Man to climb Antarctica's highest peak in rhino suit for charity

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Meet the man who wants to climb the highest peak in Antarctica – in a rhino suit

Having scaled six out of the famed Seven Summits is an epic feat all by itself, but John Black has upped the ante again: if you help him reach his fundraising goal of ZAR 250,000, he will climb Mount Vinson, the highest mountain in Antarctica, in a rhino suit this December!

This novel idea to support wildlife conservation started as a casual campfire conversation at a Boy Scout training camp in 1998, and later became the 'Three Peaks Expedition' – aka climbing the three highest peaks in Africa in a month, John says.

In the following 20 years, he climbed as many peaks as he could, including six of the Seven Summits – which brings us to his current attempt to complete the Seven Summits challenge. (His last summit was Denali, Alaska, back in 2011.)

For rhinos, as a rhino

Outside mountaineering – but very much in the rhino mould – John previously raised ZAR 250,000 in 2011, and again almost ZAR 100,000 with his wife in 2013. The latter was done running the London Marathon in a rhino suit.

This time, John is commemorating World Rhino Day on September 22 with a very public promise to climb Mount Vinson in the cold heart of Antarctica in December 2017, wearing a rhino suit.

Through very supportive sponsors, committed saving and personal sacrifice, John has been able to cover the costs of his travels *and* raise money for his causes. What drives people like him to forego personal comfort for the causes he loves?

"I feel it is our duty to preserve the fauna and flora diversity we have," he says. "I love spending time amongst animals and in the 'bush', and I want to safeguard that for our own enjoyment and that of future generations."

Rhinos in need

His help and that of others is sorely needed. In February 2017, the South African Department for Environmental Affairs released statistics showing that 1,054 rhinos were killed in South Africa alone during 2016. In just a decade, more than 7,137 African rhinos have been lost to poaching.

Like many, John is alarmed at the rate at which endangered species are being threatened, and combines an enthusiasm for conservation with a passion for mountaineering to make a difference.

But anyone can make a difference for a charity they love, he says. John's suggestion is to have a cause that really matters to you. "Additionally, if it ties in with who you are, what you do and how you live your life, it just makes sense."

To help put the first man in a rhino suit on Mount Vinson, donate to John's fundraising project at https://www.givengain.com/ap/rhinoinantarctica.

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