

SANParks partners with PPF to care for injured rhino

The Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) has partnered with the South African National Parks (SANParks) as part of the Rhino Protection Programme (RPP).



The partnership will see R2.4m allocated towards assisting with the care of rhino which have been injured and orphaned as a result of rhino poaching.

The Kruger National Park has been particularly affected by rhino poaching and in the course of 2014 SANParks rescued 16 rhino orphans, of which 12 went to specialist care and four were placed with surrogate mothers in holding bomas managed by SANParks.

The ultimate aim is for the rhino orphans to be integrated back into a normally functioning breeding population. The rhino orphans that are rescued in circumstances where their mothers have been killed by poachers require specialist care as they are generally weak and dehydrated.

With the nurturing cycle broken, human intervention is essential to support the rehabilitation of orphaned rhino. Once the rhino orphans have recovered and are grazing, and have been integrated with older rhino, they will be moved to rhino strongholds where they will form part of the breeding population.

Specialist treatment

Veterinarians and rangers are also regularly confronted with dealing with wounded adult rhino in the Kruger National Park following poaching incidents. Unfortunately many wounded rhino have such severe wounds that they have to be humanely euthanised.

If there is a chance, however, that the rhino will recover, then specialist veterinary treatment will be administered, and the rhino released with a tracking collar so that the rhino can be monitored and follow-up treatment administered.

"We appreciate the support of the Rhino Protection Programme in helping rhinos that have been injured and orphaned as a result of poaching, and supporting our teams of vets and field staff who brave the frontlines of the rhino poaching war every day. These interventions form a critical component of the strategic integrated approach to combating wildlife crime," Fundisile Mketeni, CEO of SANParks, commented.

The RPP - a collaboration between the Department of Environmental Affairs, South African National Parks, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and PPF - is funded by the Dutch and Swedish postcode lotteries and other private donors which include The Sophia Foundation as well as the UK-based fundraising initiative, The Charge.

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