



Black Rhino Research Fellowship

The Eastern black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) is a critically endangered subspecies restricted to Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda. Prior to extensive poaching between 1977-1978, the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem was estimated to contain between four to five hundred individuals, of which more than 70% were estimated to reside in Serengeti National Park and adjacent game reserves. By 1993, this population was reduced to between 19 and 23 animals.

Coordinated programs for the reintroduction of Eastern black rhino into the Serengeti National Park has been underway since 2010, when five individuals were re-established in the Northern Serengeti. Ikorongo Game Reserve, in the western Serengeti of Tanzania, contains some of the highest quality black rhino habitat in the ecosystem, but currently no free-ranging rhino reside in this area.

The Grumeti Fund is a non-profit organization tasked with carrying out the wildlife conservation and community development work in and around 350,000 acres of the Ikorongo-Grumeti Game Reserve complex (IGGR). With a team of 170 dedicated staff managing and protecting the concessions, remarkable conservation accomplishments have been achieved since 2003, including a four-fold increase in elephants and ten-fold increase in buffalo. In 2019, Grumeti Fund launched a new research center, Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE), whose mission is to develop and support research targeting tangible solutions to benefit the people and wildlife of the Serengeti ecosystem and beyond.

In collaboration with government and other local partners, the Grumeti Fund is facilitating the re-establishment, monitoring, and management of a viable free ranging population of Eastern black rhino in natural habitat in Ikorongo. In 2019, a population of 14 Eastern black rhino will be established via translocations from captive and wild populations. This population will act as an additional source population for the Serengeti ecosystem and increase the available genetic diversity.

The Grumeti Fund and RISE are requesting proposals for innovative research relevant to this reintroduction effort. Areas of research may include, but are not limited to: conservation genetics, population dynamics, epidemiology, reintroduction biology, animal behavior and movement, rewilding, and community ecology. Proposed research

outcomes should have management applications. This may include insights for the management of black rhino locally in the western Serengeti, ecosystem wide, or more broadly across their range, or more generalized applications pertaining to species reintroductions as a conservation tool. Particular areas of research and management interest are the improvement or maintenance of the genetic heterozygosity of the founder population and wider Serengeti population, foraging behavior and preferences, the impacts of common disease vectors and parasites such as tsetse flies and ticks, and rhino-elephant interactions at the individual and population levels.

Benefits and expectations

The Fellowship includes a one-year award of up to \$20,000 for research funding. One award will be made. The award may be renewed for up to two additional years, subject to adequate research progress, funding requirements, and availability of funds. RISE and Grumeti Fund staff will provide on-the-ground support for project design and implementation.

The recipient must use the funds to undertake research in the Ikorongo-Grumeti Reserves complex in the western Serengeti of Tanzania on a topic related to the reintroduction of Eastern black rhino in this system. Proposals should include a field-based component. Awardees must receive the necessary research permissions within Tanzania before undertaking research (RISE will advise on requirements and timelines).

How to apply

Application packages must include the following components:

1. Personal statement
 - a. Briefly describe your career and research goals
 - b. Describe your experiences and commitments to diversity
2. Research statement
 - a. Rationale
 - b. Methods
 - c. Expected outcomes
3. Supporting documents
 - a. Timeline
 - b. Budget
4. CV
5. Graduate program transcripts
6. Two reference letters

The personal statement should not exceed one page, and the research statement three pages. Both should be single-spaced, in 12pt font, and with standard one-inch margins. Any references, photos, or maps count towards the total length. The timeline and budget information do not count towards the total length.

Proposals and reference letters are due by July 15, 2019 and should be submitted as a single compressed PDF to KristenS@grumetifund.org, referencing "RISE Rhino

Fellowship” in the subject line. Reference letter writers should email their signed recommendations from their organizational account, and should also reference the full name of the relevant graduate student in the subject line.

The recipient will be announced by August 15, 2019. Start dates are negotiable, but by December 31, 2019 is preferred.

Eligibility requirements

Applicants must:

1. Be enrolled in a research-based PhD program OR be a post-doc affiliated with a university, research institution, or established conservation oriented organization.
2. Have very strong academic qualifications, with academic and career goals relevant to wildlife conservation.

Use of Fellowship Funds

The primary purpose of the grant is to cover direct research-related expenses. This includes travel to the field site, accommodation, research assistant salaries, field or lab equipment, sample export, research permit fees, and lab fees. If research funding is available from alternative sources and the funding is proposed to be used for other, indirect costs, this must be explained and justified in the submitted proposal.

Reporting Requirements

Fellows are required to submit two written reports during their fellowship year. An interim report must be received by June 30, 2019 and a final report by December 31, 2019. Guidelines and requirements for these reports will be provided in advance of each due date.

For questions or inquiries, contact Kristen Denninger Snyder at KristenS@grumetifund.org.