

BOOK REVIEWS

How to raise a rhino: a biography of Anna Merz, founder of Lewa Downs black rhino sanctuary

Deb Aronson

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How to raise a rhino by Deb Aronson takes the reader on Anna Merz's journey as she commits the fourth quarter of her life to saving a species that has been on this planet for 40 to 50 million years. By the end of the 1970s and early 1980s the population of wild black rhino in Kenya had crashed from 20,000 to less than 400 and was critically endangered. Through her friendship with Mama and Mzee Craig, she found her calling and embarked on an adventure that brought a group of people together—farmers, vets, trackers and hunters turned conservationists committed to finding the last isolated rhinos in northern Kenya and bringing them together into a safe and secure sanctuary known as the Ngare Seroi on land made available by the Craig family. This founding population of 11 rhinos were the beginning of the reversal of fortune for the rhino population in Kenya and started a conservation movement that has ensured the survival of this species.

This book brings to life the passion, dedication, and emotion that are needed to

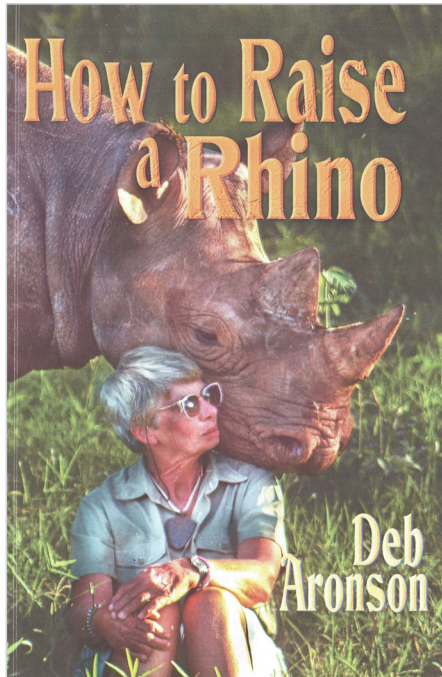


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succeed and created a generation of change makers. Her principal partners were Ian and Will Craig, Kinyanjui Lesanderia, Fuzz Dyer, Ted Goss, and Dr Dieter Rotcher. Today's East African rhino population is now secure, and the challenge faced by the Kenya Wildlife Service and conservationists is no longer about a species becoming extinct, but about finding more space and suitable habitat for a growing population. The book confirms that Anna had no ego and was therefore not constrained in committing her life to her cause, and although she ultimately stepped away, her legacy went from strength to strength. The current population of rhino in private

sanctuaries exceeds by a wide margin the total number of rhinos at the most critical point of the crisis. Her Samia Trust continues to this day to provide support to rangers dedicated to protecting rhinos across the African continent.

40 chapters. Available from: Dragonfeather Books (Bedazzled Ink Publishing Company) Fairfield, California <http://www.bedazzledink.com>