the International Rhino Foundation, Chester Zoo and US Fish & Wildlife Service, as well as with other charities such as DSWF and Tusk. Together we are stronger!

7 Environmental education programmes will begin to take effect If the kids watching Laikipia's Unity Cup (see page 7), who pledged 'I will give a red card to environmental destruction and defend our natural heritage', grow up as passionate about conservation as they are now, there is hope.

MARK CARWARDINE

Above: Skulls retrieved from animals killed by poachers, Mkhaya Game Reserve, Swaziland.

Below: The teams at the Laikipia & Beyond Unity Cup.



LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

8 Sooner or later, we will land a major funding application for community/natural resource management projects in key rhino areas We work with some great field programmes who'd make excellent candidates for development aid. This will catapult us onto a new level of working.

9 Eventually, the Virgin London Marathon will choose an environmental charity as official partner We've applied five times. I am not giving up. Of course I'd love it to be Save the Rhino, but most of all I want to see 35,000 runners and several million spectators go green.

10 We will continue to be savvy about new media It was 1996 and I was 30 years old when I sent my first email. Now I'm Save the Rhino's most prolific tweeter. A tiny charity we might be, but we have to keep up with the big boys.

We can't afford not to focus.

