

Patrons: The Lord McAlpine of West Green, David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay AM, Nick Price

President's Report

Despite the widely reported deteriorating economic and humanitarian conditions in Zimbabwe, the rhino numbers have continued to improve, against all the odds! In fact, the good news is that their numbers have doubled since their low point of 1993! We have continued our support of 8 rhino projects in Zimbabwe, 2 in Namibia, and other conservation projects within Zimbabwe and the Congo DRC. More details are shown in our project funding list of 2004/05.

We are proud to be one of the major NGOs continuing to support Zimbabwe during these very difficult times. In fact, several conservation authorities in Zimbabwe acknowledge that many of the rhinos would not be around, had it not been for the ongoing support given by SAVE FOUNDATION over the past 18 years.

Rhino numbers have doubled in the last 10 years in Zimbabwe

We are in regular contact with a number of other agencies and projects working within Zimbabwe, both by e-mail and telephone, and believe that we have our finger on the rhino pulse. We are endeavouring to make our membership more aware of this and we invite you to avail yourself of the information that we are passing on. We generally do this by electronic mail, as it is the most economical and timely method of communication.

If you have not registered your e-mail address with our office, then we urge you to please do so when you renew your membership so that you, too, can receive the fairly regular updates that we are sending out. To those that do not have e-mail: if you wish to receive these updates in printed or faxed form then kindly also notify the office when renewing your membership. Thank you.

There is so much to report since our last Newsletter 12 months ago, and the present 8 pages contain a large amount of information. Some of the major issues include the sad and untimely death of Mike Hearn of Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia, the continued generous support of Hunter Hall Investment Management Limited, the success of last year's two safaris, and our involvement in the October CITES Meeting in Thailand.

At last year's AGM, we welcomed two new members to our Executive Committee, both of whom had seen our work in Zimbabwe on the May safari. Their knowledge and enthusiasm has been most helpful since then. We also farewelled Ken McDonald after 10 years of great service. Incidentally, he had also joined the Committee after enjoying the 1994 safari. There is no doubt that there is a clear link between visiting Africa on the ground and being able to make a great contribution on your return to Perth.

Your membership renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter and we do ask you to quickly pledge your support for the next year, and also to make copies and pass them to your friends. Our membership is only around 100 and, for the work that we do, and the \$1,200,000 of items that we have donated during the past 18 years, we feel that the word should be spread more widely and that the Australian population would enjoy the opportunity to belong to our Foundation should they be given that chance. Thank you for your support, keep it up.

Nicholas Duncan

Zimbabwe Update

As reported above, we have continued to lend as much support as possible to various wildlife projects within Zimbabwe and surrounding countries, but with special emphasis on the black rhino in Zimbabwe. We are involved in projects within Save Valley conservancy, Bubiana and Bubiye River conservancies, Gourlays Ranch, the Midlands Conservancy and Imire Game Ranch. In addition, the Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) of Matusadona, Sinamatella, Chipinge and Matobo are also part of our plans, these all being within the Zimbabwe National Parks.

After the outbreak of poaching in 2003 and early 2004, particularly in Sinamatella, we are happy to report that there have only been 2 known cases during the past 12 months, one at Main Camp, Hwange, and one in the Midlands. The Main Camp incident was in November and was most disappointing as it involved a local National Parks Ranger, who subsequently admitted to the slaughter. Due to particularly good follow-up work by National Parks and Simon from CIRAD, the horns were tracked to a house in Hwange town, some 80km from the poaching site. Four culprits were arrested and charged with possession of rhino horn, and are currently out on bail awaiting their court appearance. The self-confessed poacher (Parks Ranger) has died in custody and will not be able to give evidence against them! We await the outcome of their trial with interest.

Stop Press: The rhino horn has mysteriously disappeared from Hwange police station!

We continue to support the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy, our main contribution being towards the running expenses for the conservator and the anti-poaching units. We welcome Stan Elliott, the new conservator since November, and commend him for the great work that he is doing with the anti-poaching guys throughout the whole Conservancy.

Mike Palmer, Eleanor Lowe (Midlands rhino monitor), Nicholas Duncan and Evelyn Wong discuss latest happenings in the Midlands Conservancy by the Perth beachside (March 2005).

The black rhino poached in the Midlands was on Circle G Ranch, and was a 4 year old female sub-adult. Her fate is graphically displayed below. This occurred last October and subsequent investigations are still in progress; at this time, we are unable to comment further.

RIP Fungai, Zimbabwe

New field kit was delivered to the specially trained monitoring scouts in Save Valley, Bubiana and the Midlands and this will certainly act as encouragement in their ongoing motivation with the very important duties of rhino identification that they perform. Keep up your great work, fellows, and we will be happy to continue to support your field operations. They are certainly delighted with their new uniforms, which are a mixture of ex-British and French army outfits. They are of a very high quality and similar products have been with the Sinamatella Rangers for the past 8 years.

Save Valley Conservancy rhino monitors with their new kit.

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management has recently transformed into National Parks and Wildlife Authority, to be run independently of the Government. This meant that all current staff within the Department had to re-apply for their positions with the Authority, together with infrastructure changes towards the top level of

management within the new Authority. Many of the older men over 45, with countless years of expertise and experience, failed to meet the requirements of the new Authority and were unable to be placed in field positions. Fortunately, this decision has been rescinded in many instances and there is now a flow of these talented rangers back to the workforce of the Authority.

In the meantime, 1,300 new scouts were recruited, some from the general population and some from within the ZANU-PF party. They are in the process of being trained and kitted and we will eagerly be monitoring their progress as they slot into a new lifestyle of bush patrolling. Certainly, there now appear to be adequate numbers to patrol the IPZs with sufficient field presence to prevent infiltration by poachers. That, of course, is providing they are trained, equipped and motivated to complete such tasks.

Sadly, we report the death of one of Imire's original 7 rhino orphans, Mvu. She was originally rescued in 1987 from the Zambesi Valley, after her mother had been shot by poachers, and hyaenas had eaten her ears (as a delicacy). She features in a number of documentaries in the late eighties, particularly "Noddy and Big Ears", and over the years she has produced 4 calves. In mid September, her steel enclosure was broken into by one of the Imire elephants, who went completely berserk (being in musth), and gored her several times with his tusks. Her calf, Kamchacha, ran away and was saved from injury. The elephant had to be destroyed by John Travers, who owns the game farm, and Kamchacha returned the following morning, seemingly none the worse for wear.

Mvu and Kamchacha entertain our group two days before Mvu's sad death.

She was introduced to an older rhino calf and they have teamed up to become the best of friends. They are now virtually inseparable. One of our members,

Kay Kubank, has kindly donated funds to provide milk powder for Kamchacha for the past six months and up to the middle of this year. Thanks Kay, from Imire and us, for your support. We have also provided uniforms for the rhino minders at Imire.

We continue to provide lesser levels of funding to four other projects in the Main Camp area - the wild dogs, lions, elephants and hyaenas. We do thank the various members of these projects for meeting with our groups last May and September and informing them of all the current progress with their research.

We are greatly impressed by the magnificent painted dog rehabilitation and education centre, designed and built under John Lemon's supervision. John currently works at Perth Zoo and formerly was at Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo. He is considered one of the world's leading authorities on painted dogs (hunting dogs). We are contributing towards his expenses to return to Zimbabwe in April to release a newly created pack into the wild and to monitor its progress as the painted dogs learn to hunt for themselves.

Painted dogs John and Angela, named after John Lemon and his wife, in their rehabilitation centre enclosure.

Our involvement with the lions project has extended to funding the rebuilding of two of their vehicles, a Land Cruiser and a Jeep. From the field work done by Zeke, Jane and Dan, Andy Loveridge has been able to provide National Parks with sufficient evidence that the lion hunting quotas have been too high in the past and the number of large male lions in Hwange National Park is much lower than previously thought. Hence, hunting has been stopped for the time being whilst research continues to monitor the situation and whilst the younger male lions are given the opportunity to become pride lions. This is vital work being done by the lions project as their numbers were declining far too rapidly, as is the case right around Africa. It is not

only due to over-hunting but also to a version of feline AIDS.

Many of you will have purchased Sharon Pincott's recently published book, "In An Elephant's Rumble", and we have received quite a few accolades from the readers. Australian-born Sharon has been working mostly on privately owned concessions, and has been monitoring the world famous "Presidential Elephants". During the past two years of land invasions they have suffered greatly, along with all the other animals in the area, from snaring and some ghastly atrocities have occurred. We are helping to kit out the three-man anti-poaching patrol and we are glad to see that they can now resume their work on some of the land that has been recently vacated by the former occupants. We also supply a grant for Sharon's ongoing fuel bills.

Nolwenn Drouet has taken over from Julia Salnicki in the hyaena project. Our support in this field is in the form of two GPS collars so that she can not only track the hyaenas at any one time but can also monitor their movements over the previous 30 days. Nolwenn will also be working in conjunction with the lion researchers to see just how hyaenas and lions inter-relate in their quest for prey.

Rhino Management Plan 2005

Dr Chris Foggin, Head of the Wildlife Veterinary Unit, has submitted his management plan for 2005, which has naturally been accepted by the National Rhino Committee. It involves a combination of dehorning, relocation, translocation, ear notching and horn implants, and will take place between May and October and will affect some 200 rhinos in all different parts of Zimbabwe. We have committed to donate the first 75 horn implant transmitters and will monitor further requirements as the programme evolves through the year.

Sponsors

The black rhinos of Zimbabwe join the Executive Committee and the members of the SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia in acknowledging and thanking the following corporate sponsors for their most generous donations and support during the past year:

Hunter Hall Investment Management Ltd.
South African Airways
MK Airlines, UK
Kimberley Clarke

We also thank the following individuals who each donated more than \$1,000:

Joy Blyth, Reggie Fernandes, Leanne Hand, Alan Hartland, Ray Hill, Geoff and Kim Hoddy, Jean Johnson, Sally Karl, Iain MacGregor, Arthur and Michelle Manowski, Mike McCausland, Norman McNamara, Peter and Jean McSkimming, Carol Murray, Mike and Eva Palmer, Marlene Pearson, Jill Poole, John and Sonja Rodda, Martin Storey, Vanessa Sturrock, James Thompson, John and Carol Trevillian, Dorothy Wishart and Evelyn Wong.

AGM 2004 and 2005

The 17TH Annual General Meeting took place at the Perth Zoo Theatre on 7 July 2004 and was attended by 40 members and their guests. The following new Executive was elected:

This year's AGM will be held at the same venue in early July, with details to be e-mailed and posted nearer the time. Please attend, find out all that we do, and show your support for our conservation involvement.

Launch of our website

We are greatly indebted to Martin Storey and Vanessa Sturrock who, having been on the May safari, decided to become more involved in our work, and offered their technical expertise in helping re-design our website. So, it was with great delight that we officially launched the new site in September

last year. Martin continues to update it at regular intervals. We do invite all of our readers to visit the website, www.savefoundation.org.au, and to view the past 17 years of our activities including all of the Newsletters, financial statements, links to associated websites, our supported projects and so much more.

Again, a very big thank-you to Martin for taking on this project, and we hope the association will continue for a long time to come.

Safaris 2005

We are running two safaris later in the year, one being a reunion safari for those who went in earlier safaris, plus their guests, and the other being open to anyone who would like to come along! The reunion one has 15 bookings out of a maximum possible of 20, so it still has very limited space available. However, the other one will take place either in late August or early October, depending on booking requests by the end of April.

Please telephone or e-mail for a colour brochure, the sooner the better. In a nutshell, this fully escorted tour will take in the wonders of Botswana, from the Okavango Moremi wildlife area, famous for its lion prides, to the Chobe River and its 60,000 elephant population.

Come one and all!

Then it's on to Victoria Falls, one of the 7 natural wonders of the world, described by Livingstone as "Scenes so lovely they must have been gazed upon by angels in flight". As a finale, there are four days at The Hide, Safari Lodge of the Year for 7 out of 10 years - pure luxury and style, not to mention 400 species of birds and 107 different animal species including lion, rhino, giraffe, zebra, sable antelope and another mere 40,000 elephants. Wow!

So, if you have marvelled at all the TV documentaries and wanted to see the wild animals in real life, then this *is* the trip for you! Make contact with Nicholas ASAP.

Dining in style at The Hide

Mike Hearn, 1972-2005

Mike Hearn, Director of Research for Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia, sadly died on 19 January in a surfing accident. He will be sorely missed by rhino conservationists around the world.

Mike's love for mountain biking and rhinos

Tribute to Mike Hearn

“How terribly sad to hear of Mike's sudden departure and to read all the astonishing tributes to him. I only briefly met him twice in 1993 and 1995 but heard many good things in subsequent years. We at the SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia have been donors to Namibia's rhinos for many years, especially to SRT and Mike's camels. Indeed, 16 of us are visiting Damaraland in September 2005 and were looking forward to being hosted by Mike. We would have so loved his enthusiasm and spirit. We will still come as we want to be part of this unique landscape and we want to feel Mike's unique presence amongst his beloved rhinos and local people. Thanks, Mike, for making such a contribution to rhino conservation and we will proudly continue to support this work in your honour and memory.”

Safaris 2004

There were 2 safaris last year, one in May and one in September, the first with 22 guests and the second with 15. You can be assured that a great time was had by all, as indicated in some of the glowing comments that you can read in this section. We visited all sorts of places and cemented our relationships with many of the field researchers, particularly the lion, painted dog, hyena and elephant

projects in the Hwange Main Camp area. We also spent quality time with Norman English and his team and the Sinamatella IPZ and were rewarded with a couple of special rhino tracking expeditions, using the rhino horn implants that we had donated in May 2003. Great excitement was had on these treks and the participants can feel really privileged to be amongst the few people that have ever been allowed to do this. Thanks, Norman.

Norman English “She's out there somewhere!”

We always go to Imire Game Ranch as this is such a lovely place to start your time in Africa and a great introduction to all the various antelope species, and of course, they have got the gorgeous rhino calves and their parents. Victoria Falls is another of the “musts”, great for the tremendous impact of the falls themselves, the flight of angels and the curio markets, not to mention high tea and dinner in the colonial magnificence of the Victoria Falls Hotel. We also went down the road to Chobe National Park, enjoying game viewing on the boat cruises and the drive and the September group finished up in the tranquil setting and surrounds of the Okavango delta.

This could be you at the unforgettable Victoria Falls!

These trips are thoroughly recommended though you may say I am partial in my comments, but here's what others say:

warrant the cropping of old males, thought to be past their breeding state. Theoretically, this will increase future breeding rates as younger males strive for the breeding rights.

Malan Lindeque, Namibia, introduced a proposal on black rhino export quotas *Fundisile Mketeni, South Africa, also requested black rhino hunting export quotas*

Discussion was very limited, and once Namibia and South Africa had introduced their plan and "promised" to maintain open, transparent financial records of the hunting trophy fees and the use to which these funds were put, with the guaranteed recipients being conservation and community projects. Support immediately came from the neighbouring SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries, followed by USA, the European Union (who vote in a block of 25 either for, against, or abstain), Japan, Caribbean, and just about everyone else. Opposition was heard from India, Israel, Kenya, Chad and Mali.

CITES 2004

Your Executive Committee made the decision for SAVE FOUNDATION to be represented for the first time at the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This was scheduled for Bangkok from 2-14 October 2004, and we decided to attend as an Observer for the first 6 days, in order to make contacts within the conservation world. However, things didn't quite turn out as planned!

The main motivation for attending the convention was to monitor two proposals made by Namibia and South Africa to introduce five rhino hunting trophies per year from their expanding rhino populations. As it happened, these "debates" were tabled for the first morning and, in our naivete, we expected to hear arguments on the pros and cons of rhino hunting for large trophy fees in one of the most critically endangered species on earth. But not so!

Namibia and South Africa had very cleverly lobbied the 166 attending countries (1,500 delegates) and had proved to them that their rhino numbers had sufficiently increased over the past 10 years to

Non-government organisations were then invited to take the floor and only two were chosen, one of which was SAVE FOUNDATION. Unfortunately, the Chairperson invited your President to "get on with it" and hustled him to finish his presentation, which was based on familiarity with actual conditions in the field, plus common sense, rather than scientific evaluation. The Chairperson then decided to adopt the motion by consensus, despite there being some clear opposition to it.

Nicholas Duncan, SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia, expressed disappointment that the Committee approved a hunting quota of five black rhinos

As this happened on the first day, and all the proposals weren't to be ratified until the penultimate day, there was now a 9 day gap in which lobbying

could be carried out to try to change the minds and opinions of the delegates. Easier said than done! During these next 9 days it became highly apparent that major hunting organisations had obviously strongly supported in whatever way they thought appropriate these proposals to reintroduce rhino hunting. They certainly wined and dined the African nations to quite a large degree.

Your President also received some pretty stern words on two occasions from one of the leaders of a major hunting group and was advised that it was best left to the “experts” to sort this out, as hunters were quite clearly the best conservationists on earth!!! Encouraged by some delegates to continue his campaign, your President decided to stay a further 6 days to make whatever contribution he could on behalf of South Africa’s and Namibia’s black elderly male rhinos. As time went by it became more obvious that this was more a meeting of vote swapping, financial arrangements, theoretical statistical data, but lacking in common sense and practicalities.

Your President published and distributed three documents to the delegations, outlining the case for opposing the hunting, based on the message it would send to poaching syndicates. He predicted widespread headlines around the world to the effect that “*CITES endorses legalised rhino hunting*” and 34 such headlines did appear in the next 5 days in the worldwide media.

Should these have reached the poaching syndicates in Africa and Asia, you can imagine the encouragement that this would have given them. They wouldn’t have bothered to read the small print about excess old males being cropped to encourage younger males to breed, they would have just reacted to the sensationalised headlines. Further evidence was presented of large-scale rhino poaching existing at present.

However, when it came to accepting the proposal on the penultimate day, it was obvious that the delegates had been informed by their Government on the way in which they were to vote, and that very few people had changed their mind despite all the campaigning. Hence, the motions were passed 88-14 with a number of abstentions.

We hope that the CITES Secretariat will insist on regular updates being made available by Namibia and South Africa on their method of choosing the hunting trophies and their evidence of the trophy fees being spent on community and conservation projects, as disclosed at the CITES Symposium.

We understand that Zimbabwe is considering a similar proposal at the next meeting in 2007.

Rhino Monitoring

Paul de Montille of DART (Dete Animal Rescue Trust) has made arrangements for a micro-light to come from England for the purposes of rhino monitoring and tracking. It has recently arrived in Zimbabwe and is undergoing aviation testing with the authorities, prior to a series of volunteer pilots donating their services in different parts of Zimbabwe for this tracking and monitoring to be carried out. SAVE FOUNDATION is contributing US\$500 per month to the operational expenses of this micro-light and we wish Paul and his team every success in this initiative. This is yet another example of outside help being provided by well wishers who are concerned with rhino conservation in Zimbabwe. No doubt we will meet up with the micro-light on our visit in September and we will be able to give further reports in due course.

The new micro-light, awaiting transport to Zimbabwe thanks to Senga Bradie and Paul de Montille