SAVING THE SURVIVORS

CREATING HOPE FROM HURT

PROSPECTUS

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Introduction

Saving the Survivors (STS) is a field-based, non-profit conservation organization, registered in South Africa, UK and USA, that aims to maintain biodiversity by caring for and rescuing threatened and endangered wildlife species, through partnerships with governmental, non-governmental, community and private stakeholders. As a non-profit organization, STS relies heavily on donations and sponsorships to carry out the much-needed work in conservation.

We provide critical and emergency veterinary intervention, care, and support to threatened and endangered wildlife, focusing on, but not limited to Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

STS has worked hard to become a reliable and meaningful conservation partner to compliment National and Provincial Parks, as well as private rhino owners and other stakeholders in conservation activities in Southern Africa and abroad.

Vision

STS aims to maintain biodiversity by caring for and rescuing primarily threatened and endangered wildlife species, by partnering with governmental, non-governmental, community and private stakeholders.

Mission

STS aims to achieve its conservation goals through:

- Providing veterinary care and support to primarily threatened and endangered species in Africa and the East, e.g. rhino, elephant, lion, cheetah, giraffe and wild dog.
- Enhance endangered wildlife conservation through national and international partnerships with and direct support to conservation programmes and projects, with specific reference to endangered and threatened wildlife species.
- Conserving threatened and endangered species in Africa by developing and supporting conservation programmes and projects that threaten biodiversity.
- Reducing threats to endangered wildlife that can lead to extinction, such as loss of habitat and spread of contagious diseases, e.g. rabies in Wild dog populations.
- Providing high-level research in the endangered wildlife veterinary field.
- Provide training and education with respect to wildlife towards communities, as well as the general public.
- Partner with and provide veterinary support to rehabilitation facilities.

Executive summary

Saving the Survivors (STS) was founded by veterinarian Dr Johan Marais in 2012 with the goal to provide care and treatment for wildlife that have suffered due to the impact of man, mainly through poaching. As a field-based project, STS assists various wildlife species across Africa and Asia. With mobile teams currently in South Africa and Mozambique, STS is covering a large geographic area of Southern Africa that has little to no support in these affected areas. Due the dramatic rise in rhino poaching for the illegal trade in rhino horn over the last 8 years, the need for specialist wildlife veterinary support has become evident throughout Southern Africa and Asia.

STS has performed some world firsts in the field of wildlife surgery, many with successful outcomes - arthroscopic joint surgery on White rhino, abdominal colic surgery on White rhino, abdominal colic surgery on 'Naledi' – an elephant calf in Botswana, developed a method to successfully cast limbs of White rhino to treat fractures and severe wounds and the endoscopic examination of the stomach of calves and adult rhino to ascertain whether they suffer from stomach ulcers. In providing a combination of clinical expertise and research, Saving the Survivors is leaving a huge footprint and making a direct impact on rhino and wildlife conservation.

STS aims to expand their existing field-based mobile veterinary emergency units into neighbouring Southern African and East African countries, to provide the much-needed specialized trauma treatment and care for injured and endangered species, that is currently void in the wildlife conservation industry.

By partnering with local and international organizations, STS aims to not only treat the injured survivors of poaching, but also contribute towards breeding programs to aid in the process of increasing the endangered and critically endangered species populations, such as the Black and White rhinoceros. STS works in collaboration with KZN Ezemvelo, SANParks, Free State Nature Conservation, Northwest Parks, as well as private conservation and research partners to treat and care for injured rhino.

During 2014, STS was awarded the prestigious Kudu Award from SANParks as well as 1st prize in the Best Science, Research and Technology category from the Rhino Conservation Awards. STS also supports NGO's further afield in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

STS has established firm partnerships with local National Parks in South Africa and Mozambique, namely ANAC and SANParks, to provide veterinary services on their behalf. Publications and media presence world-wide include features in the multi-award-winning films STROOP, Naledi: one little elephant, Breaking Their Silence, Last of the Big Tuskers, Rhinoman as well as many articles written about Dr Johan Marais and the work done by the Saving the Survivors team, which can be found online.

South African NATIONAL PARKS

ANAC
ADMINISTRAÇÃO NACIONAL DAS ÁREAS DE CONSERVAÇÃO

STS responds to all wildlife species in need, including but not limited to, rhino, elephant, pangolin, wild dog, lions, buffalo, leopard, cheetah, and hyena. The ecosystem comprises a network of species that is interconnected, therefore STS believes that no one species is more important than another. Every species in the ecosystem plays a vital role and every life deserves to be saved. This is important to save the genetics of the individual animals, as we have already lost 69% of the genetics of Black rhino due to poaching.

Our logo, a rhino head within a target whose horns have been removed, is globally recognized as a sign of hope for injured endangered wildlife.

Extinction of iconic and keystone species

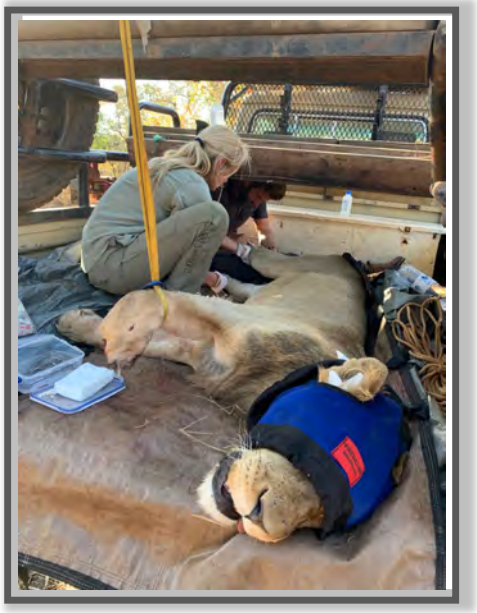
There are currently less than 15 000 White rhino and fewer than 5 000 Black rhino left in the wild today. The majority (98%) of White rhino occur in just four countries: South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. More than 80% of Africa's White rhino and 40% of Black rhino occur in South Africa. Since 2012, there have been over 8 000 rhinos poached for their horn which is predominantly used as a wealth or status symbol in South East Asia. Due to the continuing decline in wild population numbers, the value of the horns is increasing due to the decreasing supply needed to meet the high demand. This economic play is disastrous for the world's rhino population.

Similarly, African elephant populations are also in danger. Africa's iconic gentle giant has been listed as "vulnerable" by the IUCN due to ivory poaching having more than doubled in the last decade. Elephants are well on their way in following the fate of their fellow keystone species, the rhino. If elephants continue down this tragic path, many other species will follow as well, causing a snowball effect on the entire ecosystem.

Saving the Survivors solution to species extinction – 7 factors

1. Trauma treatment and prevention

STS has partnered with Kruger National Park (KNP) which is South African National Park (SANParks) premier park and one of Africa's largest game reserves. This partnership allows STS to do clinical work including therapeutic support of injured animals, integrated rhino management including Black rhino expansion and guardianship programmes, as well as desnaring in the northern parts of KNP (north of the Olifants river), where there is little to no veterinary support due to various constraints. Snaring and poisoning are two of the biggest causes of wildlife death in the area. With the STS presence in KNP, quick response to elephants and other wildlife trapped and injured due to snares are quickly treated and released where they continue to contribute to the ecosystem. In a single month, over 500 snares were removed from this section of KNP alone.



For this project to work most efficiently, STS is looking to acquire a property close to the Greater Kruger area, in the province of Limpopo, or to set up a semi-permanent base within the KNP. This property will serve as a base for STS, from where, amongst others, clinical work can be performed in KNP, as well as in the surrounding Greater Kruger area and private game reserves. Currently this area immediately west to KNP is the most active in dealing with injured wildlife, as well as running conservation programs like collaring of elephants, immunization of lion etc. An estimate of the cost to set up a semi-permanent base is R 1 000 000/$ 60 000. A permanent property, ideally around 400 hectares in the nearby area, would act as a Wildlife Hub, would cost substantially more, approx. R 12 000 000 / $ 727 362.

2. Wildlife hub

The Wildlife Centre would work as a “wildlife conservation hub”, bringing together a multidisciplinary team, diverse infrastructure and equipment focusing its activity on 3 different, but intrinsically linked fronts:

- Education, training, and capacity building
- Black and White rhino breeding
- Applied wildlife research

The Centre will have a strong focus on capacity building in different aspects of wildlife conservation by acting as a “wildlife Hub” with lectures, workshops, courses, and research opportunities. The aim would be to identify “champions” in rural children/students and invest more time in them, so they eventually become champions of conservation in Africa.

Additionally, this centre will also be used to present wildlife courses to international students and veterinarians. The Centre can play an important role in creating awareness on the issues that wildlife face, human-wildlife conflict as well as educating children and students from abroad on poaching, biodiversity etc, while at the same time giving them a wildlife experience. These courses will cover topics that will give a diverse understanding of wild animal veterinary medicine and the challenges faced by conservationists in Africa.

The Centre will partner with NGO’s and stakeholders across the world to generate new knowledge to enhance our understanding of wildlife and ensure their health and welfare, which in turn has important benefits to humans, wildlife, and domesticated animals. The knowledge gained will enable participants to contribute to the protection of endangered wildlife on a global scale.

STS has pioneered several techniques and procedures to treat injured wildlife over the last 8 years. We will therefore also assist with the transfer of knowledge and expertise with regards to evaluating injuries and specific treatment requirements for Black and White Rhino, elephant as well other species of special concern. STS will take the lead in the training and providing new skills for intensively caring for injured animals.

3. Education

Many of the children that are brought into a park like Kruger National Park (KNP) have been taught very little about South Africa's unique flora and fauna and the necessity of environmental protection and eco-friendly behaviour.

The Wildlife Hub education centre will aim to teach children the importance of conserving wildlife and the environment, for future generations to experience, and to cultivate and nurture a passion for this in their everyday lives. The focus will be on community children (both primary and secondary), and will offer environmental education programmes to various local, rural schools. The program will consist of classroom lessons and physical activities. Participants will learn identification and tracking skills, go on game-drives and visit a dam to learn about aquatic conservation as well. By educating the youth on aquatic life, we hope to highlight the importance of water quality for wildlife and people.

The Wildlife Warrior (WW) program educates the next generation of African conservationists, by establishing wildlife clubs at local schools, host local and international groups to the Centre to share their programs and research, organize an annual concert where children perform songs, dances, poems, plays and debates around a conservation theme and develop the education capacity of conservation leaders to be able to package and relay information to their community. All the WW activities are designed to promote inter-generational knowledge sharing, innovative thinking, and proactive wildlife conservation.

"**Little Moyo**" is a children's book that has already been distributed in schools to many children living near the Kruger National Park as a joint STS-KNP initiative to bring awareness and education to the young of the local communities that border wildlife parks such as KNP. The book is based on the true story of a young black rhino who lived in Africa with his mother. One day as he played with his friend, Howard the warthog, he heard a strange noise. He went to see what it was and found his mother had been taken by poachers. When he tried to save her, he too was hurt by them. With the help of his mom's unique friends, a mother elephant, a mother lion, and a mother ostrich, Little Moyo makes his way to find humans that will help heal his wounds and enable him to live safely at a rhino sanctuary. The humans who help him are Saving the Survivors, led by Dr Johan Marais.

4. Breeding

STS plans to use the Wildlife Hub centre for a rhino breeding project. Currently STS owns 2 White rhino bulls, one lives free in a large game reserve, and the other one (Seha), remains in a semi-captive area due to his severe facial injury. This bull can be moved to this property, and introduced to 2 to 3 cows, which will serve as the start of a White rhino breeding project. The horns of this bull will never grow back, so he will serve as the perfect ambassador for poaching, showing children and students the injuries sustained by these animals. He has already sired a calf, and to get him to sire more calves would underscore what STS stands for e.g., Creating Hope from Hurt.

We are also looking at introducing Black rhino to a reserve in the Limpopo Province, which currently has only 5 animals, of which the sex ratio is skewed towards males. Fifty years ago, Africa was home to more than 70 000 Black rhino, now fewer than 5 000 remain. While security on the reserve is one of the best in South Africa, rhino poaching remains a serious threat today. However, there's been growing investment in conservation and in restoring ecosystems, as STS realize that a "wildlife economy" brings revenue and social benefits through tourism, infrastructure, and job creation. These efforts often include re-establishing animal populations in protected areas where they once roamed. But we cannot undertake these large-scale projects alone, and so turn to partnerships with private organizations to assist us with the translocation and re-introduction.

STS will need financial support from donors and sponsors in order to provide a safe and natural environment for this major breeding project. Infrastructure and additional animals will be needed for these projects to take off, as well as additional budget to cover running and maintenance costs. We hope that in the coming years, STS can further contribute to the recovery and preservation of white

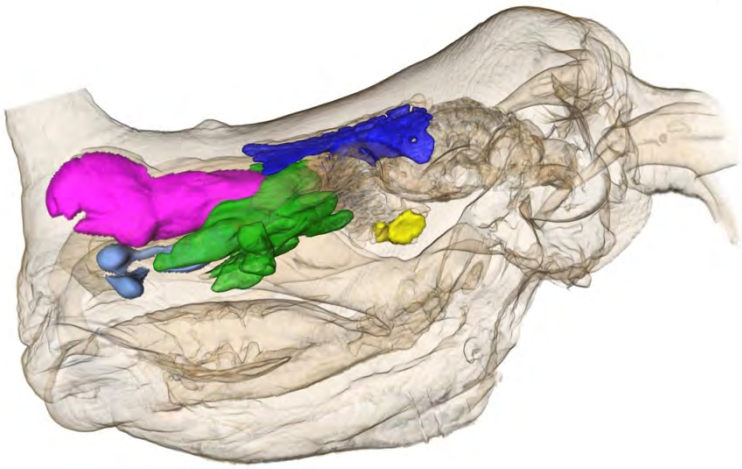
rhino and black rhino populations. The financial implication of this project would be roughly R 600 000/$ 35 300 for the purchasing of two cows for Seha.

The immobilisation, translocation and re-introduction costs of several Black rhino into the reserve in Limpopo has a budget of approximately R112 000-00 / $7 000-00.

5. Research

As a science-based organisation, we are aware of how little there has been published on endangered wildlife. STS and partners continue to perform research in these important areas to assist veterinarians, owners, zookeepers, and the conservation community at large. Eleven peer reviewed papers have been published by STS, including the paranasal sinuses of the White rhino due to its importance in the treatment of poaching survivors. A list of publications is available upon request.

Research will be conducted at the Wildlife Hub centre by STS in collaboration with Veterinary Wildlife Services – KNP, and will follow approved SANParks SOPs for scientific and ethics evaluation, registration, and implementation. The application for and use of Biobank samples will also be governed by established procedures and SOPs. The new SANParks veterinarian, Dr Lufuno, will be conducting his MSc degree under Dr J Marais, starting in 2021, looking at the tarsal joint of White rhino.



6. Community involvement

Saving the Survivors will work with the necessary stakeholders to teach children and communities about the importance of biodiversity. Poverty and inequality contribute substantially to environmental degradation. STS is passionate about the conservation mission of the National Parks and to educate children and young people about the importance of biodiversity and to discourage people living in these communities from being easily recruited by rhino poaching syndicates.

In wildlife-rich landscapes, people and biodiversity are equally important. Communities living next to game reserves play a key role in preserving the integrity of the wilderness area and its ecosystem. Ensuring that communities understand and benefit from the existence of the reserve is an important element of this relationship, however, this rarely happens. Despite living in such close proximity to a game reserve, many have never had the opportunity to view and appreciate the wildlife that we are tirelessly working to protect.

Human-Elephant Conflict - Mozambique

STS has piloted Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in Mozambique and have seen remarkable success rates. We have supplied various affected communities with toolboxes, that are simple, easy to use and effective and can be rapidly deployed in eminent HEC situations. They include practical items to deter animal incursions including rope fence with reflective tape and airhorns. All elephants were deterred by one or a combination of the tools. Improvements to the toolbox from the pilot testing included using sisal rope rather than nylon, which would allow it being soaked in a natural and easily sourced elephant repellent solution first, an additional deterrent for elephants, and would avoid the rope being stolen for other uses. Given the promising results, we aim to continue roll out these measures further to additional districts in the area.

As the District Service for Economic and Agriculture (SDAE) in Mozambique is mandated by law to manage and mitigate HEC, we aim to work with the communities through the SDAE. The SDAE will become the custodians of the boxes and be responsible for the deployment in communities at risk of an incursion by elephants, based on community reports and/or from the early warning information provided by collared elephants. The SDAE, farmers and other stakeholders in the target areas will be trained on how to deploy the tools, as well as best practices for success discussed. This project will be complimented by our work monitoring elephant movements using GPS collars. The collars have already been placed on 10 elephants from different groups in potential conflict areas to understand their use of the little studied areas outside the National Parks in southern Mozambique. The collars enable us to warn communities of potential incursion threat of elephants, so the toolboxes can be deployed, and communities can be proactive.

The aim of the project is to build capacity within the Government department mandated to work on HEC issues, the SDAE, and empowering them with simple, robust tools to deploy to communities to mitigate HEC. Empowering SDAE, in our view, the only way to provide sustainable long-term support to communities affected by HEC, outside of PAs, and by doing so increasing tolerance and co-existence values. The toolboxes and smelly elephant repellent are comprised of easily available and inexpensive items, therefore easily replicable. If the project is successful as anticipated, we aim to roll out the HEC toolboxes, including the smelly elephant repellent, to other districts within Mozambique.

Domestic dog vaccination and castration

Rabies can not only kill people, but it can destroy Lion and African Wild Dog populations. Tackling this disease is an issue that must be addressed proactively. Local communities use domestic dogs to chase baboons away from farmland and warning of predators approaching livestock. However, domestic dogs can easily spread Rabies and other diseases that are potentially deadly to Humans and Wildlife. STS are working in Mozambique to vaccinate an estimated 600 domestic dogs living in 26 villages inside Niassa Reserve from rabies and canine distemper as well as sterilize the male dogs. Thus, vastly reducing the risk of these diseases being passed on to the local wildlife. Community education teams are already out in the villages talking to dog owners and going home to home ahead of our Vets, Dr. Joao and Dr. Hugo in October 2020.

Humanitarian support

Dr. Joao Almeida served as one of the volunteers when the intense tropical Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique. Cyclone Idai was one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. The cyclone caused catastrophic damage, and a humanitarian crisis in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, leaving more than 1,300 people dead and many more missing. Dr. Joao made himself available to help with the humanitarian relief efforts, while the rest of our STS team in SA continued to focus on the lifesaving work with wildlife.

Abelana Game Reserve

Abelana Game Reserve is a 15,000ha (36,000 acre) Big Five game reserve adjacent to the Greater Kruger National Park, close to the town of Phalaborwa in South Africa's beautiful Lowveld – the country's prime big game region. Abelana Game Reserve consists of several properties, the largest of which – Croc Ranch - was originally proclaimed as a nature reserve in 1958 and is owned by the Mashishimale community. The community have committed to ensuring the property is managed for conservation and eco-tourism with the development and operation of eco-tourism projects on the property. The word "abelana" means "to share amongst each other" in the local Northern Sotho language.

Characterised by breathtakingly beautiful landscapes, varied topography and a mixture of vegetation types, Abelana Game Reserve has a 10 km stretch of the semi-perennial Selati River in its northern section, as well as numerous other seasonal watercourses. Geographically, the reserve is blessed with a range of eco-systems, from the distinctive granite outcrops and 'koppies' of the south to beautiful riparian forest in the north, dominated by large riverine trees. Abelana is home to a rich diversity of fauna and flora, from the hippos and crocodiles that make the Selati River their home and the famed Big Five – elephant, rhino, leopard, lion, and buffalo – as well as cheetah and wild dog, to an impressive number of endemic bird species including the African fish eagle, peregrine falcon, Arnot's chat, thick-billed cuckoo, bat hawk and elusive Pels fishing owl.

While eco-tourism is the main source of income in this community-owned reserve, the authentic safari experience is offered with a sensitive ecological touch. The community's environmental ethos is to operate with as light a footprint as possible; with just one camp in the south and one lodge in the north of the 15,000ha area, they can do just that. Abelana Safari Camp uses solar power and gas geysers, and no large trees were removed during its construction. The camp could be dismantled, and the site completely rehabilitated within 12-18 months. Abelana are against single-use plastics and they have their own reverse osmosis systems providing fresh drinking water from an underground aquifer to their two lodges and staff in stainless steel or recyclable glass bottles. All waste is separated and removed from the property.

Saving the Survivors is proud to partner with the eco-conscious community of Abelana in supporting the needs of, not just the wildlife such as the elephant, rhino, and wild dog populations, but the community that owns the reserve, as well as the local communities surrounding this reserve. Having already performed immunocontraception in the elephant population, ethically managing the rich biodiversity and ecological impact of these mega-herbivores, is Saving the Survivors' first step in the long and fruitful partnership with the community of Abelana.

7. Anti-poaching and GPS tracking development and support

The development of a satellite tag is currently being designed by STS to be implanted into the horn, that will communicate several times per day, and will last approximately 1,5 years. Due to the fact that satellite communication draws a lot of power from the system, we are in talks with several entities and companies worldwide to find a solution to a battery that is small enough and can be charged by a small solar panel. STS is hopeful that this prototype will be a successful tracking devise that is not only comfortable and safe for the animal to wear, but also effective in monitoring critically endangered rhino species such as the black rhinos.

Ngorongoro Crater in East Africa is home to approximately 50 of some of the last reaming 750 Eastern Black rhino. However, the equipment of the rangers is old and out of date, which makes it difficult from them to monitor and keep track of these animals. Dr Johan Marais visited the Crater and donated spotting scopes for 4 of the observation posts. These will enable the rangers to monitor the rhino more effectively, as well as carry out their anti-poaching activities efficiently due to the 60 times magnification. There are currently 14 observation posts within the Crater (excluding Acacia main camp). Four of these are equipped with Fujinon 25 X 150 Binoculars on tripods. STS installed four Bushnell 60X magnification spotting scopes at Mlima, Nyathi, Duma and Gorilla posts.

As with most African countries, true conservation support is often difficult and requires a long-term relationship with the locals and a sustainable form of benefit to the community. In order to develop this relationship and increase benefits, STS believe that providing clinical support and expertise to the local veterinarians will further cement our partnership over time. Additional funding will be needed for this initiative, but STS believes that it is imperative to the survival of the critically endangered Eastern Black rhino.

Sustainability, Risks, Funding and Partnerships

Average financial dedications: 2% marketing/fundraising, 5% Office support/administration and 93% conservation.

Financial changes over the last 3 years:

Year	Income	Expense	Net asset
2017	R 3 755 624	R 2 530 066	R 1 225 558
2018	R 4 820 597	R 4 456 778	R 363 819
2019	R 3 998 657	R 3 739 000	R 259 657

STS is focused on spending funds in the field, where it is necessary. We firmly believe in maximizing fund use efficiency and more than 90% of funds raised should go to conservation and projects undertaken.

We do however realise how important marketing and fundraising is, so this percentage needs to be increased to be able to have more funds available.

Currently, funding of STS is done through social media platforms, such as Facebook fundraisers, merchandise sales, donations, and grants. Partnerships with organizations include, but are not limited to, Mozambican National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC), South African National Parks, Over and Above Africa, Council of Contributors, Peace Parks Foundation, Ford Wildlife Foundation, Craghoppers, and more. As a non-profit STS, the wildlife and local communities rely on donations and sponsorships for the continuation of conservation work. STS is proud to have many long-term sponsors and partnerships in place, both in South Africa and internationally. An agreement with sponsors to share information from STS projects for marketing and environmental offset and tax benefits can be made to satisfy both parties involved in the partnership.

STS has permanent veterinary support in both Southern African countries providing much needed specialized veterinary support and treatment. With ever-growing pressure on the wildlife populations, Saving the Survivors is determined to continue contributing more and more to wildlife conservation by growing in capacity and expanding into more African countries, including Namibia, Botswana, Kenya, and South Sudan. With partnerships already in place with many organizations throughout Africa, STS plans to set up permanent bases and “wildlife hubs” in these countries to support the wildlife and local communities alike. Through strong partnerships with local and international groups, STS looks forward to contributing holistically to the restoration and preservation of African wildlife, communities, and ecosystems.

Proposed major future projects:

- Rhino breeding Projects
- KNP base of operations
- Mounted GPS monitoring rhino tracker
- STS Wildlife Hub South Africa
- Expansion into neighbouring African Countries

Meet some of the Survivors

SEHA

Seha

On the 24th of September 2016, the day CITES CoP17 opened in Johannesburg and the South African President called rhinos “our proud heritage”, Saving the Survivors treated this severely injured twelve year old White rhino bull in the North West province after a vicious attack by poachers. A very despondent owner, who initially wanted to put him down because of the severity of the injuries, accepted STS’s offer of assistance in rescuing and treating him. Seha (short for Sehawukele meaning ‘have mercy on us’ in Zulu) was the only survivor after five rhinos where poached on the same property. Both his horns were hacked off leaving a gaping wound of 49 cm x 26 cm and extending into the nasal cavities.

Not since Hope was left for dead and found with both her horns removed 16 months earlier in an attack in the Eastern Cape, had STS encountered such callousness.

Seha has endured many treatments over the last few years and has showed remarkable resolve and courage to survive. In 2018 we decided his wound has healed enough to introduce him to two females, with the result that little Daniel was born in June 2019. This underpins the concept of saving injured and poached survivors, allowing them to breed eventually as not to lose their genetics and having these animals contribute to the survival of the species.

Little Daniel

HOPE

The remarkable rhino, Hope.

The Eastern Cape, South Africa has suffered major losses to poaching in 2015. One of the rhinos poached was a four-year-old rhino female. She was found in dire condition a couple of days later. Her face was badly mutilated; both horns were savagely hacked off. In the process of removing her horns, the nasal bone was badly fractured, and a section completely removed, exposing the sinus cavities and nasal passage. It is assumed that she was immobilised (darted) with an opioid drug and left to die. Against all odds she survived.

Saving the Survivors travelled to Shamwari to assess her condition, upon which it was established that she could indeed be saved and undertook major surgery. The damage to her face was severe. The wounds had to cleaned, lots of dead and damaged tissue removed and an artificial cast fitted to cover the extensive wounds.

Dr Marais added “We have successfully treated a rhino in the Free state that was in a similar condition. So, from experience, we believe that she has a fighting chance. With the experience of the Saving the Survivors team in the treatment of poached rhino, we believe that she has a real shot at recovery. The welfare of this rhino is paramount, and we will do our utmost to ensure her comfort and survival.” After surgery she was released from the boma into a small camp where she was closely observed and fed on natural vegetation.

The biggest challenge was keeping Hope’s shield in place when most of the bone required for attachment points has been removed by the poachers. Dr Marais said, “we took radiographs of the damaged area to ascertain if there were anchor points and enough bone integrity to attach the shield. The bone has to be healthy enough to be able to drill the shield into place, it’s the only way that we are able to make sure it stays on. In the absence of sufficient bone, we sutured the bottom part of the shield on which should keep it in place for longer. Her procedure took longer than we would have liked so we have now made a mould of the shield so next time it is ready to be attached which should cut down procedure time by 45 minutes from over 2 hours.”

This courageous rhino has been the face of rhino poaching survivors. Wandering alone in the bush for days, deeply hurt and with half her face hacked off, she survived against all odds. It was no wonder then, that she was christened Hope and became a worldwide ambassador for her species. While her healing was described as miraculous, she unfortunately passed away due to an intestinal infection in late 2016.

NALEDI

Born in Abu Camp, Botswana, in 2013, Naledi (which means ‘star’ in Setswana) was orphaned just six weeks later when her mother passed away in January 2014 due to a prolapse of the large intestine. This meant that immediate action had to be taken to both comfort Naledi and save her life. She was able to get some milk from another female in the herd, but without enough to eat she became skinny and weak. The team were forced to separate Naledi from the herd, relocate her to another part of Abu Camp, where she received around the clock care, formed a bond with her caretakers and learned to drink milk from a bottle.

After some time, Naledi grew stronger and yearned to be with the rest of her elephant family. Having become accustomed to her routine milk feedings, the caretakers decided it was safe to reintroduce Naledi to her sisters and the rest of the family. She was lovingly accepted by the herd, resumed her life in the bush, and the caretakers even celebrated her first birthday.

But this joy was short lived as Naledi fell ill from eating palm fronds that resulted in a blockage in her digestive track. The team agreed that surgery was the only solution. The Saving the Survivors team were called in for the delicate and sensitive operation to save Naledi’s life. Much to everyone’s relief, the surgery was a success and Naledi recovered well.

Today, thanks to the dedicated team of caretakers, veterinarians, and the team from Saving the Survivors, little orphaned Naledi is alive and well, roaming the wilderness of Botswana with the rest of her family.

Goose

The Kruger National Park is home to about 80% of the world's rhino's, mainly Black rhino and Southern White rhino. This has put huge pressure on the park to protect these endangered species from poachers, yet too often rhinos are horribly wounded, poached for their horns and left for dead. Poachers use various techniques to subdue their victims, and very often this includes shooting the animal without instantly killing it, causing pain and trauma in addition to severely mutilating the face for the horns. This scenario is very similar to a very brave and strong young female Black rhino that has been fighting for her life and her species for the last two years.

Goose, as she is fondly named by SANPark's officials and caretakers, was discovered by rangers in 2018 wandering around in the bush with an acutely mutilated foot after poachers shot her multiple times. She was in incredibly poor condition, severely emaciated and on the brink of death. From the extent of her condition, it is assumed that she had been walking on several protruding bones from her completely shattered foot for many days, if not weeks.

"Ordinarily if you saw an animal in this state, you'd probably euthanise it. But she's a Black rhino and so very precious so we had to do everything we could to save her." Cathy Dreyer, Kruger Park's black rhino monitoring coordinator. And that is exactly what was done.

SANPark's KNP partnered with Saving the Survivors to try save this critically endangered Black rhino female. Goose was sedated and taken to a secure boma (enclosure) within KNP where she received much needed treatment, nourishment, and tender loving care. Dr Johan Marais radiographed the enormously swollen and infected foot and found that every bone in Goose's foot had be completely shattered, but the fact that she continued to bare weight on the foot, gave the team hope.

Initially, Goose was given antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, and probiotics, ingeniously hidden in her favourite snack, twice a day. The Kruger Park rangers and caretakers brought in fresh food from the bush and high-quality hay for Goose to get enough nutrients to not only recover from her injuries but regain the condition she had lost. Dr Johan Marais travelled seven hours every few weeks to perform ground-breaking surgery and treatments on Goose's foot; this includes cleaning the wound, medicating it, binding her foot with elephant pelt for protection and comfort, covering it with bandage and casting her foot into a boot made of fibreglass for extra protection. This procedure has been done every few weeks for the past two years.

The Kruger Park and STS teams are absolutely determined to save this incredibly strong, and valuable Black rhino female. Many fundraising initiatives were started and supported to pay the massive costs

of the regular operations. Goose has since become a bit of a celebrity in the Park but remains in her protected enclosure. Today, her foot is about 90% healed and she is doing remarkably well. Goose recently had a temporary visitor in the enclosure adjacent to hers, a handsome young black rhino bull. Much to everyone's delight, Goose responded to the bull by coming on heat, indicating she is healthy enough to start breeding! Unfortunately, the Black rhino bull was released back into the wild, leaving Goose alone in the boma.

But all hope is not lost! Fortunately, Kruger National Park has an Intensive Protection Zone outside of it's borders in a secret location with 24-hour security for rhino poaching victims. This has become Goose's new home as she continues to heal from her horrific wound. Saving the Survivors continues to be involved in Goose's recovery at the new location. Goose's road to recovery has been an exceedingly long and complicated one – over two years and still continuing - and Saving the Survivors is unwaveringly dedicated to saving any and every survivor, no matter how long it takes.

THANDI

Thandi, and one of her calves she has had since the poaching incident.

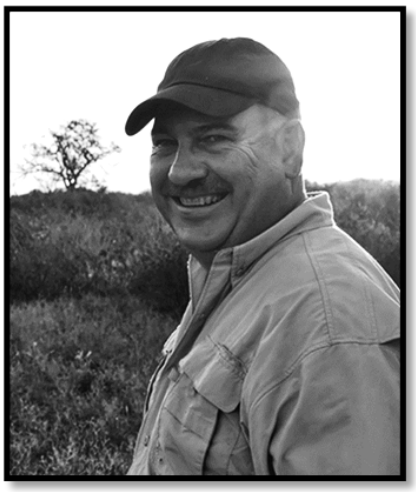
Thandi, a White rhino cow from the Eastern Cape was one of the very first survivors that made headlines in 2015. Thandi was darted by poachers, her horns hacked off and she was left to die. The reserve management found her the next morning and immediately called in Dr William Fowlds. He stabilised her initially and then called in STS.

Over the course of several months, Saving the Survivors were involved in her treatment and she made a remarkable recovery. Her story spread around the world and has inspired many to get involved in rhino conservation. Thandi, meaning courage (or to be loved) in the local isiXhosa language, with her incredible fighting strength, has gone on to have four calves already, the most recent one being born in January 2021. One of her first calves has already also had a baby, making Thandi a grandmother! Another survivor saved for future generations!

The Team

Board of Directors: Dr Johan Marais, Mr Paul Naden, Mr Graham Moon

Dr Johan Marais



Dr Johan Marais, the veterinarian, photographer and CEO of Saving the Survivors. Growing up in Etosha, Namibia and on the Highveld of South Africa Johan became a qualified veterinary surgeon in 1991. From then, Johan spent years in equine racing, before being a senior lecturer, then later head of the Equine Clinic in Pretoria. Johan has been the president for both the South African Equine Veterinary Association and the South African Veterinary Association and acquired a BVSc Honours degree in 2001, and an MSc degree in wildlife in 2007. For over two decades, Dr Marais has been a qualified veterinary surgeon. Although he has spent much of his life as an equine surgeon, Saving the Survivors soon became his calling and in 2012, his vision became reality. Dr Marais and his new team of experts began to tackle the poaching crisis from a veterinary perspective. The countless animals saved has given Johan Marais the worldwide recognition he deserves, as one of South Africa's true national treasures.

Mr Paul Naden

Mr Paul Naden, once a focused and successful businessman, came to the realization that money really doesn't buy happiness. When Paul became involved in conservation work, he discovered he had a passion with a purpose. Today, his life's ambition is to protect wildlife and leave a legacy that inspires generations. As a lad brought up near the Market town streets of Macclesfield, he is truly lucky and privileged to be able to do something that brings him joy and make a huge difference. Paul passionately works with Saving the Survivors, as well as with the South Sudan Trust to fund an expedition that aims to find the last Northern White Rhino, this will hopefully act as a catalyst and springboard to fund desperately needed resource in South Sudan.

Mr Graham Moon

Mr Graham Moon has an extensive background in managing large scale investment and development projects all around the world. In prior roles he has led an impact investment business focused on the development of conservation assets and lodge opportunities, owned one of the largest environmental consultancies in South Africa, and served as managing director of Mantis Development, an international hotel development company that owns assets on all seven continents. He's been involved in several large-scale development projects, including the Kempinski Seychelles Hotel and private residence complex, managing the N2 Wild Coast Toll Road project, and leading the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Gautrain project. Graham serves as a board member on several conservation-related entities including Shamwari and Sanbona Game Reserves, Maha Private Estate in Morocco, Cradle Nature Reserve, and Saving the Survivors.

Veterinarians: Dr Johan Marais, Dr Joao Almeida, Dr Hugo Pereira and Dr Hagnesio Chiponde.

Associate vet: Dr Gary Bauer.

UK Directors: Paul Naden, Tristan Wood, Lisa Norgren, Dov Black & Tony Nicholls.

USA Directors: Johan Marais, Paul Naden & Tristan Wood.

Fundraising and Events Manager: Joanna Boyd.

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