

Fight for Rhinos  
Raising funds and awareness to fight poaching.

## Posts Tagged With: Kariega Game Reserve

### Miracle for Two!

Posted on [December 7, 2013](#) by [Rhino Girl](#)

I'm pleased to announce that Thandi, the miraculous poaching survivor, is expecting!

Dr. William Fowlds, who has been part of Thandi's life since the poaching attempt on her life said,

*"I don't recall such a small value carrying such huge significance for anything in my professional life. Thandi is arguably the single most important rhino alive as I am not aware of any individual animal that has carried the plight of the rhino out to the world to the extent that she has and continues to do. Her story has touched the lives of so many people across the globe and her courage is reflected in our love for her and the species that she represents. The prospects of a successful pregnancy and birth represent the hope of survival. In a crisis which threatens us with despair, that hope, as insignificant as it may seem for some, is what we cling to for dear life."*

If all goes well for this courageous soul, she will have come full circle from birth to almost death, and now delivering a new life into the world to carry on Thandi's legacy, and hope for all rhino.

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# Thandi's Progress

Posted on [November 21, 2013](#) by [Rhino Girl](#)

It has been a little over 19 months since Thandi's poaching. (See previous post: [Thandi's Story \(http://fightforrhinos.com/2013/01/09/thandis-story/\)](#)) Her story is not just one of survival, but endurance. This girl has had numerous procedures and skin grafts to heal the hole left in her face from her stolen horn.

At this point, the veterinary team is letting nature take its course. It remains to be seen how the wound will fare.

The latest update from her keeper at the Kariega Game Reserve is that she is doing well.

*"She looks quite content. Her face is showing some improvement and although the progress is slow it would appear the wound is gradually closing in from the sides. Her doctors will be keeping a close eye on her progress and with their help and advice I'm sure her wound will heal."*

Please see: [Thandi's Story: 2010-2013 \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=tSJaH3ph-98\)](#), courtesy of my friends at [Helping Rhinos \(http://www.helpingrhinos.org/\)](#). Help us stop this from happening to rhinos like Thandi. Stop the Poaching, stop the trade!



(<http://fightforrhinos.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/thandi-nov-2013.jpg>)

Thandi November 2013

*Her doctors will be keeping a close eye on her progress and with their help and advice I am sure her face will heal. Hopefully to the point where it will be able to withstand the rigours of day to day rhino life without resulting in any repeated damage to the wound.” – See more at: <http://www.kariega.co.za/blog/thandi-update-november-2013#sthash.30qPzIn1.dpuf> (<http://www.kariega.co.za/blog/thandi-update-november-2013#sthash.30qPzIn1.dpuf>)*

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## Thandi: Plastic Surgery after Poaching

Posted on [July 2, 2013](#) by [Rhino Girl](#)

Thandi’s story started in March of 2012, when she was brought to our attention after the brutal poaching attempt on her life, along with her companion Themba. (see previous post <http://fightforrhinos.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/thandis-story/> (<http://fightforrhinos.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/thandis-story/>))

(<http://fightforrhinos.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/thandi-after-2.jpg>)

After a long and painful recovery, Thandi survived. But her medical crisis is still not over. Unfortunately all of her skin which healed over her horrible scar, has been torn open after a normal interaction with another rhino.

The following is a message from Dr. William Fowlds who continues to care for Thandi:

***Day 480 since the poaching of Thandi, Themba and Bull #84.***

“Today we converge yet again on Kariega Game Reserve in support of the rehabilitation of Thandi the survivor of rhino poaching. Following the successes of various phases of her recovery, a recent set-back occurred when her face was damaged by a bull introduced to replace the breeding capacity lost by the poaching incident over a year ago. In a process which has involved ground breaking efforts to give her back a normal rhino life, we have been reminded just how much poaching took away from her and just how much more she still needs our support through her recovery.



This special rhino has survived against all odds and in the process captured the hearts of thousands of people around the world. Her will to survive combined with the dedication of many and the support of a growing global community of rhino lovers has created a platform which has highlighted the rhino crisis and inspired people to action in an unprecedented way. Everyone who has been drawn back to her side on this day can reflect on 15 months where, in spite of an escalating crisis, we are more determined, more equipped and more actively committed to saving this species than ever before.

<http://fightforrhinos.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/thandi-skin-graft.jpg>

So the gravity of this day rests heavily on our shoulders. This team of professionals have the responsibility of taking Thandi safely through an anaesthetic and ground breaking surgery, and apply ways to repair her face so that she can handle the rigours of rhino life in the future. This is yet another chapter in a process which has no guaranteed outcomes. The only given is that with so many people in support of this special rhino, and what she represents for her species, we know that we are giving her the best that we possibly can.



Two specialist veterinary surgeons from the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Onderstepoort, Dr Gerhard Steenkamp and Dr Johan Marais have returned along with a human plastic surgeon Dr Alistair Lamont and together they have spent the past 14 months collaborating and working on new techniques to repair facial damage in poached rhino. The aim of today's procedures will be for them to assess the quality of the facial tissues and decide if they are able to apply any of these new measures of re-establishing robust rhino skin. Although extensive work has been done on dead rhino in understanding the detailed anatomy of rhino skin, none of this new knowledge has been applied to a live animal before. <http://fightforrhinos.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/skin-graft-thandi.jpg>

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Thandi in her recovery thus far. From members of the concerned public to NGO's who have come forward to assist, to people with specific skills in media and medical support. Those far away are as important to her recovery as those who will be at her side today.

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The surgery is over. If Thandi keeps the dressing on and all goes well, she will undergo additional procedures and more skin grafts. It is hopeful after all this, she will be able to finally have a “normal” life post poaching, and be able to engage in regular courtship activities.



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