Thandi: The Bravest Rhino in the World

#BeMoreRhino

© Daniel Haessler
Thandi, a female white rhino living on the Kariega Game Reserve in South Africa’s Eastern Cape, has to be one of the bravest rhino in the world. She survived a very brutal poaching attack in 2012 and now roams the bush with her growing family; her scarred face minus its horn a symbol to the world of her heroic status.

Thandi’s story began on the night of 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2012 where she was minding her own business, grazing and hanging out with two other rhino, when she was set upon by a group of poachers. Using dart guns and machetes, they brutally attacked the three rhinos, taking their horns and leaving them for dead.

Luckily the rhinos were spotted early by a security patrol and an amazing team of vets and scientists swooped in to their rescue. Sadly one of the male rhino was already dead and the other male, Themba, meaning ‘hope’ in the local isiXhosa language, fought bravely for another 24 days before finally passing away.
The medical team worked around the clock to save Thandi. They were astounded by her bravery and resilience, naming her Thandi, which means ‘love’ and ‘courage’ in isiXhosa. For **two whole** years Thandi endured many operations including a pioneering skin graft procedure led by wildlife vet **Dr William Fowlds**. Nearly all of her recovery was done in the wild, the best place for a rhino to be. It’s where they belong after all.

Then an exciting event happened. After her final operation in December 2013, it was revealed that she was pregnant. **White rhino carry their calves for around 16 months.** Thandi gave birth to her first calf in **January 2015**, just less than three years since the poachers had left her for dead. The female calf was called **Thembi** meaning ‘**hope**’ in isiXhosa.
Thandi has turned out to be a miracle Mum twice more since then, having gone on to have a male calf, **Colin** (named in memory of the founder of Kariega, Colin Rushmore) in **January 2017** and another little male calf **Mthetho** in **April 2019**. Mthetho, whose name means ‘justice’ in isiXhosa, came at exactly the same time as three notorious rhino poachers were sent to prison for their roles in poaching in the Eastern Cape area. In fact, it is highly likely they were the very same ones who attacked Thandi.

Thandi’s incredible fighting strength and miraculous recovery against all the odds, still continues to inspire people. **She became the first rhino every to survive a poaching attack** and she has encouraged many people from around the world to get involved in rhino conservation.
Once you have read the story about the amazing rhino called Thandi, have a go at completing these questions:

1. Where does Thandi live?

2. In what month and year was Thandi attacked by a group of poachers?

3. Do you know the name of the male rhino that survived the attack but died later?

4. What does his name mean in the local isiXhosa language?

5. What does Thandi’s name in the local isiXhosa language?

6. The name of the incredible vet that helped saved Thandi’s life is Dr?

7. What exciting thing happened in December 2013?

8. How many calves does Thandi now have and can you name them all as well as that their name means in the local isiXhosa language?

9. When Thandi’s last calf was born – what else happened during that time?

10. Why is Thandi such a famous rhino?
THANDI

To read more about Thandi and her calves or adopt this miracle family, please go to:

www.helpingrhinos.org/adopt-thandi/

www.helpingrhinos.org/news/416/mtheyhos-1st-birthday

THANK YOU