

# The HBF Howzit

*All the latest news from Galagos Wildlife Conservation*

AUGUST 2011

ISSUE 2



## This Month.....

**Page 2:** Individual Rhino Identification Project

**Page 3:** Leopard Release

**Page 3:** GWC is getting a swimming pool – Stage 1

**Page 4:** Caught on Camera

**Page 4:** Fact File



# Individual Rhino Identification Project

This month we got our first Rhino pictures on the camera trap placed at a waterhole close to camp. This waterhole is regularly frequented by these magnificent animals and although they aren't the greatest pics in terms of identifying individuals, it's a start! And check out the young one in the bottom left photo behind its mother!



Many of you will have seen all the reports and horrific photographs in the news over the past year or so concerned with the drastic drop in Rhino numbers.

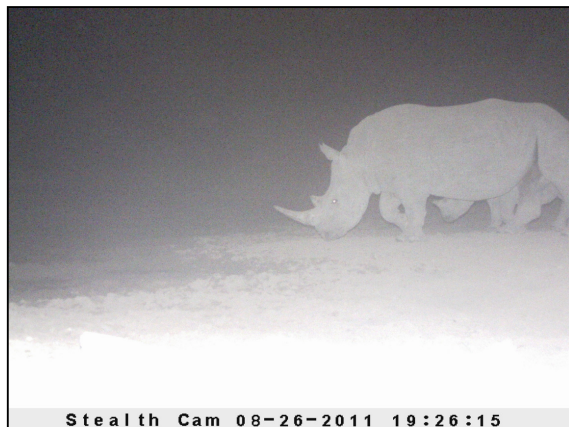
At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was an estimated 1 million Rhino in the wild, in 1970 about 70, 000 and today fewer than 24,500! And three of the five species of Rhino are critically endangered.

So what are the current threats to Rhino's;

- **Poaching;**  
For their horn for traditional Chinese medicine or luxury products such as ornamental handles for daggers. Many of you may think that ground rhino horn is used as an aphrodisiac but this is a common misconception and its actually used to cure (or 'apparently cure' shall we say) almost anything from headaches to smallpox and arthritis. There is no evidence that it serve's any medical purpose but it is a testimony to the power of tradition and beliefs.
- **Habitat Loss;**  
Although poaching is the main cause of decline they are also being affected by clearance of land for human settlement and agriculture or logging (legal & illegal).
- **Political Conflict;**  
In countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe and Nepal where there if political instability and civil wars it is much easier for the poachers.

One of GWC's ongoing projects is the development of a comprehensive Rhino ID database. We will collect as many photo's as possible, from camera traps and sightings, to set about determining each individuals distinguishing features; for example horn length, ear notches and scars.

**But what else can help?** First and foremost is **RAISING AWARENESS**, so send this on to your family and friends! At the end of the day how many people know there's also Rhino's in Asia, that 2 species only have 1 horn, that its not used as an aphrodisiac, I even read reports that some people think they are carnivores!



## Leopard Release



This week Dave and our current volunteers, Jane and Silvia, got to go along and help with the release of an impressive looking male Leopard. This wild Leopard was caught in a cage trap on a cattle farm the other side of Allday's. It was then transported to a predator friendly reserve nearby to be released. An amazing and unique experience one will never forget!



## GWC is getting a swimming pool – Stage 1



Stage 1 – The fibre glass shell is dropped off at HBF camp. Next month Stage 2 – digging the hole!



## Caught On Camera!

### The Gemsbok (*Oryx Gazella*)

This month we got some great pictures of some Gemsbok. The Gemsbok is a large antelope of striking appearance with long spear like horns.

They are about 1.2m (3ft11in) at the shoulder, and males can weigh between 220-250kg while females are slightly smaller at 180-210Kg. Gemsbok live in herds of about 10-40 animals which consist of a dominant males, a few non-dominant males, and females. They can reach running speeds of up to 56km per hour (35mph).

Gemsbok are originally desert-dwelling animals and do not depend on drinking to supply their physiological water needs. They may drink if water is available but can survive days or even weeks without it.

The only outward difference between the sexes is their horns; males have perfectly straight horns extending to a slight outward and rearward angle. Females horns are longer and thinner that have a slight outward and rearward curve along with their angle. The ringed horns can be up to 76cm (30in) long making them formidable weapons. Females use their horns to defend themselves and their young from predators whereas males primarily use them to defend their territory from other males.



So why not take a break from hectic life and come and join us for a 'lekker' time and experience this amazing beautiful place for yourself whilst giving back to nature.

Contact Us:

[info@gwcvolunteers.com](mailto:info@gwcvolunteers.com)  
+27 760357836

or visit our website  
[www.gwcvolunteers.com](http://www.gwcvolunteers.com)

Hope you all have a fantastic month and we look forward to meeting some of you soon ☺  
Nicole

## Fact File

### The Elephants Trunk

- Is a union of the nose and upper lip & is a highly sensitive organ
- It doesn't have a nasal bone or any other bone and consists of approximately 40,000 muscles!
- There are 2 nostrils through which they breathe
- Elephants can also soak up to 8L of water into these nostrils and blow it into their mouth. They do not drink directly through their trunk, this would cause a cough reflex just as it would for humans.
- It is a funny sight watching a baby elephant learn to use its trunk, they often step on their own trunks and squeal. It is relatively short when first born then it stretches a few days later.
- It also serves as an indicator for the elephants mood, it can fend off others with its trunk or use it as a punching or thrusting weapon