



### ASSAM DOG SQUAD UNIT, INDIA

#### **The Issue**

Kaziranga National Park (KNP), a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Indian state of Assam, provides vital habitat for diverse wildlife and has been protected since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Kaziranga is the last stronghold of the Indian one-horned rhino, more than two thirds of the worldwide population of this gentle herbivore live in the park. It is also considered to be one of India's most critical tiger habitats.

However, this wildlife haven and its remarkable inhabitants are under threat. In 2013, 24 rhinos from Kaziranga were lost to poachers; the worst seen since 1980s and 1990s. To-date in 2015 there have been 14 known poaching cases. Rhino horn costs have increased four-fold in three years. The park also recently experienced its first ever case of a tiger being poisoned by poachers.

It is vital that these endangered species are given the protection they need and wherever possible poachers are identified and brought to justice. With the increasingly well-funded trade in illegal wildlife, innovative and effective ways of tackling this crime are becoming more and more important.

#### **Background**

David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) has worked with Indian NGO, Aaranyak for over 20 years to protect endangered species in Assam state, India. Sole funders of a vital, comprehensive communications system for the forest rangers as well as funding equipment and camera-traps, DSWF has facilitated substantial state-of-the-art wildlife protection and research in Kaziranga National Park.

Continuing to strengthen and expand upon current anti-poaching work, in 2011 DSWF expanded its support to fund Kaziranga's first dog squad. Jorba, an extraordinary Belgian shepherd dog, and his handler Anil were the pioneers in this aspect of the fight against poaching. Having been specially trained, Jorba is capable of picking up a scent, tracking and bringing down a suspect and is trained to detect wildlife products such as tiger skin and bones, ivory and rhino horn.

In collaboration with the Kaziranga National Park authorities, the dog squad work to unearth clues, lead enforcement agencies to suspect's hideouts, arrest criminals and recover wildlife products along with arms and ammunition used to conduct the crime. During monsoon season, it is not possible to pick up a scent and so the team returns to their training, though they are always on call for emergencies.

#### **The Need**

Apprehending over 30 poachers and even recovering two camera traps discarded by poachers attempting to avoid detection, Jorba and Anil have exceeded expectations. In 2014 they were joined by a second dog, Babli. This small team has become a unique model to deter poaching and bring poachers to justice. DSWF and Aaranyak strongly believe that creating further dog squad teams would complement and expand the existing success of the team as well as DSWF's other work within KNP and the wider fight against poaching.

At 170sq miles, Kaziranga is an immense area. Expanding the dog team will enable them to cover larger areas as well as tackle multiple poaching cases; vital considering the recent increase in demand for rhino horn. Additionally, as high profile anti-poaching units, the teams are involved in many dangerous situations and adding further teams will reduce pressure as well as provide mutual support for this often challenging role.

## How you can help

Work with DSWF to establish a new, or fund part of an existing dog squad unit, enhancing the comprehensive work we have been involved with in Kaziranga National Park for over 20 years. Funding the expansion of this unique and proven model will further deter the poaching of endangered mammals and ensure wildlife criminals are brought to justice. DSWF is the sole funder of this work.

## Funding opportunities:

<b>Full dog squad team</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
Procuring trained dog	1	£2,000	£2,000
Training of a new handler	1	£400	£400
Dog handler wages	12	£150	£1,800
Camping costs (incl food) for handler and dog	150	£5	£750
	<b>Grand total</b>		<b>£4,950</b>

<b>Extra options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dog bite jacket	1	£500	£500
Veterinary costs	1	£500	
Transport of dog to Guwahati	1	300	
Transport of cage to Guwahati	1	400	
Dog food and housing	12	50	

Annual running costs for one team	1	£2550	£2550
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## Your investment may:

- Support a dog and their handler with training, housing and salary for one year.
- Provide the existing dog squads with increased support and investment in their challenging and often dangerous work.
- Protect numerous species within Kaziranga National Park, including endangered rhino, tiger and elephant.
- Create a compelling case for poacher prosecution as well as a deterrent to poaching.
- Provide support for broader wildlife crime monitoring across India.

## About David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation is an effective and flexible organisation which responds promptly to conservation threats by supporting trusted, reputable individuals and organisations operating in the field. Lean on administration but generous on funding, we support a range of innovative, vital and far-reaching projects worldwide, achieving real results for wildlife survival. More info at [www.davidshepherd.org](http://www.davidshepherd.org)