

# Zoos and Save the Rhino International: Working together to save rhinos

© Steve and Ann Toon



# Working together for rhino conservation

Zoos have an incredible capacity to play a powerful role in the conservation of endangered species, both in ex situ settings and for in situ populations.

With zoos in the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) network welcoming 140 million visitors a year, zoos have a prominent platform to share conservation messages with the public and, through close encounters with wildlife, to inspire visitors to become active supporters of in situ conservation efforts.

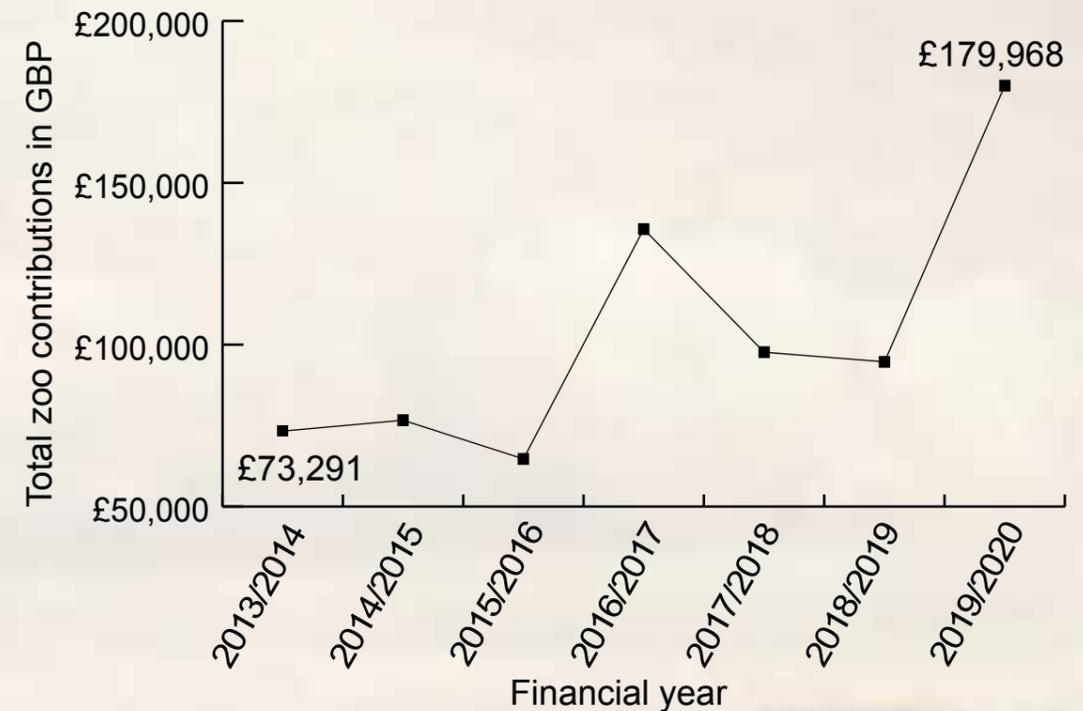
Since our collaboration on the 2005-2006 EAZA 'Save the Rhinos' campaign, the European

zoo community and Save the Rhino International have worked together to deliver vital rhino conservation efforts across Africa and Asia. Many of our zoo partners have supported the work of field programmes for a number of years; their commitment to funding key in situ conservation efforts for consecutive years is essential to deliver positive impact for rhino populations and respond to the conservation finance gap that remains perilously wide.

Donations from zoos in 2019-20 far exceeded the average annual zoo contributions in recent years, in part thanks to collaborations on new campaigns involving significant grants from a number of our zoo partners.

**Between April 2019 and March 2020, our zoo partners contributed a phenomenal £179,968 for rhino conservation efforts.**

Total zoo contributions for in situ rhino conservation programmes via Save the Rhino International.





© Cyril Ruoso

One such grant was from Wilhelma Zoological and Botanical Garden, Stuttgart, which became a Strategic Partner of the Sumatran Rhino Rescue project, pledging \$100,000 over two years to support efforts to rescue this Critically Endangered species from the brink of extinction. Another was £25,000 generously donated by the Zoological Society of East Anglia for aerial surveillance in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, South Africa, in celebration of the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Whilst recent years have seen steady declines in the number of rhinos poached, the situation remains dire. In South Africa alone, one rhino was killed for its horns every 15 hours in 2019. Clearance of land for human settlement, agricultural production and logging also continues to increase. This is a major threat to rhinos that need space to thrive, hampering their ability to recover and increase their populations. These key threats of poaching and habitat loss remain the biggest challenges to conserving rhino populations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Save the Rhino International developed a new conservation strategy to guide our efforts to tackle these threats, and protect and grow rhino populations. Continuing our focus on

conserving viable populations of Critically Endangered rhinos (with the long-term aim of each species being down-listed to a lower category of threat in the IUCN Red List), we are now working to achieve this goal by focusing on the following areas:

1. Protection, law enforcement, intelligence and investigations
2. Biological management
3. Stopping illegal markets
4. Building capacity
5. Coordination
6. Societal relevance
7. Sustainable, adequate financing



© Tristan Vince

# To respond to conservation challenges, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Conservation Strategy outlines that all zoos should "increase their contribution to and impact on saving species in the wild".

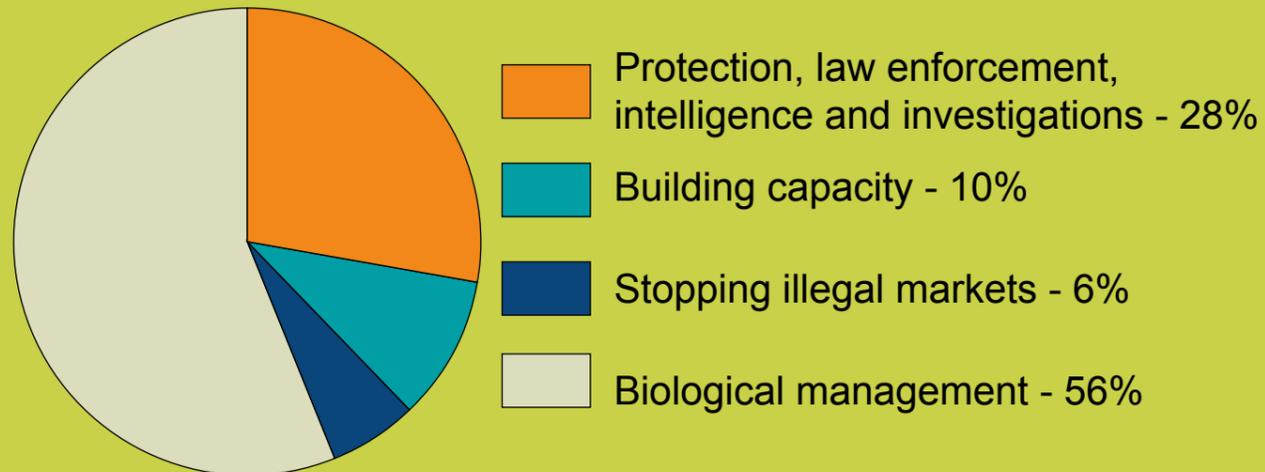
WAZA recommends that zoos partner with trusted conservation organisations to implement action in the field and commit to developing their budgets to support conservation over the long-term.

As such, we are acting as a trusted conduit between zoological institutions and in-field programme partners who protect and monitor rhino populations in the wild.

Collaboration is at the heart of all we do and this report will outline concrete examples of the conservation impact that has been achieved by connecting zoos with in situ rhino programmes.

In the following section, we review how zoo partnerships contributed to four of our strategy areas, and share the impact that funding has achieved in tackling the threats facing rhinos in the wild.

Percentage of restricted zoo contributions via Save the Rhino International analysed by strategy.



Section Ranger distributing new camping kits including battery power chargers, funded through our zoo partners, to ranger teams in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park.



# Strategy 1: Protection, law enforcement, intelligence and investigation

Keeping rhinos safe from poachers is key to maintaining healthy, thriving populations and reducing the illegal trade in rhino horn. A large proportion of funding from Save the Rhino and our partners is directed to equip rangers and enhance the anti-poaching operations they undertake to protect rhinos.

In South Africa, the team at Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP) have been tackling the rising tide of poaching in the KwaZulu-Natal province since the start of the latest poaching crisis in 2007.

Generous funding from Réserve Africaine de Sigean and Bioparco di Roma will enable HiP to buy and install a new digital radio system to support anti-poaching activities. This system will replace the previously vulnerable analogue radios, crucially improving the security of communications between the ranger teams.

In celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Zoological Society of East Anglia held a year-long fundraising drive, collecting a phenomenal £25,000 to fund the operational costs of HiP's

Generous funds from the Zoological Society of East Anglia funded the operation of the Savannah aircraft at HiP.

© Dirk Swart



© Martin Buzora

Zoo donations have enabled conservancies in Kenya to purchase a new vehicle and enabled more training sessions for canine units.



© Martin Buzora



© Dirk Swart

'Savannah' light aircraft. The Savannah is able to provide aerial surveillance across the Park, monitor fence lines, detect crime scenes and provide over-watch during contact with poachers. A key part of HiP's operations, the Savannah helps to make the Park's rhino protection and law enforcement efforts more effective.

In Kenya, Ol Jogi was one of the first conservancies in the Laikipia region to add a canine unit to their anti-poaching and law enforcement efforts. However,

courts were often not recognising the importance or credibility of testimony from canine units in criminal cases. Our partners at Zoo Berlin and Tierpark Berlin provided generous funds so that Ol Jogi's Canine Unit could undergo certification by the Kenya Police. Following the successful certification, evidence collected by the Conservancy's canine team is now considered 'admissible' in court cases, an important step to ensuring successful convictions.

Across the Laikipia region, our partners at Bioparco di Roma,

Bioparc Valencia, Rotterdam Zoo and West Midland Safari Park supported the operational costs of canine units at Lewa Wildlife, Ol Jogi and Ol Pejeta Conservancies. Donations funded renovations to kennels, supported training of the units, helped procure a vehicle adapted to transport Lewa's canine unit and helped cover veterinary costs for dogs. These investments ensure that the dogs stay in peak physical condition and that the canine teams can continue operating as formidable units to tackle the threat of poaching.

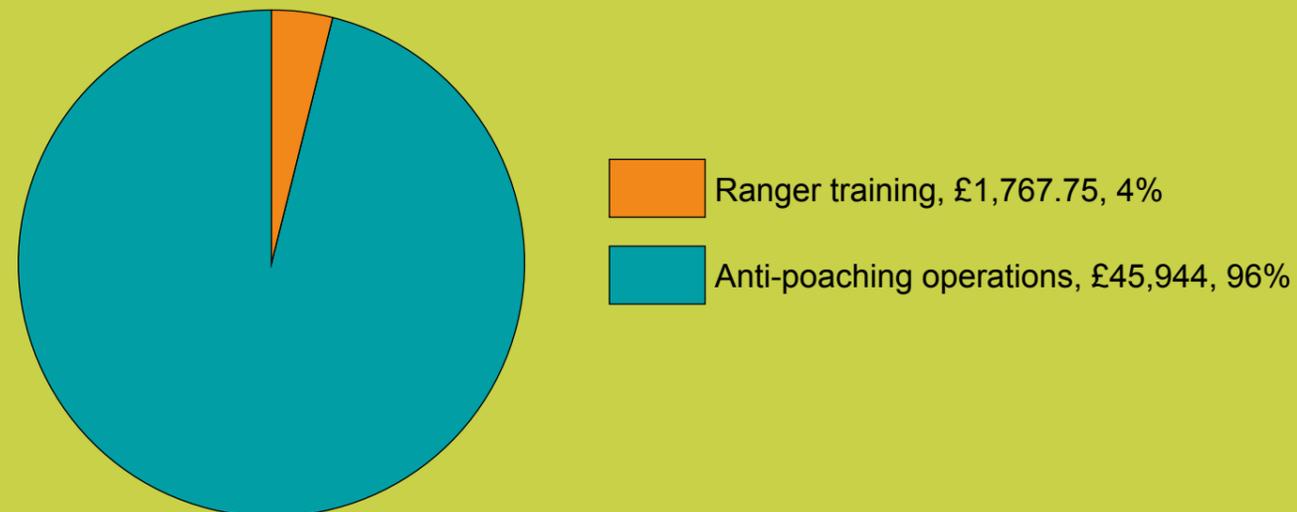
In Namibia's Kunene region, Save the Rhino Trust monitors and protects a unique population of

black rhinos. With no formal protections over the desert landscape they roam, the rhinos could be more vulnerable to poaching attempts. Staying one-step ahead of poachers is essential to protect this population.

With support from our partners at Zoo Krefeld, SRT's Wildlife Crime Coordinator (in collaboration with the Namibian Police Service) spent 220 days of the year conducting fieldwork, investigations and pre-emptive patrols. These efforts have led to many arrests and successes in deterring poachers, helping to keep rhinos safe and allowing the population to grow.

## In 2019-20, zoos provided more than £47,700 to support anti-poaching and ranger training activities.

Breakdown of zoo contributions to protection, law enforcement, intelligence and investigation activities.

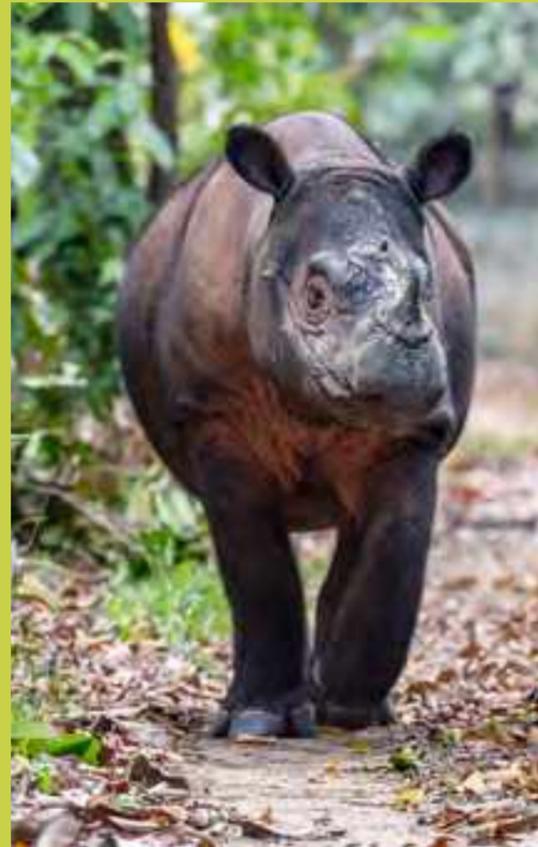


© Steve and Ann Toon

# Strategy 2: Biological management activities

Seven rhinos live at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary. They are a lifeline for their species' future. Thanks to donations from our zoo partners, the facilities of the Sanctuary have doubled in size. Soon, we hope that more Sumatran rhinos will call it home.

All images © [www.nickgarbuttphotography.com](http://www.nickgarbuttphotography.com)



Alongside protection from poaching, management of rhino populations is vital to ensure they are healthy, have strong genetic diversity and all the conditions needed to successfully grow and build resilience against extinction.

**Biological management received the largest contribution from zoological institutions in the last financial year, raising more than £93,350 for these activities.**

This is largely due to the generous grants of Wilhelma Zoological and Botanical Garden, Stuttgart, who joined the Sumatran Rhino Rescue project as Strategic Partners.

Sumatran Rhino Rescue is a ground-breaking, international collaboration to save the Critically Endangered Sumatran rhino from extinction through managed conservation breeding and care. Fewer than 80 individuals remain in the wild, scattered across 10 small subpopulations; without action, the species could become extinct in a matter of decades.

As a Strategic Partner, Wilhelma Zoological and Botanical Garden, Stuttgart is directing its support to enhance the conservation breeding programme at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) – the only viable captive population of Sumatran rhinos in the world.

Thanks to crucial funding from Wilhelma, and other partners including West Midland Safari Park, a second ring of rhino enclosures was built at the SRS, along with improvements to its veterinary and staff facilities. This has doubled the space available for rhinos in the breeding programme and increased the capacity of the team to provide the highest standards of care and fertility support to help grow the population of this unique species.

In Kenya, Ol Jogi Conservancy has also been working to increase the capacity of its veterinary surgery, which treats endangered wildlife and supports conservation research. Thanks to the support of our partners at Erlebnis Zoo Hannover, Zoo Berlin and Tierpark Berlin, Ol Jogi was able to install a sustainable solar power system for the surgery, and procured weighing scales, a new drill for inserting transmitters into rhino horns, a digital microscope

and a new portable x-ray machine. These changes have improved the efficiency and diagnostic abilities of the clinic, helping to provide the highest quality of care for rhinos, other wildlife and the Conservancy's canine unit.

In addition, thanks to a generous grant from Yorkshire Wildlife Park Foundation and further support from Erlebnis Zoo Hannover, Ol Jogi bought and installed a number of new CCTV cameras and relay stations. The footage from these cameras helps to monitor the rhino population and other wildlife in the Conservancy, and is already documenting wildlife passing through the corridors that connect adjoining habitats. The CCTV system is also helping Ol Jogi to monitor its borders closely for any illegal incursions, adding a further layer of protection to the Conservancy's rhinos.

In Zimbabwe, the Lowveld Rhino Trust monitors black and white rhinos to inform management decisions aiming to develop large populations with high breeding rates and strong genetic diversity. To carry out this work successfully, it is important that the team can identify individual rhinos. Thanks to the generous support of our partners including Dublin Zoo, Stichting Wildlife (Beeksebergen

Safaripark) and Fondation Le Pal Nature, LRT was able to conduct a number of 'ear notching' operations where unique patterns of notches are made on rhinos' ears, under anaesthetic, to help identify different animals. By being able to record individual rhino sightings, biologists can then monitor the movements, interactions, health and safety of all individuals within key populations and make interventions to grow the population.

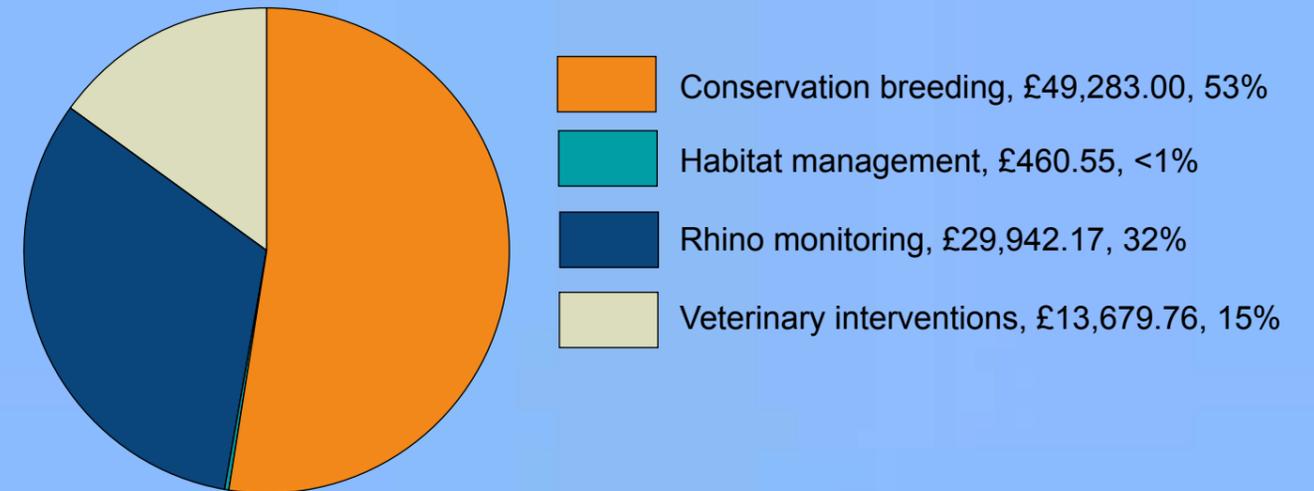
At Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) in Namibia, the team need to cover a 25,000km<sup>2</sup> region of desert to monitor the black rhino population. Our partners at Zoo Krefeld and West Midland Safari Park provided funds to help buy a new vehicle for SRT and support its running costs respectively, meaning the rhino monitors can continue to deploy across the landscape, receive essential supplies in the field and conduct their important work.

**Donations from zoos have improved vet clinic facilities and purchased CCTV for wildlife corridors in Kenya.**



© Save the Rhino International

Breakdown of zoo contributions to biological management activities.



**Zoo partners supported vehicle running costs for Save the Rhino Trust in Namibia.**



© Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia



# Strategy 3: Stopping illegal markets

Reducing the demand for illegal rhino horn products and stopping their sale are crucial to disrupting the trade and stopping poaching of rhinos. In the 2019-2020 financial year, zoo partners donated more than £10,150 to support this work, mostly centred on behaviour-change campaigns with our programme partner Education for Nature Vietnam. Save the Rhino also supports the work of our partners at TRAFFIC in China and Vietnam, as well as the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). In addition to behaviour change, these efforts focus on consumer and market research, intelligence and investigations in consumer countries, and strengthening legal and policy frameworks to stem the illegal trade in rhino horn.

Vietnam is one of the two countries (alongside neighbouring China) with the highest demand for rhino horn, which in Vietnam is mainly bought as a status symbol, with some also using horn in traditional medicines. Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) works to educate Vietnamese citizens about the threat of illegal wildlife

trade to species such as rhinos in an effort to reduce consumption. Generous funding from Zoo de la Barben has supported ENV's work on Public Service Announcements (PSAs); videos that aim to change people's attitudes and behaviours around illegal wildlife products. Their most recent PSA, 'Children know the score about rhino poaching' has been shown on TV channels across Vietnam, and viewed more than 1.6 million times on YouTube.

**ENV's video is spreading the important message that using illegal wildlife products is wrong.**

Zoo Berlin and Tierpark Berlin, with additional funding from Zoo de la Barben, provided grants to support ENV's National Wildlife Protection Network. This group of volunteers monitors and reports wildlife crime and raise public awareness of the threats illegal trade poses for wildlife. In 2020, the Network is recruiting more volunteers to expand their efforts.

# Strategy 4: Capacity-building

To ensure rhino conservation efforts are as effective as possible, it is important that the teams protecting rhinos are well equipped, trained and motivated. In the last financial year, zoos contributed £16,232 to build the capacity of wildlife rangers and rhino conservationists in the field, procuring essential equipment, paying for training and supporting the welfare of staff working in often dangerous and stressful situations.

The state of Assam, in India, is home to the largest regional population of Greater one-horned rhinos in the wild. Whilst successful poaching attempts are low, the number of attempted rhino poaching incidents means rangers and law enforcement must stay vigilant.

Our partners at Parc Animalier de Branféré and Rotterdam Zoo provided generous funds for wildlife crime investigation training sessions in Assam as part of the Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV2020) programme. The training covered topics such as securing crime scenes, evidence collection and handling procedures and writing reports.

**Last winter, 40 frontline staff from three rhino reserves took part in wildlife crime investigation training in Assam, India.**

Thanks to the increased capacity of law enforcement, recent years have seen a decrease in poaching and arrests of poaching suspects have increased.



A Greater one-horned rhino in India's Kaziranga National Park.

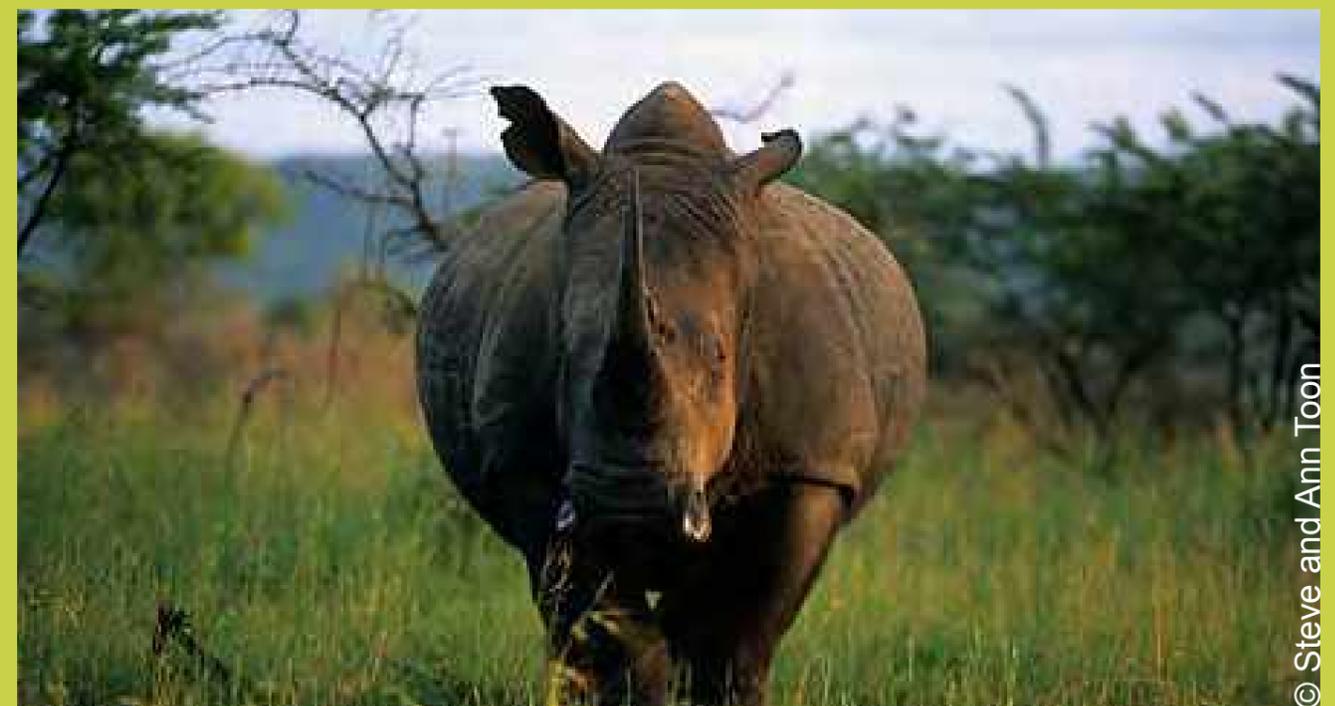


**Funding from our partners including Colchester Zoo, Zoo de Montpellier, Zoo Zlín, Parco Natura Viva and Zoo de la Boissière du Doré procured 130 extended camping kits for Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park's rangers.**

At Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP) in South Africa, rangers work hard to tackle the high rate of illegal incursions into the Park.

With more kits (including backpacks, tents, mattresses, sleeping bags and gas cookers - see photo left), rangers can spend longer periods in the Park's 'hotspots', ready to intercept any incursions before a rhino is poached.

Breakdown of zoo contributions to capacity-building activities.



# Conclusion

**Thanks to the incredible support of 34 zoo partners in 2019-20 financial year, together we directed grants totalling £167,466 to eight rhino conservation programmes in seven countries across Africa and Asia.**

Additionally, zoos generously gave £12,501 in unrestricted contributions supporting the breadth of our rhino conservation efforts.

From supporting anti-poaching operations in South Africa to the conservation breeding programme at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Indonesia, our zoo partners play a pivotal role in conserving all five species of rhinos in the wild. Almost doubling the total contributions from zoo partners in the previous financial year, together we are realising the goal set by WAZA for zoos to “increase their contribution to and impact on saving species in the wild”.

Whilst the past financial year has been a great success in deepening our partnerships and increasing our impact, we recognise there will be challenges in the year ahead. The Coronavirus pandemic has greatly affected life around the world. In

Europe, nearly every zoo has experienced a period of closure as part of national responses to this crisis. With a massive reduction in income but continued high operational costs for zoos, the future of fundraising for in situ conservation looks uncertain. In 2020-21, we expect many zoos will be focusing all of their efforts on continuing to offer the highest standards of care for their animals and ensuring their organisations can continue operating.

Inevitably, we understand that in the following months we might see a reduction in contributions from zoos as they tighten their budgets. Our programme partners across Africa and Asia are similarly having to cope with the impacts and uncertainties of Covid-19, working to keep their staff safe and healthy and maintaining their vital rhino conservation operations whilst dealing with a reduction in funding from tourism and philanthropy. We will continue to support our programme partners

in the field through the pandemic, and hope that, once zoos are able to reopen and welcome back visitors, they will be able to renew their commitment for in situ conservation efforts in the long-term.

Save the Rhino is also ready to support our zoo partners with their fundraising and awareness activities whenever they need, and will continue providing communications and reports demonstrating the impact their support makes for rhinos in the wild. Despite the pandemic, we aim to continue strengthening our partnerships with zoos and regional organisations, including EAZA, AFdPZ (the French Association of Zoological Parks)

and BIAZA (the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) to continue supporting rhino conservation efforts. Through these collaborations, we will strive to achieve our shared aims of a future with more biodiversity and a more symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature.

Finally, we would like to say a massive ‘thank you’ to all of the zoos, their staff, Boards and visitors, who have so generously contributed to support rhino conservation programmes across Africa and Asia. We look forward to continuing our successful partnerships to make a future where all five rhino species thrive in the wild a reality.

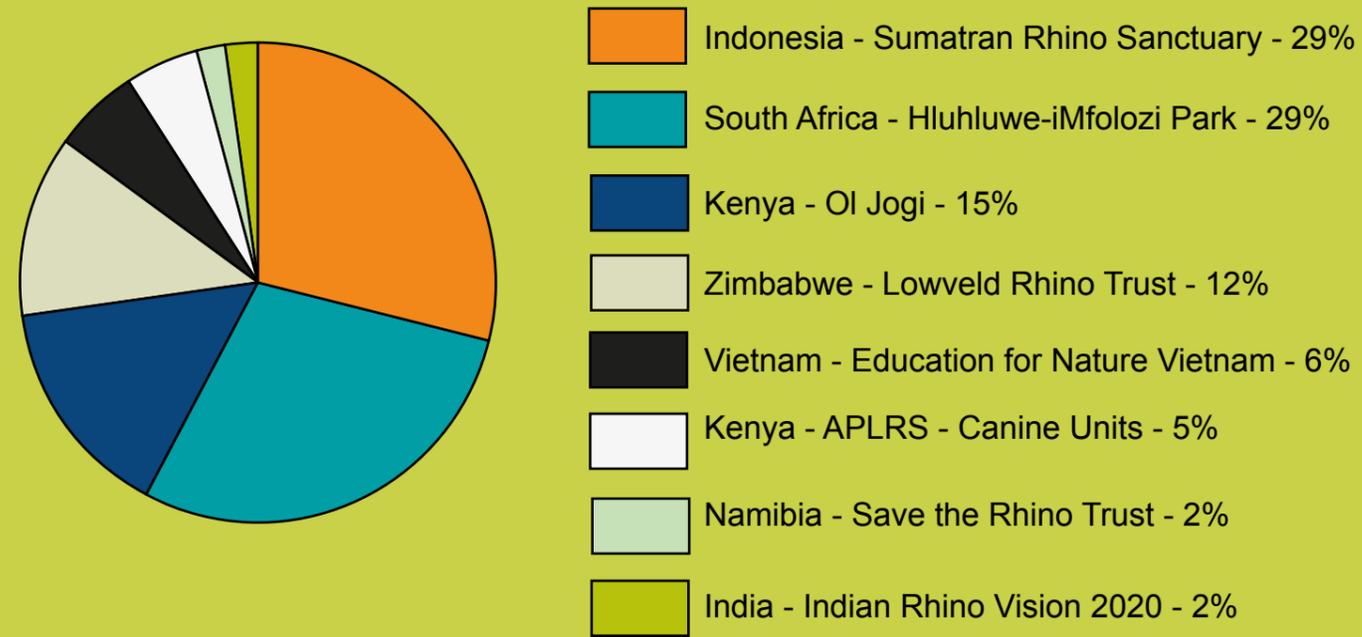


© Steve and Ann Toon

# Appendices

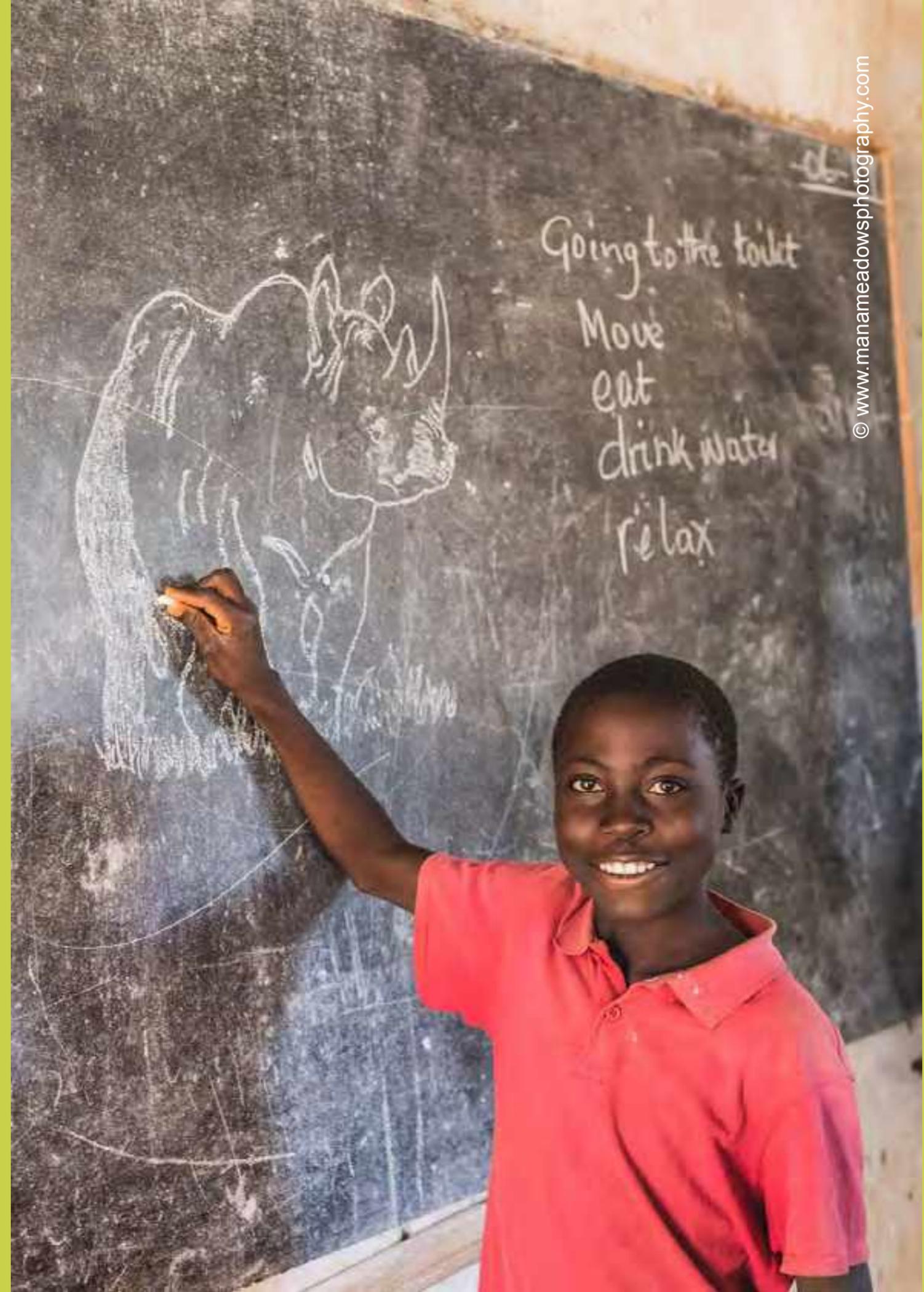
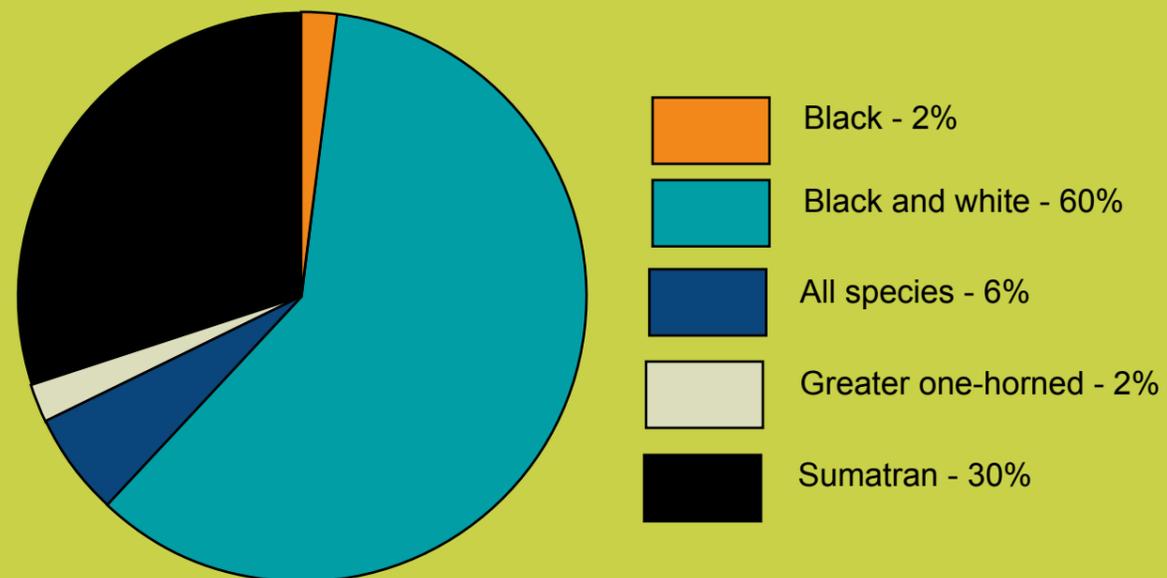
## Appendix A: Analysis of zoo contributions made via SRI by field programme

Percentage of restricted zoo contributions made via SRI by programme.



## Appendix B: Analysis of zoo contributions made via SRI by species

Percentage of restricted zoo contributions made via SRI by species or strategy focus.



## Appendix C: Zoo support listed by field programme in the financial year 2019-20

<b>India-Indian Rhino Vision 2020</b>
Parc Animalier de Branfere
Rotterdam Zoo (Diergaarde Blijdorp)
Indonesia-Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary
West Midland Safari & Leisure Park
Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten Wilhelma (Stuttgart)
<b>Kenya-APLRS-Canine Units</b>
Bioparc Valencia
Bioparco di Roma
Rotterdam Zoo (Diergaarde Blijdorp)
<b>Kenya-Ol Jogi</b>
Erlebnis Zoo Hannover
Tallinn Zoo
Yorkshire Wildlife Park Foundation
Zoologischer Garten Berlin and Tierpark Berlin
<b>Namibia-Save the Rhino Trust</b>
West Midland Safari & Leisure Park
Zoo Krefeld
<b>Save the Rhino International-Core fund</b>
Cotswold Wildlife Park
Edinburgh Zoo (RZSS)
Folly Farm
Monde Sauvage Safari Parc
Ruhr-Zoo Gelsenkirchen (Zoom Erlebniswelt Gelsenkirchen)
Salzburg Zoo
Touroparc
Zoo du Bassin d'Arcachon
Zoo Madrid and Parques Reunidos Foundation
Zoologischer Garten Schwerin
<b>South Africa-Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park</b>
Bioparco di Roma
Colchester Zoo
Friends of Berlin Zoo (Gemeinschaft der Förderer von Tierpark Berlin und Zoologischem Garten Berlin)
Knuthenborg Safaripark
Parco Natura Viva (ARCA Foundation)
Réserve Africaine de Sigean
Zoo de la Boissière du Doré
Zoological Society of East Anglia (Banham Zoo & Africa Alive)
Zoologicka Garden and Chateau Zlin-Lesna
<b>Vietnam-Education for Nature Vietnam</b>
Parc zoologique de la Barben

Tierpark Berlin
Zoologischer Garten Berlin
<b>Zimbabwe-Lowveld Rhino Trust</b>
Dublin Zoo (ZSI)
Fondation Le Pal Nature
Stichting Wildlife / Safaripark Beekse Bergen and Dierenrijk



© Gerad Lacs