

Missile, the Rhino Protector

14 September 2023

It's a story of collaboration and commitment. Missile, the dog, has emerged as a true hero in the ongoing battle against rhino poaching. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the late game ranger, Jaco Buys, and Rocco Carr, a dedicated advocate for nature conservation and Glacier's very own Business Development Manager in the Free State region, Missile's story is inspiring and attests to Glacier's value of Ubuntu. At the annual charity auction held at the Glacier Investment Summit Free State 2022, funds were raised for SANParks, and consequently, Missile's career as a canine anti-poaching ranger began.

The money raised was used to purchase and train a dog for the K9 Programme – what has become a vital component of anti-poaching efforts. Notably, not every dog qualifies, as they are put through their paces and have to graduate through a rigorous programme, but Missile passed with flying colours.

Missile is a bloodhound-Dobermann mix, and his primary mission is to sniff out the scent of potential poachers across the vast Kruger Park area, more than 35km in radius. Assisted by his human colleagues in helicopters, Missile tracks down the poachers, and stands guard over them until the game rangers arrive to arrest the perpetrators. It is through these and other joint efforts that our majestic wildlife is preserved.

Rocco notes that since the introduction of these trained dogs into the anti-poaching initiative, the impact on deterring poachers has been astounding. Rhino poaching has significantly declined in the Kruger National Park, leading to a shift in focus to Northern KwaZulu Natal's National Parks.

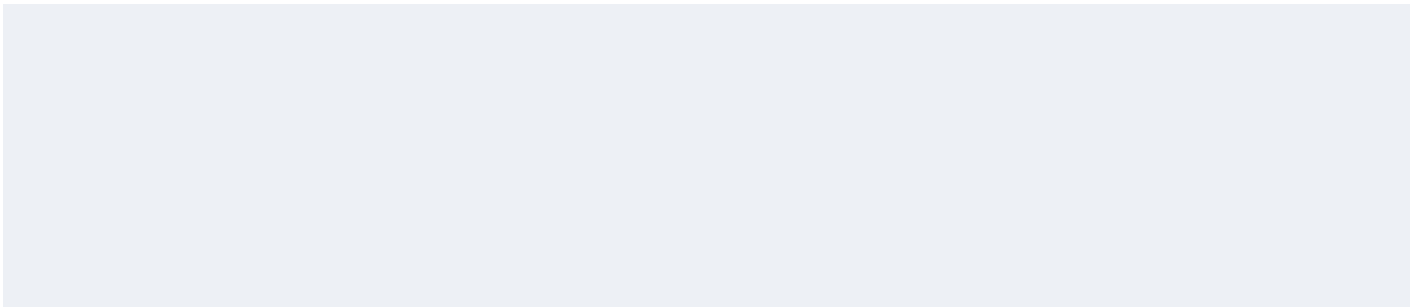
Missile's heartwarming story serves as a reminder that the age-old bond between humans and their dogs can change the world, one failed poaching attempt at a time. These dogs, with their extraordinary senses and agility, are essential allies in the fight against wildlife crime, and provide an early warning system for game rangers. They embody the spirit of unity, collaboration and resilience, and show us that together, we can protect our precious wildlife.



Missile and his human colleagues involved in the fight against rhino poaching are pictured here with Kritz Coetzee, Business Development Manager at Glacier. To protect the game rangers' identities, their faces are not visible.

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