BABY WHITE RHINO BORN TO TWO VICTIMS OF POACHING

Submitted by: Saving the Survivors
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A baby white rhinoceros has been born to two rescued victims of poaching in Limpopo, South Africa.

The mother, Lucky, suffered gunshot wounds through the shoulder and narrowly escaped having her horns removed by poachers.

The father, Seha, unfortunately suffered horrific wounds extending into his nasal cavity after poachers hacked out his horns.

His owner had wanted to have him put down due to the severity of his injuries, but accepted the help of the conservation charity, Saving the Survivors.

By saving the life of these Rhinos, it has become possible for them to become parents to future generations, massively validating the efforts of these charities.

The injury that Seha sustained from having his horn removed in 2016 is one of the worst poaching-related injuries known, especially given that he survived the attack.

Poachers, in an effort to remove the horn, will hack out from just above the nose. Often this is just above eye level, leaving a wound with measurements of up to 35cm x 50 cm. These wounds pose a massive challenge to veterinarians. There are obvious complications with treating any mutilated wild animal, but the process is complicated further in instances like this where wounds will become infected, cannot be closed, and also cannot be treated every day - as they should be.

Saving the Survivors, who have pioneered treating these types of wounds over the last 7 years, have had fairly impressive success rates treating these injuries. Where previously these animals were often euthanised, Saving the Survivors have managed to save over 65% of animals treated.

Often, they would use very specific human dressings and then cover that with elephant leather, acting as a bandage to keep the wound dressings in place and to keep the wound closed. It is also believed that the elephant dressing has the right moisture level and enzymes to aid the recovery.

These wounds require commitment, dedication, resources, and lots of funding as they take in excess of 2 to 3 years to heal adequately. Presently, Saving the Survivors are working with colleagues in Europe to look at new methods and technologies to be able to heal these injuries in a shorter period of time, including the use of 3D scanners and printers to create facial masks.

The recovery for poaching victims like Lucky and Seha must address not only physical concerns, but also psychological. Re-introduction to other Rhinos is an essential part of their recovery. The mating of two poaching victims is both a huge victory and a statement of their progress, as well as a promising sign of re-populating this near threatened species.

Having worked on over 200 Rhino, Saving the Survivors are proud of their contribution to the fight

against extinction.

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