

Large Scale Community-based Rhino Conservation in North-West Namibia  
**Annual Progress Report – 2022**



We are pleased and proud to share highlights from another exceptionally successful year of community-based black rhino conservation in north-west Namibia. Overall, we managed to surpass three out of our four targets for the year in rhino monitoring with even greater increases in foot kilometers. In fact, the distance covered for ALL foot kilometers walked by individual rangers throughout the year combine to over 110,000 kilometers – **or roughly walking around the world almost three times!** We also were pleased to welcome **eight new rhino calves** to our population and no recorded mortalities placing our population on a clear growth trend. And most critically we added yet another year of **ZERO poaching** for one of the world's last truly wild population of black rhinos where only 4 rhinos have been lost to poachers in the past 5.5 years. This result is even more remarkable when compared with the poaching escalation occurring around Namibia over the past year. Supplementing our monitoring efforts was the launching of two major new Rhino Pride Campaign initiatives including the **Rhino Cup Youth Champions League** with introducing our **new Rhino Mascot** and **Reading with Rhinos** schools initiative. Both were extremely successful and engaged thousands of local people directly in and benefiting from rhino conservation. This report summarizes our results for 2022 highlighting our main achievements.

Firstly, overall, our collaborative approach to rhino conservation in north-west Namibia performed exceptionally well yet again ensuring our core rhino monitoring efforts are not only sustained but increased across the range.



## RHINO MONITORING SUMMARY INFOGRAPHIC



2022-01-01 to 2023-01-01



TEAM FIELD DAYS

**5,935**



RANGER FIELD DAYS

**11,644**



TEAM FOOT KILOMETERS

**56,259**



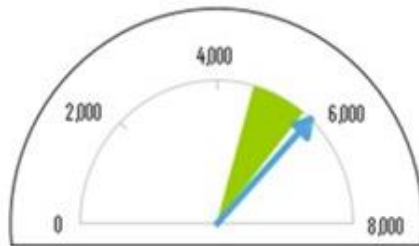
CONFIRMED RHINO SIGHTINGS

**2,937**

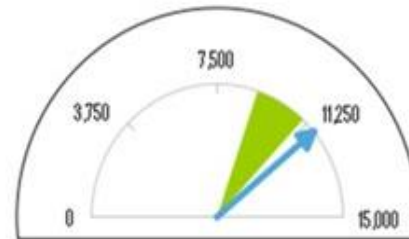
More specifically, we exceeded our 2022 targets for three of our four key performance indicators including Team Field Days, Ranger Field Days and Foot Kilometers. Rhino sighting dropped slightly from 2021 but did not miss our target by much. Further, while overall sightings were slightly down the percentage of individual rhinos seen each month increased.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO ANNUAL TARGETS (+/- 10% OF 2021 - GREEN REGION)

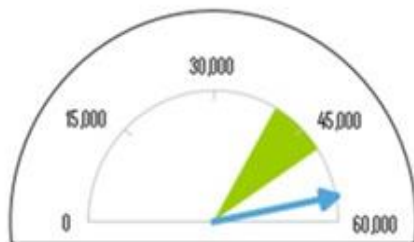
**Team Field Days**



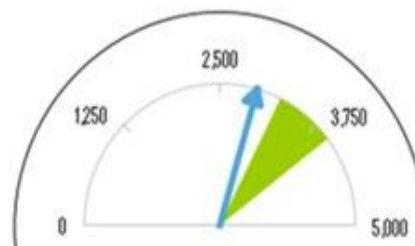
**Ranger Field Days**



**Team Foot Kilometers**



**Cumulative Rhino Sightings**



Below are a few additional noteworthy highlights from rhino monitoring in 2022

- Tourism has returned to Namibia and although figures are still below pre-COVID levels, rhino tourism-related field days and rhino sightings more than doubling in 2022 from 2021.
- We ran our first full year of the **Ranger Welfare Project** which following the first aid training conducted in 2021, ensured that every ranger patrol was equipped with a fully replenished first aid kit. This required continuous inventory of each kit upon return from patrol by our Ranger Welfare Field Officers and replenishments ordered, procured and sent up to camp in a timely fashion. In addition, another visit by a physician was conducted and 1 additional first aid training was completed which provided training for 90% of our ranger force.



- We conducted joint patrols with and hosted our new **Conservancy Rhino Ranger team from Nyae Nyae Conservancy** in the north-west to see firsthand how SRT and its Conservancy partners operate. This included some training in the use of SMART Mobile data collection (See photo below).



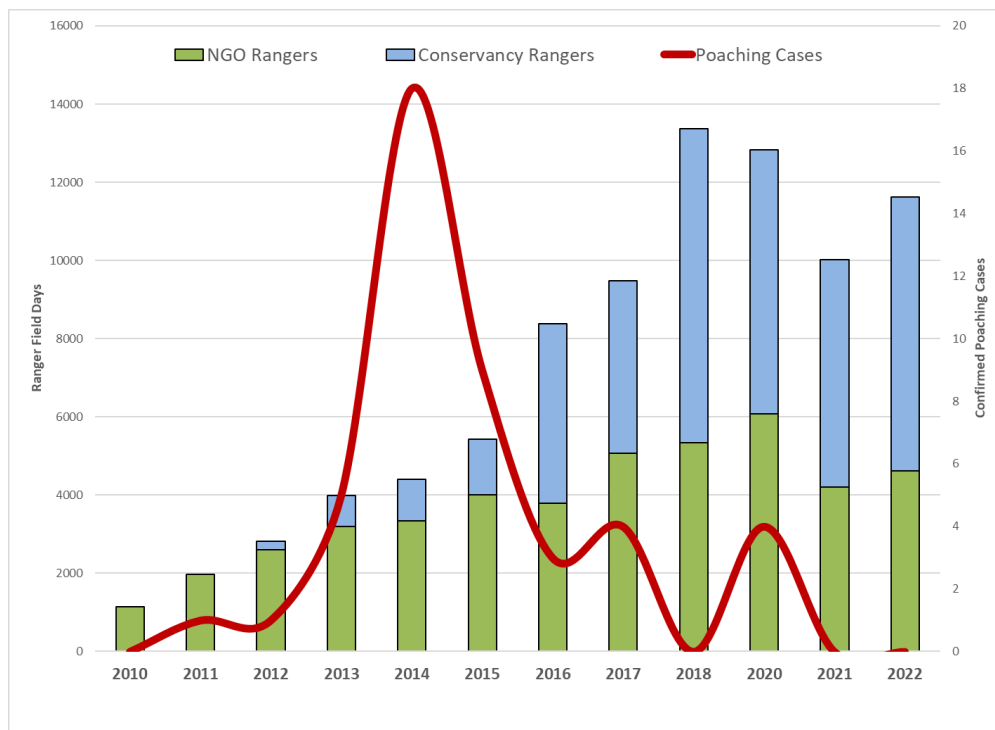
- We were invited to train 11 rangers working for one of the Namibia's largest rhino custodians on private lands in rhino monitoring (see photo below).



- One of our Conservancy Rhino Rangers, Martinus Sanib from Torra Conservancy, won an award at the first GOSCAR Award ceremony in Namibia for his exceptional performance in 2021.



- Conservancy Rhino Rangers again increased their relative contributions towards the overall rhino monitoring effort in Kunene by producing 60% of the total effort on the ground.







# Rhino Pride CAMPAIGN

2022 was a year to remember for the Rhino Pride Campaign. After 2 years of delays and postponements, we were able to make things happen in 2022. Below are a few specific highlights from 2021:

- **We launched our Reading with Rhinos programme!** After successfully training 9 teachers from our 3 partner schools in the north-west with our local education partner Mondessa Youth Opportunities, roughly 360 learners in Grades 1 and 2 directly participated in and benefited from our programme.

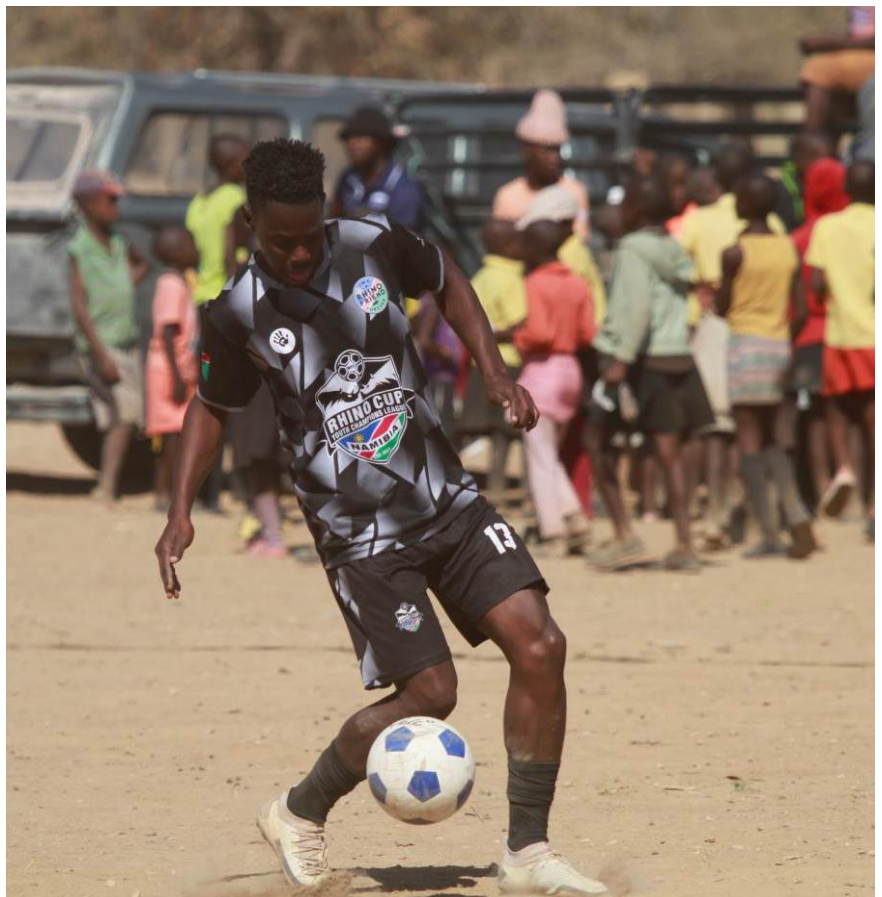


- We completed our **Reading with Rangers events** which conducted 14 independent excursions involving over 100 youth from 7 different Conservancies and 2 larger municipalities (Kamanjab and Khorixas). Each group spent a full day at SRT's basecamp learning from SRT senior staff about the region's unique black rhino population, the past and present efforts to protect them and how the partnerships with the local communities, government and private sector tourism all

contribute towards their survival followed by joining a team of Conservancy Rhino Rangers at their field camps for 2 nights and 2 full days of rhino patrol.



- We launched the **1<sup>st</sup> Season of Rhino Cup Youth Champions League (RCYCL)** – in partnership with Wild and Free Foundation. For its first 6 month season, the league directly impacted at least 543 rural Namibians engaged and empowered through formal participation as Leadership (8), Managers and Players (480 men, 55 women). Roughly 4,000 – 5,000 rural Namibians from the broader community across the region were able to experience the RCYCL in action including exposure to positive rhino messaging through our Rhino mascot, rhino music, and/or rhino-branded materials freely distributed.





- Lastly, we introduced our new **Rhino Pride Campaign rhino mascot** to Namibia! The mascot made appearances at every RCYCL event (and a few other tournaments and other trade fairs by invitation) with one of the most memorable activities the Rhino Parades around the football pitches during matches with dozens of children in tow all chanting '*Okuhepa Ongava, Kai-Aios !Nawas*' ('Thank you Rhino' in the two local languages Herero and Nama-Damara) to promote gratitude and pride in rhino amongst the hundreds of fans and spectators (see below).





## How We Got Started

In 2011, in the face of an escalating poaching threat, local community leaders and game guards saw the need to improve their capacity to protect the rhino on their lands and better fulfill their obligations as 'Rhino Custodians'. A small group of dedicated field conservationists together with support from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism formed an informal working group that sought to provide targeted support to these Communal Rhino Custodians. Our first initiative was to design and implement a programme to strengthen and expand the capacity for Communal Rhino Custodians to monitor the rhino on their lands. We called this the Rhino Ranger Incentive Programme. This program utilizes specialists from dedicated field-based organizations, namely Save the Rhino Trust, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation and Minnesota Zoo, to train a new generation of "rhino rangers" - highly talented groups of local people, chosen by and accountable to their communities to conduct rhino monitoring. The program provides an enhanced training curriculum, state-of-the-art rhino monitoring and field patrol equipment, and performance-based cash bonuses that enable and incentivize rhino ranger teams to complete quality patrols. Once rhino ranger teams acquire the basic skills needed to effectively monitor the rhino on their land and pending necessary approvals, training in rhino tourism will help guide the development of community-led rhino tourism activities that would improve rhino security by generating the critical finances needed to sustain rhino monitoring and enhancing the value that people place on keeping rhino alive.



A Rhino Ranger in action

After about 5 successful years of growing the Conservancy Rhino Ranger Programme, we realized that if we wanted to achieve lasting widespread impact, we needed to extend our engagement beyond the rangers and into the broader community. Thus in 2017, together with local partners, we launched the Rhino Pride Campaign to creatively harness and strengthen key emotional connections to rhinos including pride, gratitude and compassion through strategic outreach activities that local people value. At the heart of this approach is the belief that a future for Africa's wild rhino will only be secured when poaching is simply not tolerated by the local people, when rhino become more valuable alive than dead, and where innovative solutions – grown from the grassroots – are supported through authentic partnerships between government, NGOs and private sector.

**We deeply thank our main donors & partners:**

*(who's gifts directly support the Conservancy Rhino Rangers / Rhino Pride Campaign)*

**USAID, Tusk Trust, B2Gold, Houston Zoo, Great Plains Zoo, Minnesota Zoo Foundation, Dietrich American Foundation, SwissAfrican Foundation, Wild & Free Foundation, Conservation Travel Foundation, Cymot, and NAMDEB**

**Field Partners: Thirteen Communal Conservancies (Puros, Otjikondavirongo, Sesfontein, Anabeb, Omatendeka, Ehirovipuka, /Khoadi #Hoas, Torra, Doro !Nawas, Sorris Sorris, //Huab, Uibasen/Twefelfontein, Tsiseb), Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Save the Rhino Trust, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Namibia Nature Foundation, Conservancy Safaris Namibia, Camelthorn Safaris, Journey's Namibia, Ultimate Safaris, Wilderness Safaris Namibia and the Minnesota Zoo**