



## RHINO 'RESCUE AND RESPONSE' TRAINING WORKSHOPS

1<sup>st</sup> March 2012

*Start*

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in partnership with rhino rehabilitation specialist, Karen Trendler, will be offering a series of nationwide, training workshops for conservation and wild animal care staff, wildlife rehabilitators, rhino owners and other relevant parties at the forefront of rhino poaching and the conservation of this flagship species. The courses will run over a two day period and form part of the Rhino Orphan Response Strategy (RORS) and the first of this series begins on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March at the Johannesburg Zoo.

Said Trendler: "The workshops are an introduction to rhino field response and rescue, rearing, care and rehabilitation and include an introduction to crisis management. The lectures are supported by comprehensive reference and resource materials and include a digital copy of the Rhino Rearing Manual. We are hoping that these workshops will facilitate the development of a suitably trained national response team and support network for the crisis we are facing."

The current rhino poaching crisis is resulting in increased numbers of injured and orphaned rhino calves. Limited rehabilitation expertise, a lack of a rapid response personnel and a lack of coordinated referral and support networks focusing on rhino calves has resulted in many unnecessary deaths, prolonged suffering and further traumatising of these poaching casualties. Furthermore, the sudden proliferation of so-called 'calf rescue' projects is a real concern as many of these projects exploit the calves as marketing and fundraising tools. This often results in animals becoming tamed and familiar with human beings, which sentences them to a sure lifetime in captivity as they cannot be reintroduced to the wild or even become part of a free-ranging rhino herd again.

According to Kirsty Brebner, Rhino Project Manager at the Endangered Wildlife Trust, "Putting a rapid intervention and coordinated rescue response network in place, where the appropriate handling, rearing and rehabilitation protocols are implemented, is crucial to ensure that many more of these poaching orphans and casualties are rescued successfully, humanely and responsibly. This will also guarantee that the animals are reared in such a manner as to ensure their full rehabilitation and return to the wild."

"The spirit of activism and generous giving demonstrated by the public in response to the plight of the Rhino has been overwhelmingly heart-warming and these workshops will harness that incredible sense of activism in order to save our rhinos. It is critical though that the public carefully considers

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

**NPO Number:** 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature  
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where they make their donations. Over 200 Rhino NGOs and organisations have sprung up since the crisis first made headlines and the public needs to know where their money is going and how it's going to be used," concluded Trendler.

The ultimate test of a successful rehabilitation of an injured or orphaned wild animal is whether that animal can be returned to the wild as a free living, self sustaining and viable animal with the ability to breed and rear young effectively. The EWT remains concerned about the proliferation of organisations offering to hand-rear rhino orphans and then allowing the public to 'pay and play' with them. We therefore urge the public to support those organisations that have a proven track record in successfully rehabilitating rhino in accordance with this definition.

For further information about the workshops and the Rhino Orphan Response Strategy please contact Karen Trendler at [karojay@global.co.za](mailto:karojay@global.co.za) or Kirsty Brebner at [kirstyb@ewt.org.za](mailto:kirstyb@ewt.org.za). This project is sponsored by Sting Music, EMI Music, My Planet Rhino Card, the Johannesburg Zoo, the Schneiner Foundation, the Scorona Foundation and the Pittsburg Zoo.

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