#TheRhinoSearch Bringing the Northern White Rhino back from extinction

Monday 2 March, 2020

Press Release

IS THE NORTHERN WHITE RHINO BACK FROM EXTINCTION? MANKIND OFFERED 20 DAYS TO FIND OUT. #TheRhinoSearch STARTS NOW

Just 20 days to reverse a century's worth of damage - can mankind unite to act on this offer of redemption and bring back the Northern White Rhino from extinction?

The unicorn, a mythical creature of grace and wonder, described in urban legends with features that resemble the rhinoceros we share our planet with. While unicorns may have a similar appearance to animals, with their shape, size and of course, the majestic horn from their head, the human race acknowledges that the unicorn is a creature seen only in fairytales and legends and as such, we will never witness one walk on this earth.

Mankind must also recognise the now heartbreaking reality that now, thanks to our own actions, our children's children are just as likely to see a unicorn as they are a Northern White Rhino.

On 20th March 2018 Sudan, the last male of his kind, passed away and marked the end of his species; declaring the northern white rhino functionally extinct with only two females, unable to reproduce, remaining on the earth with us. This didn't just mark the end of a chapter for one species of animal but also the start of a terrifying storyline for others that we share this world with. If we ignored years of warnings that our actions would lead to an animal as charismatic and popular as the rhinoceros to become extinct, what hope is there for the other creatures who walk amongst this planet with us?

But, perhaps arguably undeservedly, mankind has been offered a second chance to right our wrongs and redeem ourselves…

Rumours and whisperings from South Sudan of sightings of the animal in the wild and reports of rhino tracks have re-ignited the hope for the future of the northern white rhino.

Despite being declared effectively extinct in 2018, there has been no survey or study of South Sudan's wildlife in over a decade and no comprehensive search has ever taken place. Until now.

This is a chance for us as humans to finally act on the warnings we had previously ignored; to undertake one final, comprehensive search for any remaining Northern White Rhinos in the wild. As we campaign for action to save the planet, what better way to start than to bring back one the first victims of our actions?

Over the last 60 years, the human race has had many incredible achievements; from landing a man on the moon to creating the internet, but while we've been busy creating new digital worlds and looking for life on other planets, we've quietly destroyed the existence of the lives of a species of animal we once shared our planet with.

While the Northern White Rhino was dying at our hands, millions of pounds were spent on the Space Race. Now, we have the Save the Species Race. With just a handful of days to conduct the search, we have a lifeline but it comes with a deadline. We haven't found life on other planets but we have a chance to save lives on this one.

We must act quickly.

We will never see the mythical creature that is the unicorn but we have an unprecedented opportunity to actually create something of legend; to bring back the northern white rhino from extinction.

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We have a second chance - are we going to take it?

THE (SHORT) STORY OF THE NORTHERN WHITE RHINO

The northern white rhinoceros is one of two subspecies of the white rhinoceros (the other being the southern white rhinoceros). The northern white rhino used to range over parts of Uganda, Chad, Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1907 The Northern White Rhino is officially identified as a distinct species of rhino.

1960 Estimated numbers of over 2,000 in the wild made them more abundant than their relatives in the south, the Southern White Rhino.

1970 The numbers of Northern White Rhinos have halved in the last decade alone and are declining at an alarming rate.

1975 The continued decline in the species sees a Czech zoo import 5 as a precautionary measure.

1981 The Northern White Rhino is declared critically endangered.

1984 It is reported that only 15 known Northern White Rhinos are left to exist in the wild. This number rises to 31 but due to continued poaching, any meaningful efforts are nullified.

2008 This year marks the last official sighting of the Northern White Rhino in the wild and only 6 remain in zoos.

2009 4 rhinos are shipped from the Czech zoo to Ol Pejeta in Kenya where it is hoped their natural environment will encourage them to breed.

2015 With the remaining rhinos in zoos sadly passing away, only 3 remain in Kenya.

2018 In March, the Last Male Northern White Rhino dies, with only 2 infertile old females remaining on the earth. The Northern white Rhino is declared functionally extinct.

TODAY …

In 2020, little over a century from when their story began, the final two Northern White Rhinos to walk this Earth spend their final days on a reserve under constant armed guard in Ol Pejeta.

They are both female, infertile and incapable of re-populating their species alone.

As their chapter comes to an end, it too could mark an end of the story for all Northern White Rhinos.

We’re prepared to try and rewrite history and let a happier tale of the Northern White Rhino continue.

THE PLAN: BEAT THE TICKING CLOCK #TheRhinoSearch

Against all the odds and loss of hope, a group of determined conservationists have refused to give up on the Northern White Rhino.

South Sudan was the rhinos previous stronghold and, with the rumours coming from the co

untry, we believe some still remain in this vast area and wilderness; close to where they were last sighted in the wild.

With the signing of a declaration of peace, now is the time and the best opportunity to search for the functionally extinct species.

Following a visit by Saving the Survivors’ Paul Naden and his team back in September 2019, evidence has emerged that leads us to believe that the Northern White Rhino lives on. The search operation, led by Paul Naden and Saving the Survivors, will be supported by loyal and dedicated South Sudanese security forces whom, during our preliminary search, have already demonstrated their incredible passion for the wildlife of their country and their investment to #TheRhinoSearch

We have been lucky enough to be given hope of a second chance and we cannot let it be wasted. We are raising funds to conduct a full search to find these rhinos before it's too late and the entire species is extinct.

We have to act fast.

The search will begin in March 2020 and the team will have only roughly twenty days to search an area of 93,000 square miles. The best hope we have is carrying out the search then, at the end of the dry season, when vegetation is at its thinnest and the wildlife will concentrate around the remaining waterholes. When the wet season arrives (April to August) so much rain will fall that the entire area becomes a swap and impassable to all vehicles.

This search has to happen in March and we need your support for it to be a success.

Every dollar raised will go towards search helicopters, camera and tracking equipment, medical supplies and other essential expenses. Quite simply, the more money we raise, the longer we can search and the greater our chance of success. We are reliant on the generosity of others in the world who share our hope and refuse to let this iconic species die.

We have been blessed with a second chance to save the northern white rhino. They are relying on us not to waste it.

Together, we have hope and together, we can make history.

HOW CAN YOU HELP #TheRhinoSearch

Donations will be crucial to ensure this search is comprehensive and conclusive. The initial cost of the operation already stands at £300,000 (Just under $400,000) with many unavoidable expenses we must source funding for. We are aiming to use a helicopter to search for a minimum of 5 hours a day. The cost of running the helicopter is $10,000 per day. This works out at $33 per minute.

Even a donation as small as 50 cents would make a difference as literally, every second counts.

If you are not in a position to donate money, please lend the Northern White Rhinos your voice. Donate space on your social platforms by sharing news of our search on feed to your friends to help even more people know about #TheRhinoSearch. You never know who might come across your post and make a donation that might all the difference to us finding this iconic animal and changing the wildlife world as we know it.

Follow the journey online on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram or visit www.therhinosearch.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do you think there is a Northern White Rhino in South Sudan?

As stated previously, South Sudan was the rhinos previous stronghold and there has been reported sightings and residual evidence such as droppings and tracks.

If they are Northern White Rhinos in South Sudan, why have they not been found before?

There has been limited opportunity to search in South Sudan due to perceived risk in the country due to the civil war and the following unrest. Following the signing of a declaration of peace, now is the time and the best opportunity to search for the functionally extinct species.

How are you going to try and find the Northern White Rhino?

Led by Paul Naden and Saving the Survivors, we will carry out a comprehensive search of National Parks; using expert intel and modern technology.

What happens if you find the Northern White Rhino?

Finding the existence of the Northern White Rhino is only the first step. Our course of action from a discovery will depend on many factors; the rhino's gender, their health and condition, their age and how many of them we find. Ultimately, our actions will always be centred around securing the future of the species and protecting their wellbeing.

ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN TRUST CEO PAUL NADEN

Having amassed a multi -millionaire empire of businesses before reaching 30, later life has seen Paul Naden's personal wealth decrease but his value to animals and this planet increase. For over 15 years, Paul has been involved in wildlife charities and activities; joining Saving the Survivors as a board director in 2017. During this time, his intimate involvement with the charity has incurred staggering positive achievements for endangered wildlife throughout Africa.

Paul Naden, pictured right, on a previous expedition.

ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN TRUST

Unturned by tourists, few have experienced the incredible cultural and geographical diversity of this country. From fascinating tribal civilisations to vivacious biodiversity, South Sudan is an untrodden territory, no finally becoming ever more accessible to global adventurers looking for the last bastions of unspoilt and untouched landscapes, stunning scenery only distributive and complemented by a plethora or truly free roaming wildlife.

After decades of unrest in South Sudan, a declaration of peace offers this magnificent country new opportunities for growth and prosperity.

The South Sudan Trust's commitment and pledge is to help the country set and achieve its goals in revitalising the country's conservational infrastructure and nurturing their extraordinary faunt; promoting positive sustainable development countrywide.

The discovery of the Northern White Rhino in South Sudan would act as a catalyst for conservational tourism and support for South Sudan. This war torn forgotten part of Africa could well be the last true African wilderness and, in a world that seems to be falling apart, offer new hope and chance for new beginnings.

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