

Africa Wildlife Films Plod On Amid Poaching Scourge

JOHANNESBURG — A documentary film about rhino poaching won awards at film festivals in Europe and the United States this year. But since bringing “STROOP: journey into the rhino horn war” home to South Africa, its makers have struggled for the same buzz in a country whose rhino population, the biggest in the world, has been under siege for a decade.

“Overseas, we had this amazing success,” said Bonne de Bod, narrator of the film, whose title refers to the Afrikaans word for poach. “And we come back home and we have cinema distributors and even the media telling us that, ‘Look, the public is tired of hearing about rhino poaching’ or ‘Our editor is tired of talking about rhinos.’”

“STROOP” has a deal for international distribution with Journeyman Pictures and several screenings are occurring in major South African cities, but no distributor is willing to risk a financial loss by putting it in cinemas. Documentaries about the slaughter of African wildlife can’t compete with popular entertainment — de Bod mentioned “The Grinch,” a Christmas film — and often subject audiences to disturbing im-



STROOP a film about rhino poaching shows a rhino killed by poachers in Pretoria, home to the main offices of the South African presidency. The movie won awards at film festivals in Europe and the United States in 2018, but the slaughter of African wildlife continues fuelled by consumers of illegal rhino horn products. (Susan Scott/STROOP via AP)

ages such as a rhino whose face has been mutilated by poachers.

Reaching the right audience is also hard. China and some other Asian countries are key consumers of illegal wildlife products, but access is not easy for documentaries that directly or implicitly criticize Asian governments and might include secretly filmed video of animal parts on sale in

countries such as Laos and Vietnam.

“It is very much about not only just raising awareness, but hopefully bringing about much-needed change,” said Kate Brooks, the American director and producer of “The Last Animals,” a documentary about the killing of African elephants for their ivory, the looming extinction of the

northern white rhino, and rangers and others trying to save the iconic animals.

The film was screened last year in Hong Kong as part of a campaign by the WildAid conservation group, and Brooks testified to lawmakers there shortly before the territory decided to phase out its legal ivory trade by 2021, similar to a ban already in effect in mainland China. “The Last Animals” was also shown in Taiwan, and to some EU and British lawmakers. This year, Britain announced what it said was one of the world’s toughest bans on ivory sales.

The film’s website allows people in some countries, mainly in the West, who want full bans on the ivory trade to submit online appeals to their lawmakers, and the website’s designers plan similar campaigns for Asia and Africa. Brooks warned that “these animals don’t have a chance” as long as there are legal loopholes.

“The Last Animals” will be broadcast on Wednesday in South Africa on AMC’s Sundance Channel and will be released by Netflix in Canada, Australia, Ireland and Britain on Dec. 24 as a global rollout continues, according to Brooks.

International bans on trade in ivory and rhino horn have been in effect for decades, but the killing of elephants and rhinos has surged. Recent court rulings in South Africa opened the way to a domestic trade in rhino horn, despite the concern of many conservationists. Some Asian consumers believe it can cure illnesses, although there is no evidence that the horn, made of the same substance as human fingernails, has any medicinal value.

Raul Gallego Abellan, a Spanish filmmaker, travelled to Mozambique’s Niassa National Reserve this year for the Global Wildlife Program, an initiative led by the World Bank. He patrolled with rangers trying to contain some of the worst elephant poaching on the continent.

The four-part “Niassa Elephant Defenders” video seeks to “bring light into dark places” by showing the rangers’ commitment, Gallego Abellan said.

He said he hoped viewers would not just share the video on social media but instead “do something by themselves,” whether donating to an environmental cause or deciding not to buy a product linked to wildlife exploitation.

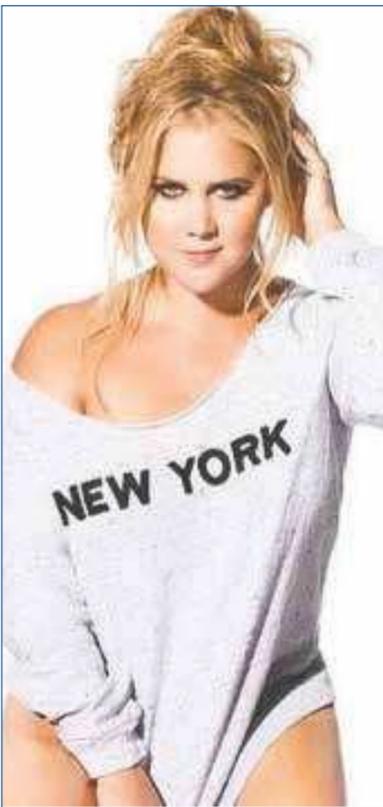
Amy Schumer Struggling With ‘Tough’ Pregnancy

LOS ANGELES: Actress Amy Schumer is looking for motivation during her “tough” pregnancy.

The 37-year-old “I Feel Pretty” star revealed her struggles in an Instagram post on Thursday. Schumer announced she was expecting her first child with husband Chris Fischer.

“The last few days have been tough. I’m grateful as hell and know it’s temporary but tough just the same,” she wrote in the caption of a photo featuring her dog, reports people.com. The comedian, who has had to postpone show dates from her comedy tour, asked her fans for motivation by having them tag her in photos and videos of their children.

“Please if you don’t mind. Post pics of your kids and tag me #amyschumer,” she wrote. “My friends sending me pics and vids of their kids is making me feel so much better. Much love accepting dog photos too.” Two weeks ago, the actress was hospitalized for hyperemesis gravidarum, a condition marked by persistent sickness which can lead to dehydration and weight loss. On Tuesday night, she shared a graphic video of herself vomiting into a cup while on her way to her stand-up show in Tarrytown, New York.



‘Blade Runner’ Anime Series In The Works

LOS ANGELES: “Blade Runner” is coming to the small screen as an animated series.

According to variety.com, Alcon Television Group has partnered with Adult Swim and Crunchyroll to produce and distribute a new anime series inspired by “Blade Runner 2049.”

“Blade Runner-Black Lotus”, as it will be called, will consist of 13 half-hour episodes. Details of the plot are being kept under wraps, but it is known that the story will take place in 2032 and will include some established characters from the “Blade Runner” universe.

“I first saw ‘Blade Runner’ in 1982, at age 11,” said Jason DeMarco, SVP and creative director of Adult Swim on-air.

He added: “It has remained one of the defining films of my life. To be able to

explore more of this universe, with the incredible talent we have on board, is a dream come true.”

Adult Swim will have the worldwide rights to distribute the English dubbed versions of the series, excluding Asia, and will air the English dubbed episodes of the series on its Toonami anime programming block.

Crunchyroll will handle worldwide streaming for its community of more than 45 million registered users and 2 million subscribers. Adult Swim and Crunchyroll are both divisions of WarnerMedia.

“Blade Runner 2049” debuted in theaters in October 2017. Produced in part by Alcon Entertainment, the film starred Ryan Gosling and saw the return of Harrison Ford as Rick Deckard, which he originated in the first “Blade Runner” film.

Kourtney Kardashian’s Woes

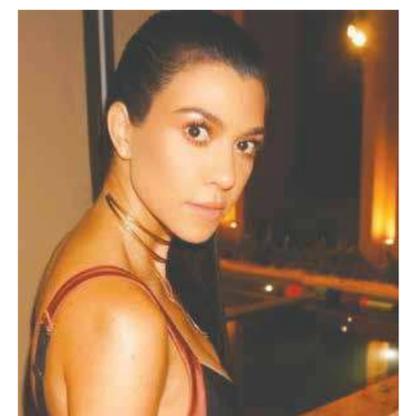
LOS ANGELES: Reality TV star Kourtney Kardashian says she cries herself to sleep at night over her pregnancy fears.

The 39-year-old star, who already has children Mason, 8, Penelope, 6, and Reign, 3, with her former boyfriend Scott Disick, made the confession during an upcoming episode of “Keeping Up With the Kardashians”, telling her friends Larsa Pippen and Stephanie Shepherd about the struggles she has been having with freezing her eggs, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Kourtney said: “I’ve been so up and down emotional because I’ve been doing the shots for egg freezing. And it’s, like, crazy. I feel like I want to jump out of my skin! Like, I’m so crazy. I just... I can’t take it.”

She played down the physical pain of the injections, Kourtney said it’s been an emotional experience.

She said: “I think everything was just really heightened and some days I would feel so anxious. It’s just very emotional. So



that, I think, is the hard part. I mean, I feel fine. I just cry myself to sleep every night. Honestly, I don’t know if I’m going to have more kids. I just feel like it’s just for safety.” Kourtney first said she was thinking about freezing her eggs during an earlier episode of the reality show when she was talking to her sister Kim Kardashian West.

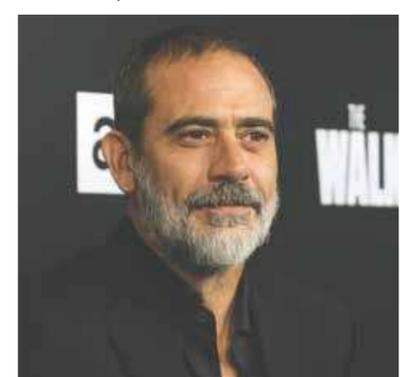
‘Walking Dead’ Actor To Adopt Bonded Donkey, Emu

CHARLOTTE, N.C.: A North Carolina animal rescue group says a donkey and an emu who’ve bonded with each other can stay together, thanks to actor Jeffrey Dean Morgan, who plays the villainous Negan on the TV zombie thriller “The Walking Dead.”

The Charlotte Observer reports Carolina Waterfowl Rescue Founder Jennifer Gordon says Morgan is adopting them Tuesday.

Jack and Diane were rescued from Kershaw, South Carolina, when their owner vanished. Gordon says they cuddle and sleep together, but cried and became frantic when they were separated.

Gordon says a post about the complexities of adopting them out together sparked more than 2,000 inquiries, including Morgan’s. She says Morgan was the best choice



since he has resources to care for the pair and they can roam free on his Hudson Valley, New York, farm

(Photo by Willy Sanjuan/Invision/AP, File).



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