

"If you know wilderness in the way that you know love, you would be unwilling to let it go.... This is the story of our past and it will be the story of our future."

– Terry Tempest Williams.



WHY DO WE MARCH?

It is the 28th of October 2012. It is late Sunday afternoon under African skies. She is walking by the border of Tanzania and Kenya; a mother and a grandmother, her daughters are with her as she walks; the youngest is just 6 months old. Sudden thunder splits the air. The sound is unmistakable, the crack of a heavy rifle. Three rapid shots, one follows another. She tries to shield her family. She falls. With her, falls a memory that is 50 million years old: a memory of water, a memory of trails, moonlight, matriarchy and earth. Her name was -- her name *is*, Qumquat.

She was killed for her ivory.

And *her* name is iThemba (“hope” in Zulu). iThemba and her 5-year-old calf were shot in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. When iThemba was found her face was a mangled mess of flesh and bone. Ravaged and weak, astonishingly, she was still alive. iThemba’s child did not survive the attack. iThemba lives and has survived several procedures to her ancient face.

She was shot for her horn.

Why do we march?

We march for Qumquat. We march for iThemba. We march for the hundreds of rangers killed by poachers over the years.

We march for the dead, the butchered, and the vulnerable. We march for those alive and those not yet born. We march with the hope that a global movement, a people’s movement can change the dynamic on behalf of earth’s last sentient giants. We march to call for grass roots advocacy and traditional NGO models to complement one another. We march because we hope for a successful confluence of strategy and policy on behalf of earth’s wild giants. We march because we know that a mass movement *of and by the people* and *for* the non-human can change the world for animals. We march because extinction is a human rights issue, a civil rights issue and a social justice issue.

Grass roots advocacy and strategic “on the ground action” are mutually essential and complementary components in moving the needle on behalf of justice for animals. History tells us that seminal social justice movements succeeded because grass roots advocates and advocacy propelled those movements and gave them wings; grass roots advocacy is democracy in motion, it is the voice on behalf of the disenfranchised and the power behind the quill and pen that lends legitimacy to groundbreaking law; legislation that bends the “arc of the moral universe” toward justice.

Status of Elephants’ and Rhinos’ Populations

96 elephants are killed every 24 hours for their ivory – 35,000 a year; 3 rhinos are killed every 24 hours for their horn – 1,000 a year: these acts of unfathomable brutality are undertaken on behalf of markets in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Asia, USA and many other nations thirsting for trinkets and fraudulent useless “medicine” made of the body parts of sentient giants -- creatures with a history and a culture spanning millions of years.

The collapse of the elephant population has been documented by the Great Elephant Census which has been concluded just recently. The population of elephants has fallen by 30% in the last 7 years alone. This news is extremely grave. With only 350,000 elephants remaining, the math doesn't look good for survival of the species without focused and determined measures by governments to secure their survival. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/31/poaching-drives-huge-30-decline-in-africas-savannah-elephants>

We know that elephants and rhinos are facing extinction within a generation; the battle for justice for elephants and rhinos follows the arc of human evolution as our species evolves toward the inevitable recognition that the non-human is a legal person. If the elephant and rhino are to live, grass roots advocacy must be nurtured, nourished and supported; grass roots advocacy must survive and thrive to ensure the survival of elephants and rhinos.

Why is This Advocacy Important?

Not only are rhinos and elephants iconic creatures, they are also keystone species that are absolutely vital for the survival of plant and other animal species in their home regions. Entire ecosystems are under assault.

Human economies in Africa are frequently based on tourism – tourism which is most generally focused on the wild animals which inhabit this part of the world. The human losses are also considerable when the wildlife is no longer available to be seen and/or when tourists must listen to gunfire from their camps.

Because the sale of ivory and rhino horn is so profitable, terrorist groups are now 'in the business' of poaching these animals in order to fund their groups' existences and terrorist activities. This is particularly true in Central Africa and more recently in Eastern Africa (Kenya and possibly Tanzania). In September 2013, when Hillary Clinton was the U.S. Secretary of State, she "drew a direct link between terrorism and elephant poaching, citing growing evidence that terrorist groups in Africa are funding their activities in part by trafficking ivory." "This is not just about elephants," Clinton said. "It is about human beings, governments, trying to control their own territory, trying to keep their people safe, as well as protect cultural and environmental heritage."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/hillary-clinton-announces-program-aimed-at-stamping-out-elephant-poaching-ivory-trade/2013/09/26/3c258c40-26c1-11e3-b3e9-d97fb087acd6_story.html

How does Global March for Elephants and Rhinos help?

1. The GMFER motivates everyday citizens across the globe to organize marches and other special annual events on behalf of elephants and rhinos.
2. Throughout the year we engage in strategic lobbying, advocacy and "awareness raising" in our communities.
3. We collaborate with local and international NGOs to engage political representatives in drafting and passing new legislation that delivers a more just world for elephants and rhinos.
4. We organize peaceful protests and rallies at select consulates and embassies, as well as at targeted events.

Each of these activities takes discipline, grace, goodwill, humility and often, very hard work. Our objective is to grow a people's movement on behalf Earth's charismatic, and last, mega fauna. We hope to speak and sing in a voice that is loud, that is understood by all, sharable by all, reachable by all and heard by all: a voice *of and by the people for the non-human*. This new voice of conservation for the wild creature in Africa must engage the commons; the voice of the people must be brought to the table, it *must* be considered and considered with gravitas.

Highlights of Our Work

- **Marches:** We have marched since 2013. In 2015 GMFER coordinated 136 marches across all 7 continents. This year, we are up to 127 marches and counting.
- **Memoranda of Demand:** In 2014, Our march organizers in the 136 cities delivered, by registered mail or by hand, our Memorandum of Demand (MoD, <http://march4elephantsandrhinosaurs.org/documents/>) to the embassies or consulates of the CITES' "Gang of 20" nations in their respective countries. We repeated this effort in 2015.
- **Proposed Amendments to Legislation in South Africa:** In South Africa, GMFER's Proposed Amendments to Legislation for South Africa was hand-delivered to South Africa's Minister of the Environment, Edna Molewa; GMFER continues to lobby for the PALSAs to be adopted in South Africa. (PALSA, <http://march4elephantsandrhinosaurs.org/documents/>) We repeated this campaign with a revised PALSA in 2015.
- **Assistance to On-the-Ground Groups in Africa:** GMFER coordinates with, supports and provides much needed resources to stellar community driven, anti-poaching, and awareness-raising groups, such as Kenyans United Against Poaching (KUAPO) (<https://www.facebook.com/KenyansUnitedAgainstPoaching>)
- **Zimbabwe's Elephant Calves Exported to China:** GMFER's core group coordinated painstaking "behind the scenes" work on behalf of Zimbabwe's elephant calves, young elephants who were captured from the wild, and separated from their families to be shipped to China for "human-entertainment": part of this work included obtaining undercover photos of the calves while they were still in Zimbabwe, photos that were eventually used for a write up in National Geographic Magazine (<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/06/150625-elephants-lions-china-hwange-national-park-zimbabwe/>).
- **Legislation to End Ivory Sales in the U.S.:** GMFER has organized, supported and promoted advocacy on behalf of elephants and rhinos in key states within the USA where the illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn impose a significant impact on the species.

We galvanized support for the successful New Jersey and New York bans.

We worked to help with the Hawaii ban, which passed into law in 2016.

We succeeded in passing AB 96 in the State of California which prohibits the sale of ivory and rhino horn in the Golden State. Through its membership base in California and collaborating with many vested NGOs, GMFER coordinated a large-scale advocacy and lobbying movement, gathering thousands of signatures on behalf of California's AB 96. GMFER delivered more than 14,000 signatures to the Governor's office in support of AB 96, which has now passed both houses of California's legislature and has been signed into law by Governor Brown.

On behalf of captive elephants, GMFER helped with advocacy and support on behalf of California's groundbreaking bull hook ban, also currently awaiting the Governor's signature.

- Strategies for 2016: Focus on CoP17/CITES, including our worldwide marches; letters to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Chelsea Clinton of the Clinton Foundation which requested their support of Appendix I status and No Trade; reaching all CITES member nations; sponsoring a black mamba (Lewyn Maefala) to CITES and having her speak at our side event; sponsoring a charismatic young Tanzanian, an animal and social justice advocate to CITES (Shubert Mwarabu) who has a large following on FB - he too will speak at our side event in Johannesburg. His focus is engaging local communities, given that the solution to these problems lie within communities and the sons and daughters of Africa. All of these efforts are geared toward Appendix I status for the elephants and rhinos and a statement for International No Trade at CoP 17 at CITES meeting this September.
- U.S. Department of State Accolade: In 2016, the GMFER marches were singled out by the U.S. Department of State's news platform, ShareAmerica, as one of the three big wins for elephants in 2015. They said: "According to experts, these marches keep political pressure on leaders to protect the world's largest land animal." <https://share.america.gov/elephant-ivory-prices-plummet/>

Reaching for Hope

And *her* name is Hope. She is four years old. She survived one of the most brutal attacks in the Eastern Cape on a rhino in South Africa this year.

"Hope is giving victims of poaching a voice that cries out to the world for our help. She is becoming a living symbol of this poaching crisis, and an inspirational example of the fight for survival against seemingly insurmountable odds. Her struggle to claim back her life and her dignity must become our fight to change human behavior and restore value and respect and care for all living things."

– Dr. Will Fowlds

We march for Hope. We march for Qumquat. We march for iThemba. We march for the hundreds of rangers killed by poachers over the years.

We march for Africa, we march for the Earth and we march for *You*.

March with us. #MarchAgainstExtinction.

With Gratitude,

The Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (<http://www.march4elephantsandrhinosaurs.org/>).