HEALTHY NEWS

Trained Dogs Prevent Poachers from Killing 45 Rhinos in South Africa

By bestfolkmedicine · 21/05/2020 · 2 min read

A pack of dogs have been specially trained to keep the wildlife in South Africa safe. They've already helped save 45 rhinos from being poached.

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The breeds of the dogs that were chosen vary from bloodhounds to beagles and their main task is to help in the protection of the endangered species.

They've been trained since birth and are able to handle pressures from real operations somewhere around 18 months, when most of them become operational.

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Sean Viljoen who's 29 and lives in Cape Town shared photos of the dogs in action in the South African Wildlife College in the Greater Kruger National Park.

Viljoen owns a production company called the Conservation Film Company through which he's trying to spread the stories of those at the frontline of the conservation efforts.

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Preserving Our Wildlife Is Essential

Johan van Straaten is a K9 master at the college and noted that the information they collected for this applied learning project helped avert around 45 rhinos from being killed by poachers since the dogs became operational 2 years ago.

In fact, in the areas where the college patrols, the success rate of the dogs is approximately 68 percent with both on and off leash dogs, compared to between 3 to 5 percent without any canine support.

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This difference is thanks to the free tracking dogs' speed which is much higher than the ones of humans in terrains.

This project is therefore helping make sure that the rich biodiversity in southern Africa stays safe and its wildlife, including the rhino which has been the most severely impacted by the crime of poachers.

South Africa has almost 80 percent of the world's rhinos! However, sadly in the past 10 years, 8000 rhinos have been lost because of poaching and the country has been hit hard by this slaughter of precious wildlife.

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Meet the K9 Unit Fast Response

The dogs, including foxhounds, blue ticks, Texan black and tan coonhounds have been trained to benefit counter poaching activities and are of aid in free tracking, detection, incursion, patrol, and apprehension.

Their handlers, Precious Malapane and Robynne Wasas are part of the team and also help in the training of the anti-poacher canines.

> *An important update from @StopRhinoPoach on the fate of Skukuza Court. Thank you to all involved and all who signed the petition in support of South Africa's #rhinos and rangers. #TeamRhino https://t.co/M9DRAALKn9 pic.twitter.com/3CbRsBL5tk*
>
> *— IntlRhinoFoundation (@RhinosIRF) April 24, 2020*

The dogs have been trained from a young age and were socialized from early on. They learn how to track properly and bay at a person in a tree. They follow basic obedience too.

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When the dogs were six months old, they placed them in training together more formally.

However, although they’re equipped with the right skills to begin operations at a younger age, they’re not mature enough to handle all the pressure that comes with it.

When all factors are taken into account, most of them become operational at 18 months.

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