

## ***Dehorning of rhino***

Dehorning of Rhino is declared a veterinary ethical procedure. Dehorning of rhino should be conducted under direct veterinary supervision. The procedure may be repeated as dictated by the growth of new horn.

The threat of the illegal killing of rhino simply for purpose of harvesting their horns appears to be increasing [2011]. Anecdotal reports as well as the results of preliminary research investigations suggest that dehorned rhinos are less likely to be killed by poachers than those with horns. Research to date has also failed to demonstrate any detrimental effects due to the dehorning of free-ranging rhino populations. In one study on a black and white rhino population, findings suggested that dehorning increases rhino survival because of lower mortality due to poaching. Mortality in calves or mortality due to fighting did not increase in the dehorned population.

### 4.8.4.1 Guidelines for dehorning of rhino

1. The veterinarian must operate in accordance with the law and must comply with all legal requirements for dehorning of rhino. The veterinarian must ensure that s/he is operating with the explicit permission of the owner of the animal.
2. Risk benefit analysis should favour dehorning.
3. All normal principles of safe immobilisation / anaesthesia as well as best possible practice should be adhered to when dehorning rhino.
4. The veterinarian should familiarise him/herself with the anatomic structure of the horn in order to prevent damage of germinal layers.
5. Dehorning of females with unweaned calves should be discouraged.
6. Detailed records (which should include photographs, microchip numbers, notch configurations, horn measurements, farm location, etc) should be made and retained. The horn and the rhino should preferably be individually identifiable by DNA sequencing.
7. Partial dehorning whereby damage to the germinal layer is avoided is an acceptable technique for temporary removal of rhino horn.

4.8.4.2 The following procedures are defined for clarity

1. Rhino dehorning is the removal of the horn of the rhino.
2. Partial dehorning (bloodless) is the removal of the cornified structure of the horn without exposing any viable tissue.
3. Surgical dehorning is the removal of the horn by entering living tissue.
4. Complete dehorning is the surgical removal of a rhino horn inclusive of the germinal tissue that it takes origin from. No growth of horn will take place.