

Save the Rhino EAZA Rhino Campaign 2005-2006



EAZA Conservation Campaigns

Over the last ten years Europe's leading zoos and aquariums have worked together in addressing a variety of issues affecting a range of species and habitats. EAZA's annual conservation campaigns have raised funds and promoted awareness amongst millions of zoo visitors each year, as well as providing the impetus for key regulatory change.

INTRODUCTION

The fifth EAZA conservation campaign, launched in September 2005, focused on the rhino, a charismatic mega-herbivore that is often a favourite for zoo visitors. Three of the five species of rhino are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Through cooperating with Save the Rhino International (SRI) the campaign was able to ensure that the funds raised went to support a number of key rhino conservation projects.



CAMPAIGN AIMS

There are five species of rhino. Two species (black & white) occur in Africa. Three species (greater one-horned, Javan, and Sumatran) occur in Asia. The black, Sumatran and Javan rhino are all Critically Endangered, with as few as 50-60 Javan rhinos remaining in the wild. The greater one-horned rhino is considered Vulnerable, while the white rhino is listed as Near Threatened. Rhinos face threats from a number of sources including hunting – both for souvenirs and Chinese traditional medicine – habitat loss and political conflict. In this context, the EAZA Rhino Campaign had three aims:

- to raise international awareness of the threats rhinos face;
- to promote the protection of these endangered animals; and
- to raise money for *in situ* conservation programmes.

Partnership with SRI ensured that the campaign could benefit from their considerable knowhow and connections. A dedicated member of staff was employed by SRI for the duration of the campaign.

CAMPAIGN ACHIEVEMENTS

With only about 90 zoos holding rhinos, one of the challenges was how to engage the support of zoos that didn't house them. This was achieved by using rhinos as a flagship species for the diverse species that share the same habitats and benefit from the presence of rhinos. The success of this strategy was reflected in the fact that 123 EAZA institutions and 11 non-members (schools, etc.) participated in the campaign.

Through SRI, Aardman Animations gave permission for EAZA to use Douglas the Rhino as the campaign mascot, which proved very popular. Throughout the active period of the campaign (2005/06) millions of zoo visitors learned more about the threats to rhinos and their habitats.

The initial fundraising target for the campaign was €350,000. However the campaign proved to be so successful that eventually more than €660,000 were raised, enabling the support of greater number of projects than initially envisaged.



Douglas the Rhino – the campaign mascot. © Aardman Animations

PROJECTS SUPPORTED

As with other EAZA campaigns, a set of criteria for projects to be funded was established. It was agreed there would be at least one conservation project for each of the five rhino species. The projects were to include a range of activities considered important for conserving rhinos, such as monitoring, anti-poaching, translocation, field research and community outreach programmes.

The 22 projects that received financial support are set out below. EAZA involved the IUCN-SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups in the selection process. All further donations were sent to SRI.

Project	Country	Funds granted (GBP)
African Rhino Specialist Group core costs	Various African countries	£17,255
Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries	Kenya	£10,175
Black rhino nutrition	Various countries	£20,400
Chyulu Hills rhino programme	Kenya	£17,040
Combating the illegal trade in and demand for rhino horn in the Yemen	Yemen	£6,779
Conservation of rhino and strategy framework to reduce poaching	India	£19,100
Enhanced community outreach programme	Sabah, Malaysia	£5,770
Environmental Education programme at the Laikipia Wildlife Forum	Kenya	£18,800
Establishment of two additional rhino protection units	Sabah, Malaysia	£4,294
Indian Rhino Vision 2020	India	£69,578
Lifting crane for rhino capture truck	Zimbabwe	£13,083
Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy	Zimbabwe	£20,675
Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary	Tanzania	£17,035
National Trust for Nature Conservation	Nepal	£33,032
New vehicle for the Lowveld Rhino Conservancy Project	Zimbabwe	£15,425
Reestablishment of black rhino	Zambia	£23,671
Rhino horn fingerprinting project	South Africa	£3,723
Rhino monitoring equipment for Kenyan national parks	Kenya	£17,367
Rhino Protection Unit programme	Indonesia	£88,625
Rhino security equipment for Hluhluwe Game Reserve	South Africa	£11,407
Rhino translocation equipment	Namibia	£33,335
Save the Rhino Trust	Namibia	£20,314

| WHERE ARE WE NOW? |

Unfortunately, in 2009 a dramatic increase in rhino poaching was noted. Rhinos from South Africa, India and Nepal were primarily affected by this development. This only serves to highlight the continuous threat rhinos face due to the traditional Chinese medicine trade and the need for long-term commitments to ensure wild rhinos continue to thrive.

On the positive side, many ‘twinning’ partnerships were established during the EAZA Rhino Campaign, meaning that some of the zoological institutions that participated in the campaign have continued to support some of the selected conservation projects.

| LINKS |

- www.eaza.net – website of EAZA, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria.
- www.savetherhino.org – the website of Save the Rhino International
- www.rhinos-irf.org – the website of the International Rhino Foundation