

ROTARY MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Rhino Week in August: A Unique Wildlife Experience Supporting Endangered Rhinos in Southern Africa



In the vast wilderness of Southern Africa, where the sun sets over sprawling savannas, a unique initiative is making a significant impact on the conservation of one of the world's most endangered species—the rhino. This initiative, known as "Rhino Week," brings together conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts, and donors in a collaborative effort to protect these majestic creatures from the scourge of illegal poaching. Centered in Zimbabwe, Rhino Week offers participants a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage directly in the fight to save rhinos, while also enjoying the stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity of the region.

The Importance of Ear Notching

At the heart of Rhino Week is a vital conservation task: the ear notching (marking of rhinos). Each rhino is given a unique ear notch, allowing rangers to identify and monitor individual animals. This process is crucial for maintaining accurate records of rhino populations, tracking their movements, and ensuring their safety. By being able to identify each rhino, rangers can respond more effectively to threats, such as poaching, and ensure that the rhinos are healthy and thriving in their natural habitats.

The ear marking also serves as a deterrent to poachers, who often target rhinos for their valuable horns. By marking the rhinos and keeping a comprehensive register, conservationists can better protect these animals, making it harder for poachers to operate undetected.



Rhino Week: A Special Event

I had the privilege of attending Rhino Week in 2024 and 2025. Rhino Week was particularly memorable, thanks to the involvement of the Rotary Central Club and philanthropic individuals in the Cayman Islands. Through their generous donation, the Rotary Club helped to fund the naming of two baby rhinos, which have been christened Pedro St James and Mastic after two historical landmarks in the Cayman Islands. The naming ceremony was a poignant moment during the week, symbolizing the global effort needed to save these creatures from extinction.



Pedro St James, named after the oldest stone structure in the Cayman Islands, and Mastic Trail, a reference to the island's famous nature trail, now serve as living symbols of the connection between the Cayman Islands and the conservation efforts in Southern Africa. This gesture not only raises awareness of the rhinos'

plight but also strengthens international ties in the fight against wildlife crime.



A great success story – come be a part of it!

The efforts of the team on the ground in Zimbabwe is paying huge dividends. Few conservation efforts can boast doubling the rhino population in their area. This is particularly significant in terms of the critically endangered black rhinos, but the white rhinos in the area are also benefitting. The rangers are patrolling the area on foot and recording the rhino population, supported by a canine unit.

	ATS 2012	To Date 2025
Rhino Numbers	102 Black Rhino 30 White Rhino	219 Black Rhino 65 White Rhino

An Invitation to Future Donors

Rhino Week, in August annually, offers a unique opportunity for future donors to contribute to this vital cause. For a donation of \$2,000 USD, donors can name a baby rhino, leaving a legacy in the fight to protect these endangered animals. In addition, for an extra \$1,000 USD per person, donors are invited to embark on a seven-day safari to and from Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. This exclusive experience includes a three-night stay at Rhino Week in August 2025, providing participants with an immersive wildlife adventure.



Guests will be met at Harare International Airport and will be guided on their safari by Rotarian Naude Dreyer, a retired former Chief Dental Officer of the Cayman Islands who has dedicated his retirement to the conservation of rhinos. Dr. Dreyer's passion for these pre-historic creatures is contagious, and his wealth of knowledge ensures that participants leave with a deep understanding of the challenges and triumphs of rhino conservation.

Beyond Rhino Week: Explore Zimbabwe and Southern Africa

In addition to the core Rhino Week activities, participants can enhance their experience with additional options. A visit to the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, is a must-see for any traveller to Zimbabwe. For those looking to explore further, there is also the option to visit the winelands of Cape Town, South Africa, known for their stunning vineyards and world-class wines.



Rhino Week is more than just an opportunity to see wildlife up close; it is a chance to contribute directly to the survival of one of the planet's most endangered species. By participating in this unique experience, donors not only help fund critical conservation efforts but also become part of a global community dedicated to ensuring that future generations can witness the beauty of rhinos in the wild.

Conclusion

In a world where wildlife is increasingly under threat, Rhino Week stands out as a beacon of hope. By combining conservation, education, and unforgettable wildlife experiences, this initiative is making a tangible difference in the fight to save Southern Africa's rhinos from extinction. Whether through naming a baby rhino or joining the Rhino Week safari, participants have the unique opportunity to play a direct role in protecting these incredible animals and ensuring that their legacy endures for generations to come.

For more information about the Rhino Week safari, or to make a donation and name a baby rhino, interested parties can contact Dr. Naude Dreyer via email at naude.dreyer@gmail.com or through WhatsApp at +264814830080.