

Wildlife MATTERS



Rhino - on the horn of a dilemma

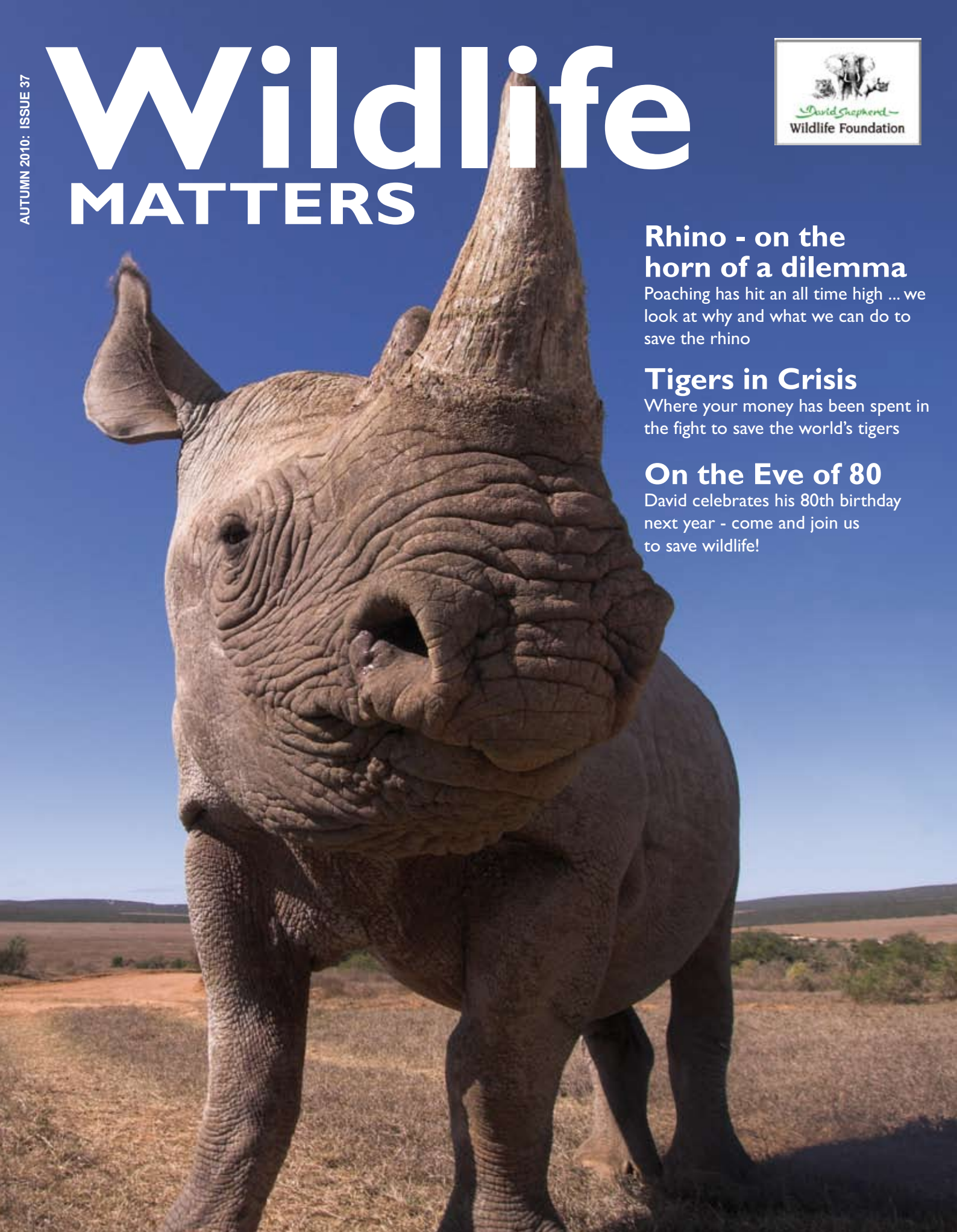
Poaching has hit an all time high ... we look at why and what we can do to save the rhino

Tigers in Crisis

Where your money has been spent in the fight to save the world's tigers

On the Eve of 80

David celebrates his 80th birthday next year - come and join us to save wildlife!



Fulfilling the Art of Conservation

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DAVID SHEPHERD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
SAVING CRITICALLY ENDANGERED MAMMALS IN THE WILD

www.davidshepherd.org

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DSWF would like to express its sincerest thanks to all our supporters, donors and volunteers – without whom we simply could not achieve as much we do to save wildlife.

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Charity No. 1106893 Company No. 4918382
 CAF 'Give as you earn' No. 001604. VAT Reg No. 414001815

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Print: Kingsley Print Ltd
Cover Image: Rhino courtesy of Mark Carwardine

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Welcome to Wildlife Matters



Photo courtesy of Becky Thomas

When you receive this issue of Wildlife Matters I will be on my way to Zambia to raise awareness and funds for the Elephant Orphanage and Park Protection projects there. A second home to me for over forty years I am privileged to be called an 'honorary Zambian' and never fail to delight in the country's wonderful wildlife and people. Our fight to protect this diverse wildlife resource is close to my heart and the very real hope that our work may lead to the re-introduction of black rhino in Zambia should inspire us all. Long distance trips like this, packed full of meetings and press engagements, are hard work – especially when you're nearly 80 – but I would travel to the ends of the earth if it meant that the projects supported by the Foundation are able to survive and thrive.

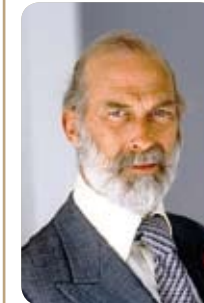
Maintaining the excellent work in the field that protects endangered wildlife and its habitat is no easy matter – especially in these times of increasingly organised and ruthless poachers. South Africa has suffered appalling losses at the hands of unscrupulous gangs of poachers this year and the voracious demand from Asian markets means that seizures of illegal ivory and other wildlife products are regularly discovered. It certainly takes a very special type of person to continue the fight against these merciless gangs hell bent on destroying the planet's precious wildlife resources; someone with resilience and tenacity, a diplomat with the power of persuasion and, of course, a passion for wildlife. I am full of admiration for all the teams in the field that DSWF supports who so willingly dedicate their lives to endangered animals. Wildlife Matters celebrates their work and their dedication and illustrates the highs and lows of wildlife protection - without them there would be little left to protect.

By the same token, without our wonderful volunteers and without you, DSWF's loyal supporters, there would be no funds to support the vital work in the field. Every penny really does make a difference and I would like to thank you for your continuing generosity which enables us to save some of the planet's most amazing mammals and the richly biodiverse habitats that they in turn support. Your help also enables us to work closely with the communities that live alongside endangered species and who are a vital ingredient in species survival. Thank you.

It was a privilege to meet so many of you at our events over the last twelve months especially at the Wildlife Artist of the Year exhibition at the Mall Galleries in May. We were delighted to be joined by David Gower, Robert Lindsay and Robert Powell (pictured) and an inspirational group of wildlife artists all of whom work to give something back to the animals they paint. Their support is invaluable and we look forward to a fantastic new exhibition in 2011. If you're an artist please enter; we'd love to see your work! You can find out more on the back page.

Events like this form the cornerstone of our fundraising work in the UK, they bring us all together for one cause and help raise awareness of the Foundation's vital work. Over the next 12 months we've got a wonderfully busy diary and with my 80th coming up we're planning a big birthday bash at the Natural History Museum in May – we'd love to see you there!

David Shepherd

**Kensington Palace London**

Being involved with wildlife conservation brings with it a broad gamut of issues - many of which stir ones emotions and bring into question a whole host of environmental and human concerns. Getting the balance right between conserving endangered wildlife and creating sustainable livelihoods for the people that share their environment is never easy. But, with the right resolve and the right people it is achievable.

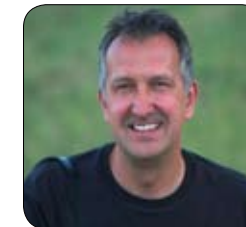
DSWF works with teams of experts both in the UK and in the field to try and achieve this difficult balance and together they are making a difference.

While you may read saddening headlines about the plight of endangered animals, including the current 15-year high in rhino poaching, you can be assured that DSWF and its founder, David Shepherd, remain dedicated to the fight against the illegal trade in wildlife and to the protection of wildlife and its habitats. And, with your support DSWF will continue to make a difference.

I am looking forward to celebrating David's 80th birthday in 2011 – his achievements are many and the celebrations hugely justified. I hope that many of you will also join the celebrations which honour not only the vision and commitment of one man but also the endangered wildlife that we are all so passionate about.

Michael Parkinson

Wildlife matters to our Honorary Vice Presidents ...



Commenting on the Amur tiger project in the Russian Far East: "I have never seen such tremendous determination against seemingly insurmountable odds. I was overwhelmed by the dedication and motivation of our anti-poaching patrols teams. The success of the project is directly related to funding - the more money we give the greater the impact."

Mark Carwardine

"There is no doubt that DSWF by being small can target resources where it matters, it punches well above its weight and, as a consequence, is having a direct impact on local conservation issues, issues which have a marked affect on everything that goes on around them. And, by being able to target resources to specific species, the knock-on effect is dramatic."

Simon King, OBE

"Being part of a winning team is something special and I'm very proud to be part of team DSWF."

Gary Lineker, Captain of DSWF Young Friends

"David's amazing passion for his subject, be it art or wildlife, has created a fantastic and inspiring charity of which I am hugely proud to be part."

David Gower, OBE

"Being part of the Shepherd family, and part of the Foundation, has always given me a huge sense of pride. My father not only continues to inspire me but thousands of others who care passionately about the plight of endangered wildlife."

Mandy Shepherd

COME DINE WITH THE DINOSAURS!

at the Natural History Museum on Friday 6th May 2011 and celebrate David Shepherd's 80th birthday in the company of Sir Michael Parkinson.

This fabulous venue is the must-be place in London - the event not to be missed! Join us to celebrate the achievements of a remarkable man and the work of his wildlife Foundation.

Call now for more information on 01483 272323.



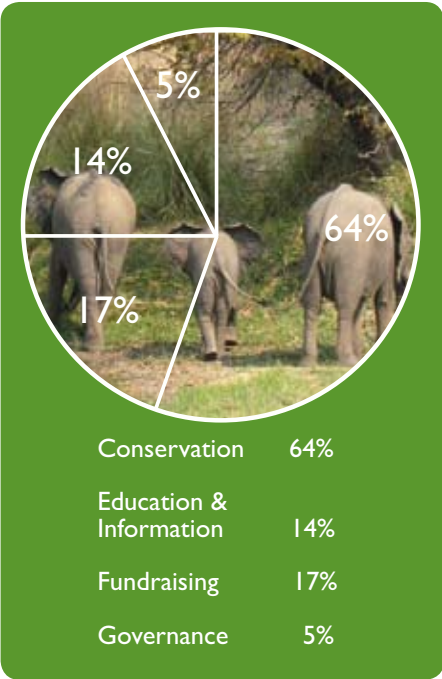
80th birthday



Since its inception 26 years ago, the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation has given away £4,913,000 directly in grants to our field projects and invested a further £1,050,000 on important education and advocacy.


Education that promotes global conservation issues to future generations, here in the UK and overseas, and our Art for Survival programmes are vital aspects of our work.

All the projects featured are long-term DSWF programmes. The Foundation also has an emergency fund to respond to wildlife crises should the need arise.




100% of all donations you send, marked for specific projects in the field, go in full with no administration costs deducted.

How and where we spend your donations




Uganda Waterways Protection Project
Page 20

Funding anti-poaching operations and waterways law enforcement projects to protect elephants and other wildlife in and around the Queen Elizabeth National Park.




Zambia Park Protection, Anti-poaching and Elephant Orphanage Project
Page 17

Funding park protection through anti-poaching operations and ranger training and the development of Zambia's first elephant orphanage to rescue, rehabilitation and release orphaned elephants.




Zimbabwe Painted Dog Research Project
Page 19

Working with local communities to save one of Africa's most important populations of African painted dogs, as well as other wildlife, through anti-poaching operations, education programmes and outreach projects in this unstable country.




Namibia Save the Rhino Trust
Page 12

Funding essential monitoring of black rhino and rare desert elephant, anti-poaching operations and support for local community outreach programmes.



South Africa Black Rhino Monitoring Project
Page 13

Funding park expansion, translocation and monitoring of breeding populations of critically endangered black rhino in several protected wild areas in South Africa.



CITES International Trade in Wildlife

Funding enforcement initiatives and lobbying against illegal trade and unsustainable legal trading in wildlife species.



Russia Amur Tiger Project
Page 7

Saving the last Amur (Siberian) tigers through anti-poaching operations and community education programmes in the Russian Far East.



Mongolia Snow Leopard Project
Page 18

Funding anti-poaching, monitoring, research and community programmes in Mongolia to save the last surviving snow leopards.



China Bear Rescue Project
Page 16

Funding the rehabilitation of bears rescued from the horrifically cruel Chinese bear bile farms and supporting work to end this barbaric trade.



Asia Active Conservation Awareness Programme

Tackling the consumer end of illegal wildlife markets by successfully persuading millions to stop buying wildlife products, and supporting London's fight against the illegal trade through 'Operation Charm'.



Thailand Thap Lan Tiger Project
Page 8

Funding enforcement training and community projects to secure the future of Thailand's wild tiger populations.



India Kaziranga Rhino and Tiger Project
Page 6 & 11

Funding essential communication networks, patrol boats and supplies for anti-poaching operations in Assam's key wildlife parks to protect some of the last surviving Indian rhinos, tigers and wild elephant populations.



India Wildlife Crime Monitoring Project

Funding undercover investigations to expose and stop the illegal smuggling of rhino horn, tiger bones and ivory through Assam and across its borders.



India Rapid Action Project
Page 9

Funding rapid emergency aid enabling immediate response to wildlife crises throughout India.



India Gir Lion Project
Page 9

New funding to train and supply every forest officer patrolling the Gir National Park, home to the last surviving critically endangered Asiatic lions.

Full information and latest news on all our projects is available at www.davidsshepherd.org

On the horn of a dilemma

Rhino poaching has hit an all-time high. In July, South African National Parks (SANParks) admitted that 124 rhinos had been lost between January and July; 55 in the national parks, 38 in the provinces and 31 on private concessions. Following the brutal killing of five more rhino in South Africa in September the tally has risen to 210 deaths this year, already 70 more than recorded in 2009.

A lack of funding, skills and equipment have been blamed for the poor policing of the national parks and a call for younger, more active staff is being made.

"This is a war we plan on winning," said David Mabunda, head of SANParks stating that funds had been set aside for rangers, equipment and increased policing to crack down on the trans-border crime.

The demand from increasingly rich Asian markets and the price tag of over £38,000 per kilo for rhino horn is being blamed for the increase in rhino poaching.

"The price of rhino horn has increased dramatically making the financial return for the poachers and their bosses enticingly high," says CEO of DSWF, Melanie Shepherd. "The poachers come armed with sophisticated weapons and helicopters leaving carnage in their wake. With the rhino horn brutally removed the animals are left fatally wounded to die a slow and agonising death."

The perpetuation of the myth that rhino horn contains medicinal properties seems to be behind the continuing slaughter. For centuries rhino horn has been used in traditional Chinese medicine to cure a variety of ailments from rheumatism, gout and high fever to the alleviation of devil possession. More recently

it has been used as an aphrodisiac and recent claims by a Vietnamese minister that it cured his cancer have created a new surge in demand.

"People persist in believing the myth, but research into the medicinal properties of rhino horn have been inconclusive," adds Melanie Shepherd.

Studies carried out by Hoffman-LaRoche in 1983 and by the Zoological Society of London in 2003, both concluded that rhino horn had no medicinal properties. Likewise, in 1990 research carried out by the Chinese University in Hong Kong came to the same conclusion.

What all these studies confirmed was that rhino horn, like fingernails, is made of agglutinated hair and has no anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic or diuretic properties and would be ineffective even at reducing fever, a common usage in much of Asia.

And yet the myth persists and ignorance is driving demand,

"Most people who use products containing rhino horn, including some high profile personalities across the world, have no idea of the violent truth behind the products," adds Melanie Shepherd.

"Making sure that people understand the truth about rhino horn is paramount to conserving the species," says DSWF's conservation advisor, Mark Carwardine. "But changing long-held beliefs is a hard fight to win."

With some reports blaming the success of rhino conservation for the increased poaching (believing that the presence of more animals makes it easier for poachers to pick them off)



Another victim

leaves us with a difficult dilemma. How do we save the rhino - an animal whose ancestors roamed the planet millions of years before humans even existed? And, with the power of the poachers often overwhelming efforts at protection, what can be done?

"What happens is that when you start decimating a species, pushing it to the brink of extinction, you create a wave, there's no stopping it, there's no turning back and you enter an irreversible process where you change things forever," says conservationist, Saba Douglas-Hamilton. "We should save animals because they have an inherent right to exist and because if we care about our future, if we care about humanity, if we care about our planet we have to try and pull back a little bit on man's impact on the world and try and protect the biodiversity that remains."

DSWF's rhino projects in Namibia, South Africa and India are endeavouring to do just that - to protect the environment in which rhinos can remain wild and free and to destroy the smuggling rings so that the rhino can remain a valuable part of life on earth. As rhino poaching escalates around the world our work is more urgent than ever and with your help we can, and will, save the rhino.

Read more about DSWF projects over the next three pages ...

On the front-line against Assam's poachers

Assam, in North East India, is one of the last strongholds of the highly endangered Indian one-horned rhino. Protecting them and the rich biodiversity of the area is key to the work of the Forest Department, which has been funded and supported by DSWF since 1994 through local NGO, the Aaranyak Society.

"Over the last 12 months the anti-poaching teams have had a number of successes in the war against poaching," says Bibhab Talukdar, secretary general of Aaranyak.

"We continued to reduce rhino poaching in Orang and Kaziranga National Parks and there were no poaching incidents in Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary for the fourth consecutive year."

But there have been casualties; more rhinos are now being brutally killed for their horn, a forest guard was kidnapped and murdered and a number of poachers lost their lives in encounters with forest guards.



Poachers arrested in Assam in the war against illegal wildlife crime

"The bloody desire of the poachers is balanced only by the determination of the forest guards to protect the rhino and the parks they inhabit," adds Bibhab.

In the last few months vigilance and important local intelligence has led to the arrest of nine poachers, the confiscation of their guns and ammunition and important information about the buyers and dealers further up the chain.

One poacher confessed to having made £2,100 for the horn of a rhino he had killed in Kaziranga earlier in the year, while a gang of seven poachers were arrested with rhino horn and cash in their possession.

"The threat from poachers, not only to rhino but to other 'tradable' species such as tigers in Assam, is continuous," says Bibhab. "But our efforts to combat these illegal activities is a top priority."

Thanks to DSWF's continuous support their efforts are having a real impact on poaching, reducing it by 50-80% over the last ten years.

"During the winter we will have to redouble our efforts to protect the rhino as they wander out of the parks in search of dry land and food. We would not be able to do any of this without DSWF's support which provides a life-line to Assam's endangered wildlife," says Bibhab.

Rhino viewpoint with Mark Carwardine

CEO Melanie Shepherd caught up with DSWF honorary vice president and wildlife advisor, Mark Carwardine to talk about rhinos.

You've been spending a lot of time with rhinos recently - how optimistic are you about their future?

I have recently returned from filming the translocation of four of the last eight northern white rhinos from Prague to Kenya, for a 'Last Chance to See' special with Stephen Fry and before that I was photographing critically endangered Sumatran rhinos in Indonesia.

I am an optimist by nature – you have to be in the conservation business – but I lose sleep worrying about the future of the world's rhinos.

Why?

Because there's more poaching now than there has been for many years (rhinos are even being killed in well known, well protected places such as the Masai Mara, Kruger and Kaziranga) and with burgeoning middle classes in China there is a greater demand for rhino horn than ever before.

And on top of that, critical rhino habitat is under enormous pressure – for example, the plan to build a road right through the northern sector of the Serengeti will inevitably increase poaching activity in the area.



To be frank, it's impossible to exaggerate how dire the situation is.

What do you think should be done?

The only long-term solution, of course, is to kill the demand for rhino horn in Asia. But that's a phenomenal undertaking. Even if all the efforts being made at the moment were combined it will still take a very long time – but it's

something that has to be addressed urgently. Until then, we have to provide efficient protection on the ground in Africa and Asia. Sadly, that means fence protected areas and 24-hour armed guards, which cost a fortune.

This is why it is so crucial to support DSWF's work in rhino protection – without it the rhinos would be disappearing even faster.

DSWF is extremely grateful to Mark for his continuing support and expertise and for allowing DSWF to reproduce his fabulous photographs (left and front cover).

You can find out more about Mark's work at the Mall Galleries in June next year when he joins DSWF for our Wildlife Artist of the Year Exhibition. There's more on his recent film assignments and work at www.markcarwardine.com

Mathilda, Inka, Dulci and Clarissa

With poaching devastating rhino populations elsewhere, the Desert Black Rhino is an increasingly precious but threatened population. With protection and monitoring efforts being stepped up in response, Bernd Brell, Director of Field Operations for Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), brings us up-to-date with DSWF supported rhino translocations and monitoring in Namibia.

At the end of August, during a routine rhino-monitoring patrol, Mathilda was spotted with her new calf and another adult rhino in attendance. She had not been seen for more than a year, hiding away on top of the Etendeka mountain range in northwestern Namibia. Not adhering to the “Black Rhino Rule Book”, stating that black rhinos are mostly solitary, Mathilda always moves around in a small group with her family. This could be attributed to the constant pressure these animals are exposed to; uncontrolled tourism, trophy and consumptive hunting in the area and the pastoralists along the eastern boundary. Her home range received good rains during the last rainy season and has plenty of food and water available.

During July SRT staff assisted the Ministry of Environment and Tourism with another translocation of Desert Black Rhino within the historical range; adding another two communal conservancies to the existing list of those that had become custodians of Desert Black Rhino. SRT teams were instrumental in locating the rhinos in the field, while two SRT staff members acted as spotters in the aeroplane. Selected animals were airlifted by helicopter (using specially designed slings), a first for Namibia, to the waiting truck, which took them to their new home ranges.

The overall supervision and running of the operation was conducted by Mr Pierre du Preez, the National Rhino Co-ordinator of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, while Mr Simson Uri-khob, Director of Science and Outreach SRT, supervised the SRT field staff on the ground. With the latest translocation the former rhino range has been extended to just south of the Kunene River. In

Mathilda hasn’t been adhering to the ‘Black Rhino Rule Book’

light of the increased poaching activities in neighbouring South Africa and Zimbabwe exact locations and specific conservancy names cannot be given for safety reasons.

The team were also glad to find the ‘mystery’ calf in the southern parts of the rhino range. The tracks of a female and her calf were first spotted and followed in September 2009. At that stage the calf was about three months old. Until July 2010 the female and calf successfully avoided being found by SRT trackers, by using the inhospitable area as well as the prevailing strong winds to their advantage. Eventually they were identified as Inka and her first born, which turned out to be a young healthy male. The father is most probably ‘Mike’, the resident bull in the area, who was spotted with Inka in March 2008.

Dulci, translocated in March 2009, also disappeared off SRT’s ‘radar’ for about 10 months. The transmitter fitted to her horn had stopped working, preventing SRT from finding her by aircraft. The use of camera-traps enabled the southern team to find her and since then she has been spotted on a regular

basis, including a recent sighting where she had been mating with Mike; exciting news – another possible calf within the next 15 months! Clarissa was also seen with a new calf during a recent visit by DSWF Trustee Bruce Norris and his wife Jill.

No incidents of rhino poaching have been reported for the northwestern rhino range of Namibia so far, though two animals were found dead in August, one male and one female. No foul play was involved and the horns were recovered. Unfortunately both animals were part of the translocation operation in July 2010.

SRT would not have been able to keep up the continuous patrolling and monitoring of the rhino range if it was not for the loyal support of DSWF and their supporters. The funds received keep the trackers in the field as well as SRT vehicles running. But, as poaching increases and protection efforts are stepped up your support is more vital than ever.



Inka and her male calf, Icarus



Despite a five week pit-stop for repairs the DSWF supported Land Rover has clocked up 163,000km on SRT patrols and remains an important team member!



Mathilda and her calf at home on their range

Rhino SOS - a view from the field

As the threat of poaching closes in, Lucky Mavrandonis and Sue Downie in South Africa appeal for your help to ‘SAVE OUR RHINOS’

Since 1991 the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation has been instrumental in increasing the black rhino population in South Africa. Without DSWF Shibula would not have been returned to Africa from Lisbon Zoo, she would not have given birth to seven calves in the wild; she would not be grandmother to four wild born rhinos. We have, with the help and support of DSWF been monitoring four populations of black rhino for the last eight years and now, more than ever, we need to keep these precious animals safe.

Shibula and her family are the torch bearers for her species. She is the nucleus of the present breeding group of the *Diceros bicornis bicornis* sub-species. But rhino poaching is raging across Africa and for us in South Africa it is reaching catastrophic levels – more rhino have been brutally killed in the first six months of 2010 than the whole of 2009.

There are so few rhino left that we have to save them. They have survived for over 50 million years, but these harmless herbivores cannot survive the rapacious greed of a few humans and their misguided customers. Our project in South Africa monitors 56% of the entire sub-species in national parks, and 39% of the total population in South Africa (national and private). With just over 1,000 of this sub-species left in the world (mainly in Namibia and South Africa) our project is crucial for the growth of the black rhino population.

Everyone we talk to is horrified and appalled at the savage measures used to kill and maim rhino. Those guilty of this heinous crime are not only those that do the killing, it includes the helicopter pilots, the vets with drugs and those chain sawing off the horns leaving the wounded animal to bleed to death, as well as the corrupt police, middlemen and end-users who pay outrageous amounts for a little bit of powdered horn – no different to powdered finger nail.

Some owners, reserves and parks are resorting to dehorning their rhinos to try and save them. We cannot agree with this. Black rhino mothers use their horns to break branches and get fresh succulent leaves within reach for their calves. Do we have to maim and disfigure this magnificent animal in order for it to survive?

Some owners are reportedly poisoning the rhino’s horns – it does not affect the rhino but may make end-users think twice.



Caring and social, the black rhino is rarely aggressive unless provoked. Above: Faru and calf Right: Nkombe, Jabula & Dju-ba greet one another



Over eight years of monitoring black rhino in South Africa has shown us that rhinos are caring animals, have a protocol for greeting each other and introducing their calves to other rhino in the group and display enormous affection between cows and calves. They are not innately aggressive and are very social. Their hearing and sense of smell is exceptional, and their vigilance, even when sleeping, is incredible. They have an inherent right to life.

There is a very wide front line from which we have to fight the rhino killers, from improving security in all national, provincial and private parks which give sanctuary to rhinos, to upgrading the skills, equipment and pay of existing anti-poaching units, by training more field rangers, improving communication, improving rhino crime investigation services and punishment by law. If we make a concentrated effort and do not tolerate this despicable practice – we can save the rhinos.

We are forever grateful for the generous funding of DSWF and all their supporters. Our project, now in its ninth year, is highly successful, we are learning new facts about the species, we are studying their behaviour, growth rates are excellent, and thankfully to date we have no gory pictures of our rhinos being poached. But, the threat is coming ever closer, and a rare Cape mountain zebra was recently shot close to the boundary fence in an area where our rhinos are free to roam. Rhinos are being poached all around our project areas so there is no time for complacency.

Some reserves in South Africa have already lost all their rhinos and a business colleague recently reported ‘the body of a slaughtered rhino with the horns cut off’ while on a walking trail in a reserve.

We need the resources now, to ensure these sophisticated organizations do not wreak havoc with our populations – each animal is identifiable to us, has its own character and we have followed them all this time – we simply cannot afford to lose one single animal. We cannot hesitate – now is the time to act. Please help us save this charismatic wildlife icon by supporting DSWF. Together we can save the rhino.



Shibula’s legacy - little Kiteng (Shibula’s granddaughter) nudges the bull rhino, Alfred, as her mother, Dundi, drinks.