



The Crash

The newsletter for rhino professionals

IRKA

October 2011

2011 Board of Directors Results

IRKA Board of Directors Elections

The International Rhino Keeper Association held its fifth annual election for the Board of Directors (BOD). The voting was done electronically and took place July 1st – 15th. The results were announced on August 15th, and we would like to extend our congratulations to Jane Kennedy, Wendy Shaffstall, and Jennifer Conaghan. The BOD positions will begin on September 1st, 2011 and last three years.

The BOD is dedicated to ensuring the IRKA progresses toward its goals, and is accountable to the membership. As an organization we need all of our members input to improve the future for all species of rhinoceros as well as directly addressing conservation, education, and captive management issues.

IRKA was created to benefit rhinos and rhino keepers worldwide. Become a professional member, and help us create a great organization!

Stephanie Richmond

Limited edition prints for sale!!!!



"Tender Moments"

A signed Limited Edition

Prints are available for sale! Last year Dave Brunger along with some of his work colleagues climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise funds for black rhino conservation work at the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania.

To continue to raise funds for this vital work at Mkomazi, he has painted and produced limited edition prints (250 prints) of a photograph taken by his colleague Helen Massey which is in the 2012 IRKA calendar. In addition, Dave would like to auction the original print to raise additional funds for this project that is close to his heart. Please go to his website www.dbartworks.co.uk and click SAVE A RHINO tab for further details!

From the Editor:

Greetings everyone!

It was really good to see so many new faces at the 2011 Rhino Keeper Workshop at Fossil Rim! We have a lot of great opportunities coming up for member participation, so keep your eyes open in the next few months. Jane Kennedy is already hard at work planning the 2013 Workshop in San Diego, and it already looks amazing!

Keep those articles coming!

Best wishes,

Chris Bobko



If ONLY this were true! Happy Fall!

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IRKA Facebook Update : Jonnie Caprio

Thanks to all our members, the IRKA Facebook page is really taking off! Since the recent Keeper Workshop, we've gained more exposure on Facebook and increased our "likes" to 855. Please continue to suggest this page to your friends and colleagues who may be interested in what we do.



Please share any facility news that's relevant to your rhinos. Usually, anything that has already been posted on a zoo's Facebook page, website, or in a press release is fair game to share on the IRKA page. Be sure to adhere to your zoo's social media policy when deciding what to post. We're working on a social media model to offer more opportunities to share detailed rhino news and accomplishments. Thanks so much for supporting the page and looking forward to seeing more posts!



2011 Rhino Keeper Workshop Immobilization Summary: Wendy Shaffstall

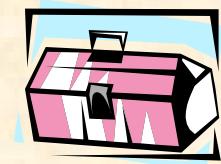
RHINOCEROS IMMOBILIZATION DATA

Information was garnered from 2011 Rhino Keeper Workshop working group discussions and is generalized for all species, unless otherwise noted.

Preparation for procedure:

General supplies needed:

Thick cotton rope	Rubber mats	Sand bags/inner tubes
Straps/fire hose	Come-a-longs	Towels/blankets
Trash bucket	Extension cords	Supplemental lighting
Binoculars	Tool box w/pliers, etc.	Hay/straw bales
Hoof trimming supplies	Water bucket	Flashlight
Wood wedge for teeth	Cattle prod	Ultrasound machine
Cotton/Fabric ear	First aid kit	Leather gloves
Vehicle (go run to get additional supplies and/or equipment)		
Push boards for directing animal if immobilization is to take place in larger space		



Suggestion of weather dependent supplies:

Portable fans

Ice

Readily available water source with hose

Tarp or Portable shade structure

Supplemental heat



Due to possible extenuating circumstances should have the following readily/quickly available:

Welder

Chainsaw

Forklift-backhoe

Portable generator





Planning meeting :

Should be attended by participating personnel (veterinary staff, veterinary technicians, curators, keeper staff, and a maintenance staff person)

Topics to be discussed:

- 1) Barring emergency circumstances, where will immobilization take place (inside pen , outside holding area, on exhibit, in the field, etc.)?
- 2) What procedure(s) will be taking place (foot work, wound treatment, reproductive assessment, etc.)?
- 3) Does any equipment need to be in place prior to the procedure for desensitization?
- 4) Will this be standing, or full, immobilization /
- 5) Preferred recumbence if full immobilization (lateral versus sternal?)
- 6) What time will procedure begin?
- 7) Estimate of time required for specified procedure?
- 8) What elective procedure(s) might be completed, as time allows?



9) Delegation of responsibility:

Who is person in charge during the procedure

What keeper (probably accompanied by a veterinary staff member to record relevant time parameters) will monitor animal after narcotics are administered?

Who makes decision regarding presence of excessive and/or unnecessary personnel?

Who is person responsible for employee transport in case of emergency?

What is each individual person's responsibility?

If immobilization is to take place on exhibit (or in view of public) who will be responsible for crowd control and interacting with visitors? If it will involve another department, be sure to include them in planning meeting so their role is established, clearly defined and they are knowledgeable about information they are permitted to convey to the visitors.

10) Chemical agents:

Will pre-sedation with oral medication be done?

Safety protocol to be followed (drug handling, reversal agent, needle/syringe disposal)

Administration: hand injection versus darting

How injection site will be identified/marked to avoid direct contact

Gloves (required or not?)

11) Contingency plan for emergency:

Procedures to follow in person comes into contact with opioid

What developments might dictate rapid reversal of animal

Staff escape routes

Rapid equipment removal plan

12) Extenuating circumstances to consider :

For example – if female is still nursing s calf, need to address:

Will timing of procedure enable staff to condition calf for routine separation prior to procedure?

When should calf be separated from dam (if not part of a routine process)?

When, and how, should calf be re-united with dam?

Where is calf going to be located, so it will avoid stimulating female with vocalizations, etc.

13) Dietary restrictions:

Example of restrictions that could be implemented, but each institution will have their own criteria based on veterinary recommendation and/or procedurally dependent circumstances:

Withhold grain ration 48 hours prior to procedure

Withhold hay ration 24 hours prior to procedure

Remove water source 12 hours prior to procedure

Need to clearly delineate where non-animal personnel (students, veterinary interns, media, public relations persons, etc.) are permitted to be during procedure and knowledge of safety protocol in case an emergency situation arises.

14) Pen preparation:

Remove toys from area

Remove salt blocks

Remove logs or branches

May need to cover bars (either with padding or plywood) to deter horn from getting caught in between them – consideration to discuss in planning meeting and installation should be done in advance for desensitization

Put in some mats in preparation for immobilization, additional ones can be left outside pen for use during procedure

Use hay/straw bales to block corners and/or put in water trough to avoid entanglement

Drain water trough (at pre-determined time)



Induction



A) Chemical agents

- Pre- sedation being done? (see planning meeting discussion point)
- Administered intramuscularly (IM) via dart or hand injection
- Each veterinarian and/or institution may have a specific “cocktail” of narcotics they prefer to use
- Some agents commonly used are Etorphine (“M99”), Detomidine (“Dormosedan”), and Butorphenol
- After injection, ambient lighting and environmental noise should be reduced since it could inadvertently stimulate the animal
- Most narcotics used have reversal compounds (such as Naltrexone)
- **Supplemental drugs may be administered if:**
 - ◊ Need to increase recumbancy
 - ◊ If animal needs slight suppression of movement
 - ◊ Require more muscular relaxation
 - ◊ Animal appears to be progressing towards a lighter plane of anesthesia than what is desired
 - ◊ Generally will see onset of symptoms in 5 – 10 minutes and in 15 – 20 will see full effect.

B) Behaviors that may be seen:

- Bumping into walls due to the reduction in visual acuity and spatial awareness
- General disorientation
- Head pressing
- High or exaggerated stepping
- Stumbling
- Pacing or walking in an attempt to “fight” narcotic effect
- Explosive exhalation



C) Circumstances to try and avoid:

- Excessive movement in the animal area until animal is fully under anesthetic effect and eyes are covered (towel or hood)
- Try not to make unnecessary noise in the animal area, wait until ears are plugged before bringing in additional personnel or moving in any equipment
- Unnecessary conversation

Procedure

- Pen should be already prepared, but additional mats and/or hay/straw bales can be outside the pen in case they are needed
- Make sure eyes are covered and ears plugged once animal is recumbent
- Depending on procedure, animal re-positioning may be required (come-a-longs, ropes, straps, etc.)
- Try to have additional padding or inner tubes to reduce pressure on shoulder, etc.
- Sand bags or inner tubes can be used to elevate head slightly to avoid potential eye abrasion on substrate
- Will generally have oxygen tube placed in nostril, will probably have pulse oximeter (on ear or caudal fold of tail, eye lid, etc.), heart and breathing rate monitored, IV line established and rectal thermometer (normal 98°) taken before any procedures are initiated.
- Staff may need to routinely massage legs every 20 minutes to ensure sufficient circulation
- A lighter plane of anesthesia could be indicated by seeing animal wiggling ear, wagging tail, legs twitching/pulling
- Conversation should be limited to avoid over-stimulating the animal.



Reversal

- Remove any ropes or straps that may be on animal
- Remove inner tubes or sand bags under head
- Get all equipment and personnel out of the pen (and surrounding area) prior to administering any reversal agents.
- Replenish substrate, and clean area, if needed (blood can cause olfactory stimulation and potentially agitate the animal)
- Reduce ambient lighting again
- Set up any doors, gates, etc. that may have been re-configured temporarily for procedure
- Usually portion of reversal will be given intramuscularly (IM) and a portion given intravenously (IV)
- Make sure everyone and everything is secure prior to reversal agents being administered – clearly communicate with each other
- Extraneous personnel out of the area and only person(s) designated to monitor animal should remain and these individuals will remain quiet and somewhat stationary to avoid stimulating animal as it recovers
- Remove eye covering and ear plugs
- Usually will see an increase in breathing rate as first indication, then increase in body manipulation and finally standing up (generally within 10 minutes after reversal agents administered, but could take as long as 30 minutes)
- Let animal rest – don't try to accelerate movement or over stimulate it
- Don't plan on re-introducing calf until dam is fully awake and ambulatory



Recovery and monitoring

- Signs of re-narcotization can occur after effects of reversal antagonists wear off, should watch for:
 - Pacing
 - Excessive sleepiness
 - Should not fall back to lateral recumbence
 - Head pressing
 - High or exaggerated stepping
- Monitoring by staff should be done for about an hour, then can be reduced in frequency and periodically for a minimum of 8 hours
- Veterinary staff should be updated on animal's status prior to keeper staff departure for the day
- Review follow up care and medication schedule (if needed) with veterinary staff
- Establish resumption of feeding regime – usually 8 hours post-procedure ½ normal hay ration can generally be given
- Establish when access to water can be given (free access or limited quantity)
- Grain ration feeding can usually resume the following day and full hay ration quantity can usually be fed.





RAD Rhinos : Mike Connolly – Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum

Those of us who have the opportunity to work with rhinos on a daily basis know just what incredibly magnificent animals they are. We also know of the “wow” factor they have as a charismatic mega-vertebrate. At the Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum we capitalize on this by holding an annual dedicated day to rhinos that we call “Rhino Awareness Day” or “RAD” for short. This annual event started several years ago and originated from dedicated pachyderm staff.



Initially the event was intended to help generate interest and publicize our annual “Bowling for Rhinos” fundraising event. However, over the years it has grown into much more. The primary objective of “RAD” nowadays is to help create a greater deal of rhino awareness by highlighting the uniqueness and importance of rhinos worldwide. We also attempt to correct any misconceptions about the species and to recognize them for their importance in the animal kingdom. Granted we do still plug our “Bowling for Rhinos” (BFR), fundraising event as well and with both events planned relatively close together a significant amount of positive public relations occurs solely for rhinos.

At the Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum, we house two white rhinos. Our female rhino, Jeannie, is 31 and our male rhino, Buzbie, is 30 and both have resided in Tulsa most of their life. We are fortunate that both rhinos are relatively laid back and comfortable with guest interaction. Our management team supports “RAD” and during the event we allow guests to make that emotional connection with our rhinos by providing them with an up close and personal experience (rhino permitting). We feel lucky to have a dedicated group of volunteers who assist with the event as well. Assistance takes many forms and the volunteers are always willing to help in any way possible. We often have a craft activity set up that in some way, shape, or form focuses on rhinos. This year we had a life size rhino footprint that guests traced out to compare to their own foot size that they could take home with them. We also provided a coloring activity with all five species of rhinos. Our marketing department has assisted in creating brochures for distribution the day of the event. The event also includes buttons for sale with images of rhinos and we also have pamphlets/brochures available highlighting the International Rhino Foundation as well as information related to our annual BFR event. Various rhino bio facts that include horn and hair are also provided by our education department. Our exhibits department has also provided various signage and banners for the event. Most popular, of course, is the opportunity to touch a real rhino. As you can imagine, the comments vary. “I had no idea they were so soft”, “Wow they sure like the mud”, “What is their horn made from?”, “I thought all rhinos were mean”, include just a few of the comments. What intrigues me the most about the event is watching guests light up with huge smiles on their faces and watching parent and child bond not only with one another but our rhinos and making memories together!



The event has become so popular that our marketing department has put the event on their annual calendar and made it a stand alone day on their “Mammoth May” promotions. This past year, I lost count as to how many radio, newspaper, and local television affiliates were present for the media day leading up to the event. On many occasions we have had guests plan trips to the zoo specifically because they heard about the event. This past year resulted in record attendance. Thus far we have always held the event in May and been fortunate to have had good (although sometimes hot) weather. Hours for the event have varied but usually average 3-4 hours in duration as our rhinos definitely have an attention span.



We are lucky to have permission to place a donation container out at the event. Even though we do not charge for the rhino “meet and greet”, guests often feel compelled to donate to conservation efforts. These donations allow us to support the International Rhino Keepers Association (IRKA) as an institutional supporter and provide funds for our BFR campaign as well. We have discovered that after making that direct connection, visitors are often more than willing to make a donation. Many feel lucky for the experience and appreciative of our efforts.

As you can see, we can make a difference. Combining dedication with creativity we can accomplish many great things. We all know rhinos need our help and with grassroots efforts such as RAD we are in a better place to assist them. For whatever reason, a vast majority of the public remains unaware of the challenges rhinos and other wildlife face. It is up to us to help drive the message home through effective educational awareness in hopes that more people will become advocates for rhino conservation. As both a flagship and keystone species, rhinos need our help and I hope you will join us in continued efforts aimed at their conservation and preservation. After all, rhinos are RAD! Who better than us realize that and can do something about it?



~Those who say it can't be done should not interfere with those who are doing it~



Institutional Supporters

The Supporting Institutional Membership is for any conservation organization , or zoological institution which supports rhino conservation in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the IRKA. These memberships are available for \$100, \$200, \$500 and \$2000. Why should your zoo be interested in joining on this level? If your institution contributes on the \$500 level then all rhino keepers membership fees at your zoo are waived! It is important that as the IRKA grows that we continue to garner the support from all facilities that are responsible for the protection and management of all species of rhinoceros. We would like to extend our appreciation for this substantial support to the following institutions, and hopefully we can add your zoo to this growing list! If you have questions about institutional memberships or any other questions please contact us at

internationalrhinokeeperassoc@gmail.com.

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