

# Project RHINO

STOP WILDLIFE CRIME



Name and Age:	Country and Area:	Grade and School:	Have you seen a rhino in the wild?
			NO YES



## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT





## Introduction

Our goal is to stop wildlife crime.

We believe in zero tolerance to rhino poaching.

What motivates us daily is the dream of both white and black rhino species thriving in KwaZulu Natal and far beyond – forever free, forever secure from poaching, well managed and protected.

We work for the safety of our wildlife and security of our natural heritage, for the upliftment and education of the people and communities that surround these wildlife sanctuaries. Our aim is to bring the human race and nature back into harmony, reducing the impacts of humankind while providing opportunity for people.

As we look back at 2018, it has been a jam-packed and exciting year with new and expanding projects as Project Rhino worked together with our member organisations to support our member reserves in anti-poaching and the protection of our wildlife.

Project Rhino facilitated Zululand reserves meetings, Midlands Wildlife Security Initiative (MWSI) meetings and NGO meetings every quarter of this year. These are vital because they retain interconnectedness within the landscape.

Communication and interdependent support is what it is all about. In addition to these meetings we also facilitated a Community meeting at the beginning of the year to map out current, planned and needed community work.

In November, we ran for the second time, the well-attended Amakhosi Community Leadership Workshop in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Game Reserve.

Project Rhino in collaboration with the USA consulate hosted a guest from the USA to discuss global wildlife crime issues and the Wildlife Economy with our reserve managers, community members and community liaison officers.

Throughout the year we continuously visited the Zululand and Midlands Reserves to keep us informed of the needs on the ground and how we need to respond with agility.

Our Rhino Art team was very active in keeping the awareness and education going by visiting many schools in KZN and the Eastern Cape.

We would like to thank every single supporter, donor, member and contributor in any shape or form for standing with us this year and supporting us to make a difference for our wildlife. 2018 has been a good year. Every single one of our projects have grown, expanded and made more of an impact.

May this be the trend for 2019.

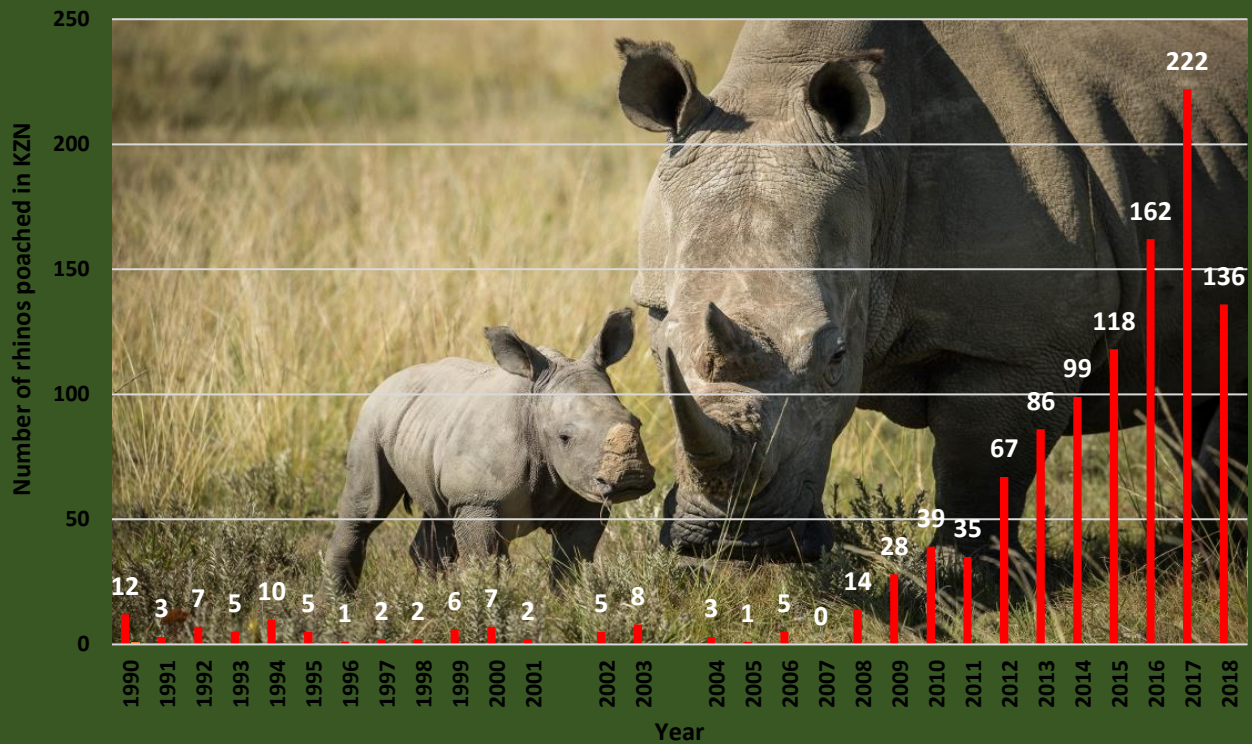


**MONITORING. PROTECTING. CONSERVING. TOGETHER.**



## Statistics:

Number of rhinos poached in KZN from 1990 to date  
(Unofficial numbers)



## Reserve Support: ZAP-Wing:

2018 was the 7<sup>th</sup> year of fixed-wing operations for the Zululand Anti-Poaching Wing (ZAPWing). It continues to provide an essential reactive and proactive function as one of the tools in the Anti-poaching toolbox.

In the middle of the year we had some major repairs done to our aircraft, which included new covering, a new engine, new engine mount and repairs to the tail and tailwheel. This was a big expense, (financial and time) but one of necessity as it was a result of wear and tear from over 1300 hours of flying for the reserves. To continue the service of ZAPWing, while the new engine was being installed, we called on the assistance of the

Ezemvelo Honorary Officers Airwing to ensure the safety of our wildlife in our Zululand reserves.

During the course of the year we increased the patrol area to include Thula Thula Private Game Reserve.

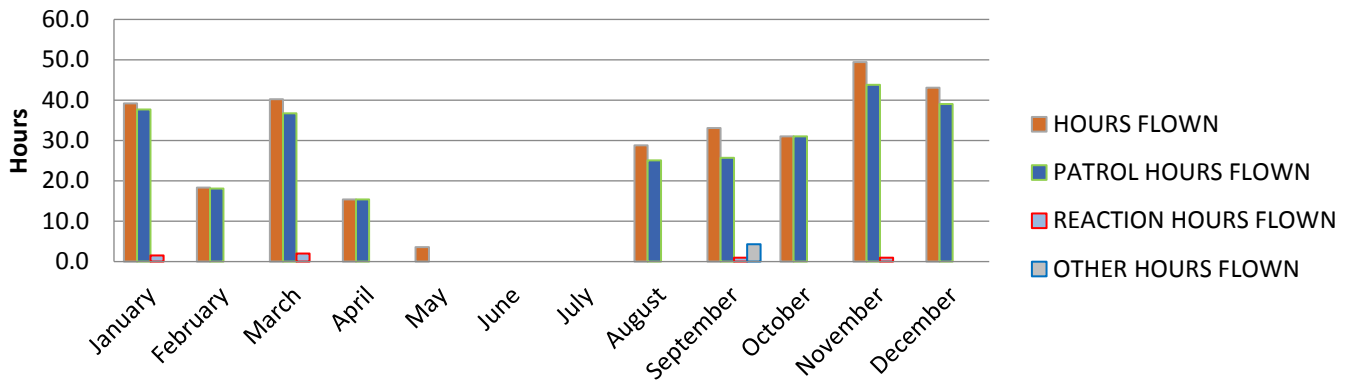
ZAP-Wing had another productive year and proved its value as a key tool to fighting rhino poaching. Although circumstances were not always ideal and there were times where high temperatures were reached (with cockpit temperatures reaching 42°C), combined with extreme winds (35kts) and rain, which made the flying challenging, they were never enough to stop it.



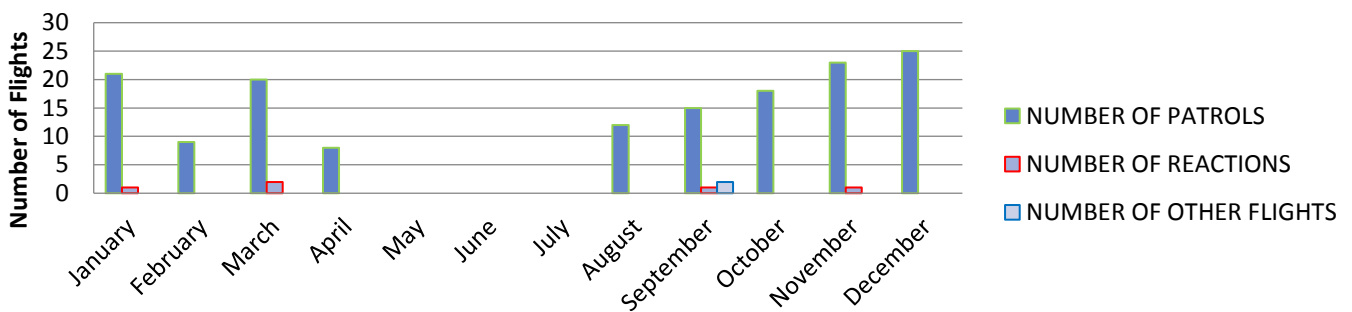




## Hours Flown



## Number of Flights



## Reserve Support: Project Rhino K9 Unit



2018 started off with a 3-month trial period for the Project Rhino K9 Anti-Poaching dog unit. After the completion of trial period the feedback from all the Zululand rhino reserves were very positive and supportive of the project and the wildlife crime fighting benefits that it would bring to the Zululand landscape.

Within the first 3-months, the Project Rhino K9 Unit was present at SAPS road blocks, conducted reserve vehicle checks and night patrols. In March, Project Rhino submitted a K9 strategy at a workshop that was hosted by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and EWT. Driven by dire need expressed by the Zululand reserves, by the middle of 2018 our K9 unit increased from 1 to 5 dogs, which included 4 trained and area adapted tracker dogs and as well as Mali, the detection dog. The project base, with kennels was set up in Hluhluwe Town (with the long-term goal to have the base at ZAPWing airfield), which is minutes away from the Hluhluwe airfield and Rhino 9 SAPS Team that can immediately respond to emergencies as one unit. Two of the tracker dogs are helicopter trained, which has been important with a number of rapid helicopter deployments this year.



Some of the reserves have erected satellite camps for one dog handler and canine, in order for the K9 team to work with their APU teams for consecutive days. This allows the different teams to get to know each other and learn to work with one another to really reap the benefits of the K9 team.

Eric Dickson, the K9 Unit coordinator, attended a Footwear Impression Recovery Course during June, which he successfully passed. This skill is an added service to the private and community reserves when

needed. The K9's have done numerous demonstrations for media groups, member reserves, school groups and sponsors, to show off their capabilities. Day and night patrols in and around reserves were conducted persistently throughout the year.

In less than six months, the Project Rhino K9 anti-poaching unit has proven to be efficient in the detection of wildlife products, arms and ammunition and the tracking and locating of suspects in a number of reserves in the Zululand area.

## *Reserve Support: Project Rhino Horse Unit*

At the beginning of 2018 we officially launched our joint Project Rhino and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Horse anti-poaching unit, which is based in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Game Reserve (HiP). The unit consists of 7 horses and 5 rangers. The horses were supplied by Lauren Louwrens of Kokstad. Lauren also trained the groom (Shokhwake Gumede of the Esiyembeni area). Three horses joined the Ezemvelo unit funded by Project Thorn in California via the NGO called 12hours. Another Appaloosa gelding was donated by Robbie and Ali Kampion.

All horse unit field rangers have Cyber trackers and their movements and distances can be monitored each day. The section ranger of the Nqumeni section in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Game Reserve, Sibonelo Zulu, who manages the horse unit, said that the horse patrols make a massive difference as on foot the rangers can only patrol approximately 12km per shift, whereas on horseback they can cover a distance of 30km per shift.

The horses are well habituated to wildlife, but the fence around the grazing paddock at the stables was in desperate need of repair to safe guard the horses, as 3 horses were lost to lions last year. The upgrade of the fence was completed in the last quarter of the year, with the funds raised through the Project Rhino Global Giving

Program.  
(<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/support-mounted-rangers-fighting-rhino-poaching/>)

Dr Jacques Flamand, manager of the Black Rhino Range Expansion Programme (WWF-BRREP), who is also a vet, assisted us with general checkups on the horses at the end of April to ensure that they are all in good health and has given us guidelines on how to manage the individual horses to ensure that they maintain the best health. Miss Ursina Rusch also from WWF-BRREP has been brilliant in offering her time and skills as a level 3 riding instructor, to assist the horse rangers to improve their riding and horsemanship skills throughout the year.

Several items of kit and support were donated by Roxane Losey, a Director of Global Conservation Force in the USA.

Project Rhino also managed to assist Spioenkop Game Reserve with 40 bales of hay as additional food for their horses during the final winter months when food resources in the veld were scarce. A big thank you to Epol and RCL Foods for assisting with sponsoring Epol cubes for the HiP Horse unit for one year.

In 2019 Project Rhino will, under the Project Rhino Horse Unit, be working with other member reserves where horses are currently being used to protect rhino and other wildlife.







## Reserve Support: Ranger Training

Project Rhino in conjunction with the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) and the Southern African Wildlife College conducted 6 training courses, which trained 63 managers and field rangers in various essential skills. The courses included Counter Insurgency tracking training (CITT), Advanced First Aid Training, as well as Advanced weapons handling and night operations training.

The feedback from the reserves that had rangers attending the courses, was that the training courses were amazing and that their rangers were very impressed and motivated by all the knowledge that they had gained.

It was emphasized that there is a need for future ranger training and re-training in all the above categories.

With nearly 500 dedicated rangers on member reserves, we plan to continue the training and retraining of rangers as it is critical to have continued upskilling and to keep rangers motivated. The need for ranger training in 2019 as expressed by the reserves is as indicated in the table below:

Requested ranger training from reserves for 2019	
CITT Training	65 Candidates
Basic field ranger training	56 Candidates
Advanced field ranger training	65 Candidates
Tactical weapons and night operations training	73 Candidates
Basic crime scene management training	69 Candidates
Advanced crime scene management training	36 Candidates



## Reserve Support: Dehorning & Facial reconstruction

Project Rhino, along with Love Africa Marketing, hosted a media week in northern KZN reserves with national and international media teams to give them a firm understanding of the poaching issues that we are faced with on the ground, as well as the effort that goes into protecting our rhino and other wildlife.

It was also aimed at informing the media of how much effort is still required to counter the real threat of rhino poaching. Unfortunately not many people realize the intensity of the current situation, which is possibly because it has not been well covered in the media of late.

This media week was made possible only with the support of our key partners and donors: Wildlife ACT, On Safari Africa, Wildlands, Emvokweni Community Trust, Green Trust, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and African Conservation Trust. During World Rhino Month in September, we also hosted a Brazilian media team as well as the UK based BBC team on dehorning events in two different rhino reserves.

When doing hands-on field work, we try to give our donors and supporters an opportunity to see the work that we do on a day to day basis and therefore try to involve them in our projects as much as possible to ensure that they understand the critical situation that the rhino population is really facing.





We hosted Mr Price Sport, Tandem Tyres, Duncan Paul, Go Rhino, The US Consulate and the St Annes enviroclub learners, who have all been loyal donors to Project Rhino and have made an incredible impact on making projects possible.

We have also had three follow-up procedures on Thembe, the rhino who received severe facial injuries from a previous poaching incident during the course of 2018.

Thembe, a rhino whose horn was poached 8 years ago, was attacked on a private reserve in Ladysmith and is still on a long road to recovery. Her horn was hacked off of her face, damaging her entire nasal cavity making it difficult for her to breath. After her wound was neglected for several years Saving the Survivors and Project Rhino stepped in to fund treatment and facial reconstruction surgeries that will increase her quality of life.

Project Rhino also contributes to global research as we believe that scientific results of these studies will assist in making more informed decisions on where we should focus our energy.

Over the past year we assisted a number of students with as much information as possible to do research and come up with answers to the current challenges we face.

Here is an extract of such work done by Tinashe Marange on the perceived effectiveness of dehorning rhinoceroses in Africa:

*"Despite, both proactive and preventative measures implemented to curtail rhino poaching all have proven insufficient and these critically endangered rhinos continue to be excessively poached.*

*Rhino populations have continued to decline precipitously thus, as a final bid to protect rhino populations, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authorities that manage approximately 800 black and white rhinos have declared all rhinos will be dehorned in due course.*

*Dehorning rhinos is still a grey area with limited scientific evidence reporting its success and several papers have questioned whether this contentious method of dehorning is an effective method to reduce poaching. Therefore, this project will determine the current perceptions of several practitioners, non-profit organisations, chief executive officers of non-profit organisations who do and do not practice rhino dehorning alongside academics. The project aims to determine whether experts deem dehorning an effective method to deter poachers whilst evaluating the social and managerial aspects involved."*







## Youth Engagement: Rhino Art



Rhino Art – ‘*Let our children's voices be heard*’ is considered to be the most successful youth-art conservation initiative ever undertaken. Its clear objective is to gather the largest number of children’s art voices ever recorded, in support of rhino conservation and to use these hearts and minds messages from the youth as a worldwide call

to action against rhino poaching. The youth have the enormous responsibility to ensure that our wildlife is looked after and preserved for many generations to come. Therefore it is of utmost importance for Project Rhino to ensure that we reach as many learners as possible with our Rhino Art movement. By mid-year over 83 schools were reached in KZN and more than 47 668 learners had received the Rhino Conservation Awareness message. Our Rhino Ambassadors have gone the extra mile and have spread the message on Ukhozi FM, North Coast Radio, East Coast radio and TV Biyela to highlight the rhino crises and the impact it has on the tourism economy and job creation. Rhino Art also crossed provincial boundaries, not only into the Eastern Cape, but also into Mpumalanga. The

Matsulu Township area has approximately 100 000 residents and is a wildlife and rhino poaching hotspot in Mpumalanga. During the Rhino Art visit to Matsulu, 6 324 learners were reached and received the Rhino Conservation Awareness message.

Proficiently lead by passion - Dave Pattle is the Eastern Cape coordinator of Rhino Art and his dedication is complemented with a solid team. 30 Schools and 12 000 learners were reached in the Eastern Cape this year. Melumsi Matiwane has been very active in the Grahamstown area doing rhino Awareness in Schools. In February, a team was taken to old faithful Hendrik Kanise who have supported two World Rhino Summits with pupils. The Twizza brand in the Eastern Cape have been amazing with support - thanks to Liezl Hullet for this field support in rural schools. Since the inception of Rhino Art in 2013, Project Rhino have conducted conservation education and awareness work in 24 countries!\* As is evident above, nothing has changed with Project Rhino, Rhino Art – ‘*Let our children's voices be heard*’ project, which is growing from strength to strength. The awareness and conservation education has been done by incorporating innovative activities such as sport, into the wildlife awareness messaging and conducting youth camps in reserves. To date, over 500 000 learners have been reached since the inception of this project.



\***Africa:** South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Chad. **Asia:** Vietnam, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Macau, China Nepal. **Other:** Germany, Netherlands, USA, South America.





## Youth Engagement: School Kids Camp

Nyandu Camp at Weenen Game Reserve in the KZN Midlands was upgraded and completed this year. This camp will be used for educational excursions to educate the youth about the bush and wildlife and give them first hand bush experience. A great big thank you to the Jonny Louw Memorial Trust, Mr and Mrs Hancock, Peter Eastwood, Pips Findley and Antoinette Phillips for assisting in the funding of this project. Thank you also to the Frik Lemmer and the Weenen Honary Officers for the endless hours of work that they have put in to get this camp upgraded. The sign at Nyandu Camp was designed to commemorate two special spirits whose lives were taken from us far too early, Mark Coetzee and black rhino cow WF2. The illustration for the Nyandu Camp sign board was done

by Mark Coetzee, an EKZNW graphic designer and illustrator. The official opening of Nyandu Camp took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.

In Zululand the Rhino Art program hosted a successful Kids Camp (24) at Somkhanda Game Reserve and a youth group (15) was taken for a wildlife walk with Nunu Jobe in the Nqumeni Section of Hluhluwe Game Reserve as part of their conservation education and awareness training.

In the Eastern Cape a select group of 10 learners were taken on a Wildlife Camp to Kuzuko, part of Legend Lodges in the Suurberg, for a weekend in Nature.

## Community Engagement:

Project Rhino attended a Zululand Community Conservation and Engagement workshop on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2018. The aim of the meeting was to get to know what everyone is doing with regards to their local communities and see where the different reserve and NGO's work overlap to help coordinate projects to be more effective in our operations.

The goal was to pull everyone's resources together and work as a team to be more efficient and successful in overall community projects. Each person was asked to present on their organisation/reserve's focus with regards to community conservation and development initiatives:

- Outline of scope of work being carried out
- Plans for 2018
- Foreseen impact of work and philosophy behind programmes.

Project Rhino has always recognised the value that communities play and can play in reducing wildlife crimes such as rhino poaching. These are part of Project Rhino's short and medium term strategic interventions.

Community engagements have been varied, but based on the simple point that it is very difficult for people to support or value something that they do not know. In November Project Rhino hosted a workshop where leaders from the communities surrounding Hluhluwe Game Reserve were able to gain valuable information on how the reserve functions and what it has to offer. A full program was in place for all to learn and experience as much as possible over the 3-days. A number of presentations were given by Project Rhino members around conservation issues, challenges (specifically in and around Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park) and opportunities that are presented by well-functioning conservation areas.

An outcome of the workshop was that such engagements were greatly appreciated by the community who learnt a great deal from the experience. The workshop looked to draw the communities closer to the game reserve to ensure its sustainability.





More workshops such as this are needed to break down past barriers and garner a greater understanding and appreciation of the role that protected areas play.

Project Rhino would like to thank members of the team and all its partners for presenting and facilitating the workshop.

## Community Engagement: Food security

Northern KwaZulu-Natal includes some of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas in South Africa. In the village of KwaJobe, situated north of the Mkhuze Game Reserve, for example, less than 5% of households have access to piped water and 8% have access to electricity for cooking and lighting. There are few employment opportunities, whilst the pay-offs from assisting illegal poaching syndicates can be equivalent to several years' basic wages. Project Rhino, together with partners like African Conservation Trust (ACT), is working in these communities to help meet basic human needs so that they can concentrate on becoming active participants in wildlife conservation.

In the first half of 2018, the ACT agriculture teams established ecological food gardens at three crèches in the greater KwaJobe region to support daily feeding schemes. The crèches – Vezukukhanya, Sibhekokufile and Siyaphaphama – look after 167 children, aged 0 – 6 years. ACT also offered a 5-day training programme to community members so that they could help care for the gardens in the long term.

This was enthusiastically received by the community, who weren't afraid to get their hands dirty during the practical lessons.

The crèches are taught how to garden using eco-agricultural (permaculture) techniques which protect the environment and have shown to produce crops that are more resilient to changing weather conditions, improve water usage and reduce soil erosion. The fresh produce is included in the crèche's daily meal plans, providing the children with valuable nutrition to help prevent stunting and malnourishment.

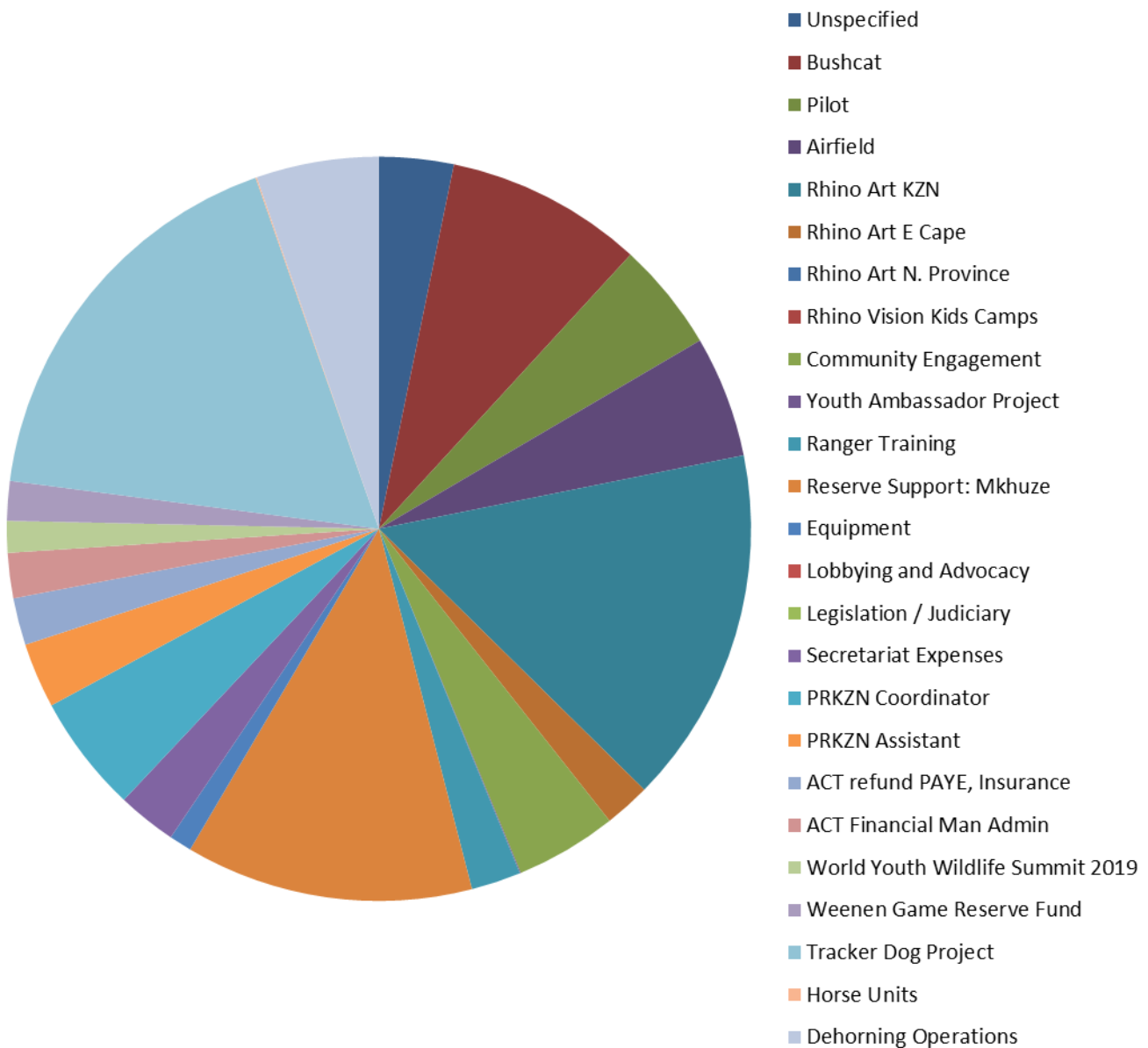
The agricultural team from WILDlands also joined the project in the latter half of 2018, and with their help, a further four gardens are being established at ECDs in the region. Project Rhino is also paying a small stipend to a local community member who is assisting as a mentor and who volunteered his services almost the entire year. We are hoping to expand the project to another twelve deserving schools in 2019.







## Distribution of funding



Funds Received for the year 2018 to date	R3,326,786.15
Funds Expended for the year 2018 to date	R5,867,426.55
Difference	-R2,540,640.40





## Project Rhino Staff

Chris Galliers  
Project Rhino Coordinator



Carlien Esterhuizen  
Project Rhino Assistant



Ian Waghorn  
Project Rhino ZAPWing Pilot



Grant Fowlds  
Project Rhino, Rhino Art



Richard Mabanga  
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Eric Dickson  
K9 Anti-Poaching Dog Unit Manager



Dave Pattle  
Project Rhino, Rhino Art EC



Melumzi Matiwane  
Project Rhino, Rhino Art EC



Jabulani Gogo  
Zapwing Hanger Assistant



*Thank you to our DONORS and SUPPORTERS!*

*"What motivates us daily is the dream of both White and Black rhino species thriving in KwaZulu-Natal and far beyond - forever free, forever secure from poaching, well managed and protected. Today we strive to protect the world's last remaining African Rhino species, so that tomorrow they will still continue to play their vital role in our continent's irreplaceable and beautiful ecosystems. We honor their uniqueness as one of the primary protector species of Africa's great wilderness areas. We know you feel the same and thank you for your support."*