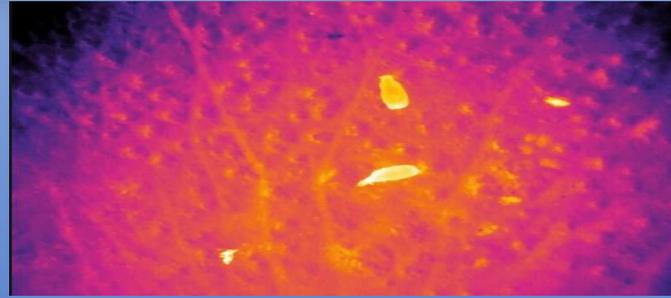


# How UAV's are Helping Endangered Species

"potential to shut down poaching entirely in areas where they are deployed."

Thanks to conservation efforts, the number of southern white rhinos has increased dramatically since the early 1900s and now sits at around 20,000 individuals. Unfortunately, this has been followed by an uptick in poaching, and more than 1000 African rhinos were killed by poachers each year between 2013 and 2017. Drones and sirens could help to combat the poaching of southern white rhinos. The technology can deter the animals from entering areas of national parks and reserves where the poaching risk is high. Drones and harsh siren sounds were the most effective tools for getting rhinos to leave the area



As a tool for monitoring wildlife, drones have proved useful for monitoring some species. For example, they are being used by the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme in Indonesia as they are capable of flying above the tree canopy – a task previously difficult and time-consuming for forest rangers – to effectively track and monitor populations by observing nests

Conservation researchers have developed an interactive software tool called Conservation FIT that can "read" digital images of animal footprints captured from smartphones, cameras or drones and accurately identify the species, sex and age of the animal that made the tracks, and even match tracks to individual animals. Researchers at Duke University and SAS developed the interactive software to help scientists monitor and map the world's most elusive and endangered species. Anyone who spots animal tracks can upload images, even if they're unsure what species made them. "Having reliable data on species' numbers and distributions is fundamental to wildlife conservation but it's not easy to collect, particularly for elusive and endangered species," Jewell explained. "Spotting these animals' footprints is much easier than locating the animals themselves. Conservation FIT allows us to reach out to millions of people worldwide who carry smartphones or fly drones, for help in collecting these data."

Under the new initiative, known as the free FLY drone program, remote-control drones will fly over entangled whales, beaming live video of each animal and the precise nature of the entanglement to crews aboard rescue boats. Using this information, the crews should be able to plan exactly how and where to make the necessary cuts before they move alongside distressed whales.



"Drones minimize your approaches give you a different view an aerial view of the gear and the animal and its condition more than anything it is safety and reduces risk. Having the drone makes the whole procedure a safer one."

