



**VETPAW**

VETERANS EMPOWERED  
TO PROTECT AFRICAN WILDLIFE

ISSUE No. #08

# THE QUARTERLY DIGEST

NOVEMBER 2023

## RHINO POACHING DECREASES

*South Africa*

Rhino poaching continues to decrease as joint initiatives pay dividends. The first six months of 2023 saw an eleven percent decrease in South Africa.

## DIVERSIFYING CONSERVATION

*South Africa*

White people have typically dominated jobs in conservation. That's about to change as groups of environmentalists fight to diversify the field.

## FEMALE SAFARI GUIDES

*Change Agent*

Leading the way for safari guides in the Greater Maasai Mara, Evalyn Sintoya Mayetu is defying conventions in a highly male-dominated industry.

## THE WILD MEAT TRADE

*From Africa to Belgium*

Up to four metric tons of wild meat are illegally entering Europe through Brussels' international airport alone every month, a new study says.



PHOTO: RYAN TATE - VETPAW FOUNDER





THERE IS  
NO GREATER  
REWARD

PHOTO: ROBERT I.M. CAMPBELL

“There is no greater reward than to know that one’s efforts have helped preserve the fragile balance of nature.”

*Dian Fossey*

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THE FRAGILE BALANCE OF NATURE





PHOTO: TADHG O'BRIEN

Veterans Empowered To Protect African Wildlife is a conservation organization that empowers highly trained combat veterans by utilizing their skills to train, advise, and assist Africa's park rangers fighting to protect endangered wildlife from poaching conducted by militarized criminal networks. Our goal is to ensure the survival of critically threatened wildlife while serving the men and women who've served their country.

*[To Learn More:](#)*





*In the first six months of 2023, 231 rhinos were killed in South Africa.*

These figures represent an eleven percent decrease (or a decline of 28 animals killed for their horn) compared to the same period last year. Between 1 January and 30 June 2023, poaching trends also continued to show a move away from the Kruger National Park to provincial and private reserves.

Forty two rhino were poached in the Kruger National Park and 143 in KwaZulu-Natal Province from January to June 2023. Forty six of the rhino killed were in privately-owned nature reserves and 143 in provincially owned reserves.

[\*To Read More:\*](#)



A woman wearing a blue t-shirt, a blue baseball cap, and sunglasses is standing on the side of a paved road. She is holding binoculars to her eyes and looking towards the right. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds, a utility pole with power lines, and a green field with trees in the distance. The text "MEET THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS WHO WANT TO DIVERSIFY CONSERVATION" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# MEET THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS WHO WANT TO DIVERSIFY CONSERVATION

*Author: Todd Richmond*

PHOTO: TODD RICHMOND

*White people have typically dominated jobs in conservation. But these groups are fighting to diversify the field.*

Environmental groups across the country have worked for the last two decades to introduce members of underrepresented populations like Barajas to the overwhelmingly white conservation world.

*[To Read More:](#)*



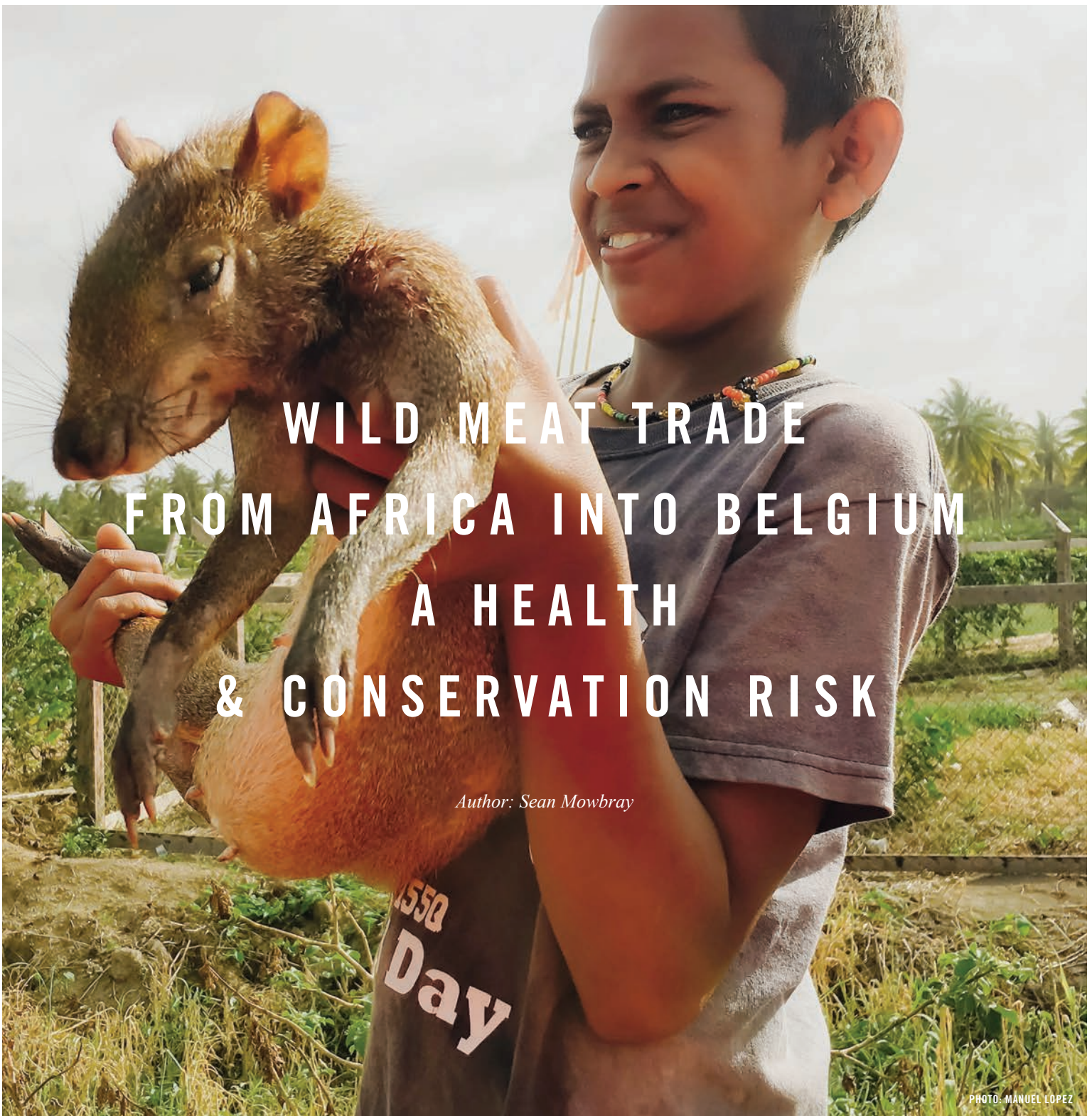


PHOTO: MANUEL LOPEZ

# WILD MEAT TRADE FROM AFRICA INTO BELGIUM A HEALTH & CONSERVATION RISK

*Author: Sean Mowbray*

*Up to 4 metric tons of wild meat is illegally entering Europe through Brussels' international airport alone every month, a new study says.*

Experts are calling for better detection of wild meat trafficking and stricter enforcement of penalties against the trade in protected species, as well as more frequent checks of the legal trade to uncover illegal shipments.

[To Read More:](#)





# WORLD HERITAGE SITES ARE BIODIVERSITY HAVENS

*Author: Max Marcovitch*

PHOTO: ALICE ON UNSPLASH

*For more than 50 years, UNESCO has designated World Heritage sites like Machu Picchu or the Great Pyramid of Giza for protection due to their “outstanding universal value.”*

A new report from UNESCO and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reveals that 20 percent of all mapped species reside within World Heritage sites — an impressive figure given that they span just 1 percent of the Earth’s surface.

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# BRAZIL LAUNCHES BIGGEST OPERATION AGAINST ILLEGAL CATTLE FARMS IN INDIGENOUS AMAZON

*Author: Rafael Moro in Senador José Porfirio*

PHOTO: LELA BELTRÃO

*Taskforce deployed to remove thousands of cows owned by land grabbers from indigenous territory.*

The Brazilian government has launched its biggest ever operation to remove thousands of cows owned by illegal land grabbers from Indigenous territory in the Amazon rainforest.

[To Read More:](#)



A woman, Evalyn Sintoya Mayetu, is the central figure, standing by the open door of a light-colored safari vehicle. She is wearing a grey baseball cap with the word 'Asilia' on it, a vibrant red and white patterned Maasai top with a white shuka draped over her shoulders, and a matching patterned skirt. She has several colorful beaded bracelets on her wrists. The vehicle has 'Asilia' written in a cursive font on its side, with 'SAFARIS | GENUINE DIFFERENCE' below it. The background shows a savanna landscape with acacia trees under a clear blue sky.

# MEET THE SAFARI GUIDE EMPOWERING WOMEN IN EAST AFRICA

*Author: Ben Lerwill*


PHOTO: ASILIA AFRICA

*Evalyn Sintoya Mayetu was the first female guide in her country to attain the Silver Level qualification with the Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association.*

Meet the safari guide empowering women in East Africa leading the way for safari guides in the Greater Maasai Mara. Evalyn Sintoya Mayetu from Kenya is defying conventions in a male-dominated industry.

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# UN ADOPTS WORLD-FIRST TREATY TO PROTECT MARINE LIFE OUTSIDE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

*Author: Euronews Green*

PHOTO: ISWANTO ARIF ON UNSPLASH

*Greenpeace's Chris Thorne has called the treaty "a win for all life on this planet."*

Members of the United Nations adopted the first-ever treaty to protect marine life in the high seas on Monday. The UN's chief hailed the historic agreement as giving the ocean "a fighting chance."

[\*To Read More:\*](#)





**SOUTH AFRICA  
RHINO FARM,  
WORLD'S LARGEST  
BOUGHT BY NGO**

*Author: Agence France-Presse*

PHOTO: RED CHARLIE ON UNSPLASH

*African Parks has stepped in as the new owner of the world's largest private captive rhino breeding operation.*

The largest rhino farm in the world, which is home to 2,000 animals and is located in South Africa, has been bought by the NGO African Parks.

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A F A R M W I T H 2 0 0 0 R H I N O





ONE OF  
SOUTH AFRICA'S  
MOST WANTED  
RHINO POACHERS  
ARRESTED

*Author: Simon Bloch*

PHOTO: CREDIT TO PHOTOGRAPHER

*One of South Africa's most wanted rhino poaching suspects is behind bars again after he was rearrested near the Kruger National Park on Friday.*

Odis Maluleke, 47, a Mozambican who has been on the run for more than four years, was apprehended in a coordinated operation conducted by the police Skukuza stock theft endangered species unit and the tactical response team.

[\*To Read More:\*](#)

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ODIS MALULEKE REARRESTED



## BLOG BY: TREVOR LITTLE

Greetings from South Africa everyone! My name is Trevor Little and I am the ground team leader and operations manager with Veterans Empowered to Protect African Wildlife. I wanted to give you all a brief update along with an inside look into some of the challenges the team has been facing as well as the amazing work and developments that the team has been able to accomplish over the past few months.

The beginning of this past year was a very unnerving time for all involved in conservation in our region as there was an influx of rhino poaching. Although we ourselves were extremely advantageous enough to not suffer any losses to our wildlife, many of our fellow rangers and conservationists in the surrounding areas were not as fortunate. Thankfully due to the tireless efforts of many of our colleagues and local law enforcement, the culprits were apprehended and handed out significant sentences for their horrendous crimes.

In the wake of the aftermath, the team has been able to take a minor step back and concentrate our efforts on the training and development of the local Anti-Poaching Unit we work alongside, whilst still maintaining our volume of presence patrols. We convened with the Anti-Poaching ranking officer and his team and were able to conceptualize the skill sets and training the unit would most benefit from. The VETPAW team then went to the drawing board.

After deciding on what training to focus on, the VETPAW team dove into establishing the curriculum. This curriculum consisted of multiple components including but not limited to; field medicine, combatives, drone familiarization and operation, tactical movement (with and without a K-9 unit), and tactical observation and application. Every team member jumped into instructor mode and began delivering courses 3-5 times per week with a scenario based training event bi-monthly. This whole process was a huge benefit to both the VETPAW ground team and the Anti-Poaching Unit whereas both elements found appreciation for one another even more so than before. The VETPAW team once again having the opportunity to successfully transfer our skills and knowledge found comfort and reaffirmation in witnessing the Rangers gain confidence in the appliance of skills and knowledge they had little to no experience with prior. Due to the Ranger's eagerness and will to learn and the VETPAW team's ability to hone in on and develop individual's strengths in certain aspects, both elements are beginning to operate as one united front in the challenges we may face in the future.

In accordance with most of our past experiences, not all accomplishments are easily obtained without the flexibility and resilience found in many military veterans. Outside of the training and patrol schedule, the team had many unforeseen elements to throw the "proverbial" wrench into our sleep schedules and routines. Due to the prolonged drought in our region, the wintry dry season brought about many wildfires that the team on the ground reacted to and fought alongside the local farmers and fire brigade. In unison with the wildfires, the snaring and bushmeat poaching had also begun to see a resurgence in our area of operations which also required attending to. On top of the wildfires, added snare patrols, and reacting to poaching attempts in the area the team was at times pushed to their exhaustive limits. Still, not one team member had any complaints or reservations about the extra responsibilities or the work to be done ahead. As the team leader on the ground, I could not be more proud of everyone I was privileged enough to spend the last few months alongside.

I'll leave you all with one more positive development of the last quarter. The local community youth soccer team that VETPAW sponsors (the Destroyers) has made some great strides over the winter season in their progression. With the help of VETPAW's sponsorship the coach, Vuyo, was able to send two of his best players to try out for a newly promoted team across the country. This opportunity was designed to give players from underprivileged means a chance to continue to develop their skills and eventually play semiprofessionally or professionally. Both team members were selected. Along with this exciting news, the soccer club also formed the female youth Destroyers soccer team and they played in their first tournament on National Women's Day in South Africa. On behalf of myself and the VETPAW ground team, the Rangers we support and stand together with, and those in the local communities who we have come to mold such strong relationships amongst, I want to thank each and every one of you who has supported us throughout. Whether you've followed our efforts from the very beginning or you are new to the extended VETPAW family, I cannot express my gratitude enough. It is because of all of you that any of this is possible and I am completely humbled by your support ever yday. Thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

It is people just like you who donate and change the course of history, saving rhinos from extinction.

Click here to donate or email [shea.peaton@vetpaw.org](mailto:shea.peaton@vetpaw.org) for targeted sponsorships.


[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)





VETERAN NEWS





# A JOURNEY OF WOMEN IN THE MARINES

PHOTO: US NAVAL INSTITUTE

*Women Marines became a permanent part of the regular Marine Corps on June 12, 1948, when Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, but they had already proved themselves in both world wars.*

“The few, the proud.” An iconic slogan from the U.S. Marine Corps that defines this elite fighting force. While the Marines were first established on November 10, 1775, women only had the opportunity to join starting in 1918 with Opha May Johnson. Their roles have grown since then and today women are training and stepping into combat roles alongside their male counterparts.

*[To Read More:](#)*





NORTHUMBERLAND  
ARMY VETERAN'S  
LIFE SAVED  
BY ANIMALS

PHOTO: SCOTT CARROLL

Anthony Johnson, from Northumberland, spent almost two decades in the British Army. He said while in the depths of alcohol abuse connected to his PTSD, he was “saved” after discovering an orphaned fawn by the side of a country road near his home in Carrshields.

*[To Read More:](#)*



A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a military cap and uniform, smiling warmly. He is holding a black and white dog. The background is a soft-focus green field.

# VA & PET PARTNERS RENEW PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT VETERANS


*Author: MyArmyBenefits*

PHOTO: PET PARTNERS

In April 2023, VA and Pet Partners announced the renewal of their memorandum of agreement, reaffirming their commitment to enhance the quality of life for Veterans. Facilitated by the VA's National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (HAP), the renewed partnership builds upon the strong collaboration established in 2019 and signifies a continued effort to deliver impactful support to Veterans.

[\*To Read More:\*](#)



A photograph of President Joe Biden presenting the Medal of Honor to Capt. Larry Taylor. Biden is on the right, looking down at the medal as he pins it to Taylor's lapel. Taylor is on the left, looking forward with a somber expression. He is wearing a dark blue military uniform with "U.S." on the lapels and a gold rank insignia. The Medal of Honor is a gold star with a central emblem, suspended from a blue ribbon with white stars. The background is a blurred wall of flags.

# THE PRESIDENT AWARDS ARMY PILOT MEDAL OF HONOR FOR VIETNAM WAR RESCUE

*Author: Darlene Superville*

PHOTO: JACQUELYN MARTIN

*On the night of June 18, 1968, then-1st Lt. Taylor flew his Cobra attack helicopter to rescue the men after they had become surrounded by the enemy.*

President Joe Biden awarded the Medal of Honor to Capt. Larry Taylor on Tuesday, honoring the Army pilot who risked his life during the Vietnam War by flying into heavy enemy fire to save four members of a reconnaissance team from almost certain death as they were about to be overrun.

[\*To Read More:\*](#)





# TRENDS IN HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES AMONG VETERANS

*Author: Madison Coffey*

PHOTO: JOSÉ IGNACIO POMPE ON UNSPLASH

Heat-related illnesses (HRI), such as heat stroke, exhaustion, and fainting, are serious concerns for the general public and Veterans. Recent high temperatures have increased awareness around these illnesses.

[\*To Read More:\*](#)





*Before concluding this Digest, there's a final shout-out we'd like to give to the amazing Dallas Zoo.*

The nonprofit Dallas Zoo is open 364 days a year and welcomes more than one million guests yearly.

With more than 350 employees and 750 volunteers are dedicated to providing unparalleled care, educational experiences, and supporting local and global conservation efforts.

By providing guests with real-world opportunities to make memorable connections with wildlife and supplementing their experience with conservation messaging, the Dallas Zoo aims to inspire and empower visitors to take action on behalf of wildlife in Texas and around the world.

*[You can learn more about Dallas Zoo and their efforts here:](#)*