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Spring edition of the Crash

1 message

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The Crash

March 2022 "Spring Edition"

The IRKA newsletter: the leading network connecting rhino keepers.

President's Perspective

It is the moment you all have been waiting for! The IRKA is very excited to announce our next Rhino Keeper Workshop will be hosted by The Wilds in 2023! I know we all are eager to meet in person and share the best practices of rhino management and conservation. It has been a long wait, but I guarantee you the wait will be worth it. Cody Cseplo, IRKA BOD member, and rhino keeper at The Wilds, is already hard at work starting up the process organizing the RKW. Please keep an eye out in further editions of the CRASH, IRKA social media pages, and the IRKA website for further details of the 2023 RKW in the near future.



While we wait to meet in person at the next RKW, we are still holding our monthly webinars. In March, we are doubling up and hosting 2 webinars! A couple weeks ago we heard from Eric Loft at White Oak Conservation Center, presenting about their bachelor herd management of white rhinos. On March 24th, we are going to hear from Elise Serfontein, from Stop Rhino Poaching, South Africa. Elise has been a great friend and partner of the IRKA for many years. She came over to the United States to be a keynote speaker at the 2019 Rhino Keeper Workshop at Disney. Stop Rhino Poaching was a recipient of the funds raised from the 2017 rhino conservation calendar, and a recipient of an IRKA donation to support ranger training in 2021. On Thursday, March 24th, she will be sharing the newest projects that Stop Rhino Poaching has been working on and the challenges they have faced the past couple of years. Make sure to register for this webinar on the IRKA website! If you are eager to get involved and learn more from your colleagues before the next RKW, Tanganyika Wildlife Park and Sedgwick County Zoo in partnership will be hosting a Training and Enrichment Seminar (TERS) in September 2022! This is a great way to get involved and learn other management practices from IRKA members. Check out Sierra Smith's article on more details and when to register.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to congratulate IRKA's Vice President, Chris Bobko, on her retirement from the Denver Zoo after being a rhino keeper there for 32 years! It is an end of an era when Chris retired from Denver, but there are new beginnings for Chris as she moved to Texas to care for rhinos and educate people about rhino conservation in a very unique way! We wish Chris the best of luck with her new rhinos and facility!

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T.E.R.S.



Tanganyika Wildlife Park, in partnership with Sedgwick County Zoo and the International Rhino Keepers Association, will be hosting a Training and Enrichment Regional Seminar September 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2022

Tanganyika Wildlife Park is located outside of Wichita, Kansas and is home to a pair of Indian rhinos and will soon be home to a crash of White rhinos. This highly interactive zoo is a wildly different place to visit and we're opening up our learning lab to IRKA members.

Participants will see both Indian rhino and white rhino training and enrichment demonstrations at Tanganyika. In addition to observing the rhinos in action they will participate in a training workshop and enrichment making session. Sedgwick County Zoo, which is located in Wichita, Kansas, is home to Eastern black rhinos. At Sedgwick, participants will go behind the scenes to see their rhino and elephant areas and watch training sessions.

Both facilities will also give participants access to experience each facility. A portion of the workshop will be dedicated to presentations from participating facilities. Our main goal will be to allow time and opportunity for keepers from the region to connect with other rhino professionals.



September 9th will be an optional "bonus day" that will include 5 interactive meet and greets at Tanganyika as well as admission to the park and animal feeding opportunities. Tanganyika also boasts a beautiful on-site Airbnb that will be available to participants on a first come, first serve basis. Additional details on the housing and "bonus day" will be available once participants have registered.



Registration will open April 1st

We look forward to seeing everyone and getting to talk about rhinos!

If you have any questions, please can contact Sierra Smith at thesierrasmith0@gmail.com

Sierra Smith
Tanganyika Wildlife Park

IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

Racine Zoo's Wino's for Rhinos Night



Racine, WI- This year marks the Racine Zoo's, eighth annual Winos for Rhinos fundraising event. This is a lively evening promoting conservation, education, and the two Eastern Black Rhinos that call the Racine Zoo home. When Beth Heidorn started as director in 2015 she looked for innovative new ways to showcase the zoo and bring in a larger variety of guests. After talking to community members, service organizations, and past guests, it became apparent that many of them had not been to the zoo in years. It highlighted the need to get adults to come back to visit. We needed new ideas to interest them and show it is not just a place for kids or the family. That year we held a trial, World Wine Wednesday event that brought in a large crowd. After seeing this success, it became clear there was an under-utilized event opportunity here. Thus began the task of picking a species to highlight, creating an event to pair them with, and of course getting creative with a name!



The Winos for Rhinos event showcase an informative presentation on different rhino species by animal care staff and a lovely dinner and wine selection. The evening is broken into five courses and wine pairings, one course for each extant species of rhino. The event takes place on the main floor inside our historic castle building. One side of the building contains eloquently set tables for guests to eat at, focused around a large projection screen while the other side contains tables for a silent auction, animal presenter, and 50/50 raffle. When guests arrive, they are greeted by an ambassador animal and someone from our education department. Once everyone is settled the sommelier or wine specialist gives a description of the type of wine, followed by the chef describing the food pairing. While they dine, guests get an in depth look at each species habitat, diet, varying characteristics, population/distribution, plights they face and what is being done for conservation. We open the floor for questions after each species. At the end of the slideshow, we go over the daily husbandry, enrichment and training that goes into caring for our Eastern Black Rhinos: one male, Kianga (19) and one female, Timu (21). The evening is a fun and exciting way to interact with guests that might not normally come to the zoo and promote rhino conservation.



At the end of the evening the auction proceeds, 50/50 raffle winnings, and the tips for conservation (tip jars set up on the bars) go into our conservation fund. Throughout the year we add to this fund through various events and donations. At the end of the year our animal care department then votes for what organization(s) to send out our proceeds too.

Sophie Erickson



Next Webinar in the series will be
MARCH 24th
7 pm EST

Join us for an evening with **Elise Serfontein**, the Founding Director of StopRhinoPoaching.com, a South African based NGO that she established in 2010 as a response to the escalating rhino crisis in South Africa



Register Now



Enrichment To Think About
at Henry Doorly Zoo

Winners of the Hose2Habitat "Grandest Prize"

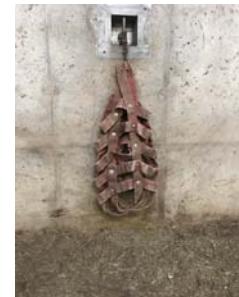
Over the past few years Omaha hoofstock has challenged themselves to break away from an old-school mentality of free loading an animal's daily diet. Contra freeloading has improved the welfare of multiple animals throughout the hoofstock department. The rhinos have greatly benefited from this change. Hay that used to be piled in a stall or stuffed in a hay rack has shifted to being scattered all over a stall, stuffed in hay bags, barrels, or corrugated pipes. Grain that was once fed only in a bowl has now moved to being fed in boomer balls, nose-its, PVC feeders, pipes, and tires. This mindset change has not only challenged the rhinos but has challenged the keepers to create new ways to add complexity to the rhinos' grazing and foraging behaviors. The Indian rhinos specifically have quickly figured out how to pull, flip, or roll a feeder to get their diet inside. As enrichment items have increased in complexity, the animals' daily time budget has been more appropriately met. The following videos and pictures are just a few ways that the hoofstock keepers at Omaha zoo have offered more enrichment opportunities.



"Our first Grandest Prize is awarded to the Hoofstock Team at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. Josiah House submitted several entries worthy of prizes, so you choose which one you think this is for....we couldn't decide!"

In addition to contra freeloading the hoofstock crew has sought to increase the complexity of the holding areas. Adding wall anchors and cables have allowed for hanging different objects that the rhinos can rub on, pull food out of, or knock around. These enrichment items have gone through many different

alterations to figure out what best works for the rhino to interact with. Over time the enrichment has gone from leaving a tire or barrel on the ground to hanging them. From there, keepers produced different materials that the rhinos would have a unique experience interacting with.



The rolling log feeder was designed to prolong the grain time for the rhinos. The Indian rhinos quickly figured out the boomer ball or noseit and needed something more complex. The rolling log feeder is used by spinning grain down into the coils of the corrugated pipe. Then as the rhino rolls the pipe the grain slowly falls out. This item also added a larger size grain feeder that forced the rhino to put more effort into moving the feeder.

[Rolling log feeder Video](#)

The PVC feeder, known as grain-ception, was also designed to extend the grain time for the rhinos. The feeder is made up of multiple sizes of pvc stacked inside each other. Each level of pvc has one or two holes that allows the grain to fall through and then eventually fall onto the ground. This feeder challenges the rhino as it takes several times rotating the feeder before grain falls out.

[watch grain-ception](#)

Josiah House
Omaha Zoo

For more ideas from Hose2Habitat visit their website
hose@habitat.org

[Bobko says goodbye to an era](#)



When many of us started in the rhino keeping business, we all dream of making it a lifelong passion and career. One of the most dedicated, passionate, and hard-working people I know has made that dream become a reality. Chris Bobko, IRKA's Vice President, has now been a rhino keeper for over 32 years, has recently hung up her hat and retired from the Denver Zoo. There, she has worked with both the black and greater one-horned rhino and has made astronomical achievements in improving rhino management practices. Mshindi, a male eastern black rhino that resided at the Denver Zoo, was the rhino Chris Bobko fell in love with and inspired her to be a driving force for rhino conservation, also making a patent "Diceros Boots" which is a custom boot made for rhinos with foot problems. That inspiration has not faded at all during her 32 years as a rhino keeper, and in fact, it has only become stronger. She continues to be a leader in fundraising efforts to support rhino conservation projects of the International Rhino



Foundation. Even though Chris has retired from the Denver Zoo, her work with rhinos has not come to an end as she accepted a job as a senior rhino keeper at the "Rhinory" in Fredericksburg, TX! The "Rhinory" is a vineyard where rhinos and wine meet for a unique Hill Country experience. They recently acquired, Blake, a 4-year-old, male southern white rhino, from Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, TX. Chris, and Blake, will be able to interact and educate many visitors that would otherwise not have the opportunity to learn about the plight of the rhino. I would like to congratulate Chris for her long tenure and achievements at the Denver Zoo, and for her new journey with rhinos in Texas! Cheers to Chris and rhinos!



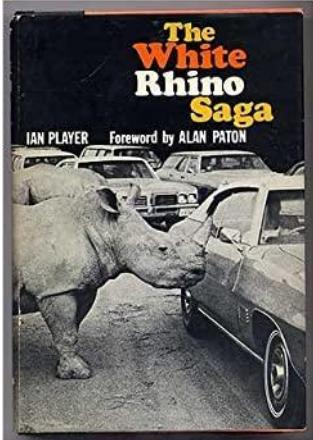
**IRKA is happy to announce that we are in the beginning stages planning for a
2023 Rhino Keeper Workshop
hosted by
the Wilds**

Stay tuned for more details as they develop



Book Review
The White Rhino Saga
by Ian Player

The White Rhino Saga offers an incredible recounting of the early days of 'Operation Rhino' from one of its main architects and executors, the late Dr. Ian Player. The text starts by painting a most detailed picture of the conditions that necessitated the preservation of the Southern white rhino due to overhunting and loss of habitat. Follow along as Dr. Player is presented with the unique problem of managing Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve; a park with few staff, constant attempts of overuse and settlement, and a unique problem for the



time of having an abundance of white rhino. He and several other great minds are tasked with pioneering tranquilization, capture, and translocation techniques to be used for this project. Player presents this groundbreaking work in meticulous, and sometimes graphic, detail as they work to conquer a mountain of unknowns, shortcomings, and adversity. The story climaxes with the perfection of rhino capture and translocation and a glimpse into some of the early events that made up 'Operation Rhino': the movement of over 4000 Southern white rhino to form insurance populations in parks in Africa as well as in managed populations across the world.

A man of his time, Dr. Player's detailed and often blunt recounting of this tale serves as a vessel for those filled with a passion for these magnificent creatures to be immersed in this important chapter of history. His passages also provide the unique opportunity for us to have a glimpse into the past lives of animals that many of us, or the professionals that came before us, may have personally worked with. It also serves as a reminder for how far we have come. Kruger National

Park would not be the rhino stronghold it is today if it were not for this work, nor would institutions such as San Diego Safari Park or Dvur Kralove. It successfully illustrates what sheer dedication can overcome and how their work has paved the way for the work we do today.

Cody Cseplo

Did you know the IRKA has a blog?!!

We have recently added a blog spot on our website.

Stay up-to-date with the latest news from all our members, including special births, professional development opportunities, workshop details and more.

Sign up below to follow our blog!

BLOG

Correspondences

Transfers:

Fort Worth Zoo received female GOH "Asha" from the **San Diego Zoo**
The Rhinory received male white rhino "Blake" from **Fossil Rim Wildlife Center**

New Members

Collin Beatty-----	Zoo Tampa
Julia Burke-----	Zoo Tampa
Blayne Kirksey-----	Zoo Tampa
Carsyn Socorro-----	Zoo Tampa
Laura Stotzer-----	Zoo Tampa
Lexi Buchanan-----	Tulsa Zoo
Jordan Patch-----	Animal Adventure Park
Chris Killelea-----	Columbus Zoo
Charlie Sammut-----	Monterey Zoo
Kelly Murphy Darko-----	Monterey Zoo
Sanka Troia-----	Monterey Zoo
Devan Powers-----	Fossil Rim Wildlife Center



New Conservation Partners



Conservation Partners are conservation organization or zoological institution which supports rhino conservation in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the IRKA. These partnerships often provide discounts for the supporting institution . It is important that as the IRKA grows we continue to garner the support from all facilities that are responsible for the protection and management of rhinoceros. We would like to extend our appreciation for the support from the following institutions, and hopefully we can add your zoo to this growing list! If you or your institution are interested in becoming a Conservation Partner, please visit:

[Support IRKA](#)

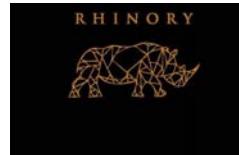
Platinum Conservation Partners



IRKA Partners



2021 Conservation Partners



Conservation Sponsors

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