

Spring
2006

SEBAKWE NEWS

Editor : John Gripper

Registered Charity : 328461

Hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe

What does annual inflation of 910% mean to the ordinary person? Traders cannot afford to give credit as you can earn 300% interest on short term cash deposits. Most payments have to be made in cash and the shops sometimes increase their prices two or three times a week.

We had a quote for a water tank needed for the borehole at 120 million Zim dollars but two weeks later the price has risen to over 500 million. The cost of a loaf of bread has just risen from Z\$44,000 to Z\$65,500 but a continued dearth of wheat has prompted Zimbabwe bakers to seek another rise in the cost of bread to Z\$90,000 a loaf.

The shortage of foreign currency has resulted in scarce fuel supplies which has pushed up transport costs – a litre of diesel costs Z\$250,000. We put 40 litres into the tank of our vehicle at a cost of 10 million Zim dollars which was paid for with ten bundles of Z\$20,000 notes. This meant laboriously counting out 500 individual bank notes. The larger retailers have note counting machines but the smaller businesses count it all out by hand which is very time consuming.



If you are paying for an expensive item then you have to take the bundles of notes with you in a suitcase or even in a wheel barrow! The highest bank note is Z\$50,000 and the promised Z\$100,000 note (which would be worth only 40p) has not yet been printed because the bank cannot afford the cost of importing the special printing ink.

The hardest hit by this inflation are those elderly people on fixed retirement pensions and the poor and the unemployed (which is at 70%). Local people who are unemployed are desperate to enter South Africa or Botswana to get some work to be able to send home money to their families so that they can buy food. Some of the better qualified professionals come over to the UK for Nursing or Caring work.

Where will it end? The IMF Executive Board has said that Zimbabwe's economic crisis required urgent implementation of a comprehensive policy package. However this financial chaos cannot continue much longer and the army has been put on alert in case there are food riots.

New Faces in the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy



Norman English has been an officer of National Parks for many years. He was Warden of Sinamatella National Park and has been recently transferred as the new Warden of Sebakwe National Park – which is part of the Midlands Conservancy.

Norman is very experienced in anti-poaching work and we are most grateful that in his new job he has found time to work closely with the Conservancy to improve our security and help with advice and support for the anti-poaching protection of the rhino.



Keith Pilz has been appointed Monitoring Manager of the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy.

At the rhino darting exercise Keith was assisting us in a part time capacity with the identification and monitoring of the rhino.

Over a number of years he has worked closely with vet Chris Foggin, and WWF Raoul du Toit, with rhino darting management exercises in Zimbabwe.

We are delighted that he has accepted the offer to stay on in the Conservancy on a full time basis where he will be responsible for the training and control of twelve personnel who will act as monitor guards.

As well as supervising the ground work, Keith will also maintain the photographic and computer identification records of all the rhino in conjunction with Eleanor Lowe.

Conservancy Update

At a recent meeting of the National Rhino Coordination group at National Parks in Harare, the Midlands Conservancy were asked to help by the translocation of eight rhino (4 male & 4 female) to establish a new breeding herd at Gonarezhou IPZ. The Conservancies in Zimbabwe were originally established as satellite breeding groups for just this purpose.

Following the helicopter crash, we still have twelve rhino to dart to complete the management exercise which commenced last year. Since the serious outbreak of poaching of rhino in the Conservancy, our security has been increased and the number of guards has been doubled. Following the ear notching last year, the monitoring of the rhino is now much more efficient and all the records and animal identification have been brought right up to date.

A training course has been set up at the Education Centre by Keith and Cryton for all Conservancy employees and ranch guards to standardise the monitoring and identification of the rhino. Norman English is assisting in this training with the help of a National Parks training team from Sinamatella.

Annie's Page

The Medical Clinic

We were able to deliver a large quantity of medical supplies to the Sebakwe Clinic during our visit in March. Many thanks to our local doctors surgery in Milton-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire and also to Centaur Services for providing the supplies. Our thanks also to B.A. who kindly allowed us 50 Kg excess baggage for the flight.

Thank you Christine at the Wychwood surgery for all the beautiful knitted baby clothes which went to the Orphanage, where they are very much needed because it is winter in Zimbabwe.

It was good to meet Sister Benhura Ndaizevei again at the clinic, but her stay will be short because in future she is going to be working from the headquarters office in Kwe Kwe and will travel to her rural clinics for short spells. She will be missed but we wish her every success in her new role.

The new Sister in charge of the local Sebakwe medical clinic is Mr Fortunate Moyo and we hope that he will enjoy working there. He was most grateful for our windfall of medical dressings, sterile swabs, rubber gloves, syringes, vitamins and antibiotics etc to fill his empty cupboards. Supplies are very short in Zimbabwe and the out-of-town clinics seldom receive much at all.

The photo shows Ray Gripper, a Zimbabwe trustee, examining a bag of syringes with Sister Benhura and Sister Fortunate.



The Schools

Due to the shortage of fuel and the heavy rains it was not possible to visit all the schools. However we did reach Pauldale and the children performed some traditional dancing and singing for us accompanied by an excellent drummer.

All the six schools we support in the area continue to receive a daily drink of Mahewu – the high protein drink. Pens donated by the National Pen Company brought broad smiles to the faces of the children and we want to say a big thank you to the company staff who kindly packed the pens and sent them to us to take out for the children in Zimbabwe.

We were able to leave pencils, rubbers and crayons and note books which had been kindly donated by friends in England.

We had some rhino T Shirts printed which we were able to take out for the youth football team which is organized from the Educational Centre. Thank you Vicky at Monterry Design in Carterton.

The photograph shows a class of children with their teachers at the Education Centre learning about wildlife and the environment. They were so engrossed in their lesson that we were able to stand in the classroom for several minutes before they realised we were there.



Rhino Scholarships - Annie Gripper

We are very pleased that three children were awarded a rhino scholarship and started their secondary school education in January this year. They are all pupils at Rio Tinto Secondary School which is about 6 km from Kwe Kwe in the Midlands of Zimbabwe.

These scholarships have provided their tuition fees and all full time boarding and accommodation costs as well as full uniform and the necessary books and school equipment for the next four years. Their uniform will be renewed after two years to allow for their growth. Transport to and from the school once each term is also covered by the scholarship funds.

On this first selection three girls from Sebakwe have benefited Nomatter Manzini, Shielar Musavengana and Patience Mbangure, but the scholarships are equally available for boys or girls.

We were unable to visit and meet the three children during our short visit to Zimbabwe in March but their parents are most grateful and came to ask us to thank the people who as members of the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust contributed to the scholarship fund.

Each parent has other children to support but all agreed education was so necessary to provide a future for their families. They each told us how happy their girls are at their new school and that they are working hard. One hopes to become a nurse, another a teacher and the third either a secretary or a teacher.



CAMFED - with whom we have arranged to oversee these scholarships, also visit the children during term time to ensure that they are fine and sort out any problems that they may have, so although they are away from home during term time, they do not feel isolated without a friendly regular visitor.

The annual cost of each scholarship is £400 and this has been paid to CAMFED, the UK based Charity. We have now used more than half the funds donated to us for these three scholarships and are looking for further donations so that we can continue to award rhino scholarships each year.

In Harare we met Winnie Farao – the CAMFED officer who is in charge of the Kwe Kwe area. She plans to work with the teachers, parents and the local community to establish a local committee within the Conservancy area to guarantee the on-going success of these rhino scholarships.



Rhino Mayday

2006

Thursday 1st June
10:15 - 18:15

**ZSL's Huxley Conference Theatre,
Regents Park, London**

This years event is being organised by Save the Rhino International in conjunction with The Zoological Society of London and the British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquariums and will be chaired by Nick Lindsay from ZSL who is chair of the EAZA Rhino Campaign.

The aim of Rhino Mayday is to present rhino conservation work and topics will range from security and anti poaching, monitoring and research as well as education and community based conservation. This year the talks will focus in particular on the African & Asian projects selected for the EAZA rhino campaign

The following presentations will be given :-

- **The Indian Rhino Vision** - Tariq Aziz & Tom Foose
- **Protection of Javan and Sumatran Rhino in Indonesia** - Nico van Strein
- **Sumatran Rhino in the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in Sabah** - Edwin Bosi
- **Environmental Education in Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Kenya** - Maggie Eason
- **Rhino Horn Fingerprinting** - Richard Emslie
- **Rhino capture and translocation in Zimbabwe and Namibia** - Cathy Dean
- **Rhino Identification and Monitoring in Zimbabwe** - John Gripper
- **Scene of the Crime** - Ian Maxwell

The lecture theatre holds 200 people and you are warmly invited to join us for what promises to be a truly interesting day

**For more information and to book your tickets please contact Renaud on 0207 357 7474
email renaud@savetherhino.org**

The Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre - by Clayton Zazu

What we have achieved, What we strive to achieve.



Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre, a project of the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust-UK Charity organisation, in collaboration with the Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe (formerly Wildlife Society of Zimbabwe) was established in 2003, and started operating in 2004. The conservation centre was officially opened by Zimbabwe's vice president, CDE Joseph. W. Msika on the 30th of June 2005.

Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre's vision is to become a leading environmental conservation project in Zimbabwe and the Southern African region. The project's mission statement is "to promote environmental conservation for the benefit and enjoyment of the present and future generations" The centre seeks to promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources in Zimbabwe, with a special focus on the protection and conservation of the critically endangered black rhinoceros population in the adjacent Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy .

Since opening its doors to the public, in 2004, Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre's conservation awareness and education work have been growing from strength to strength. The following is an outline or highlights of some of the major success stories for the project;

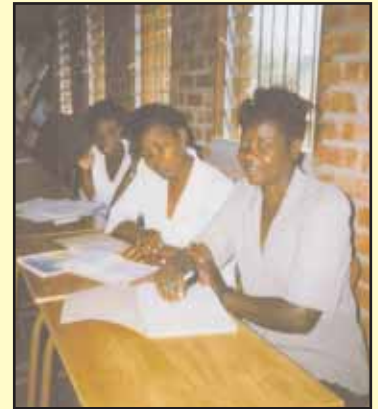
- 28 schools both primary and secondary have visited the environmental centre for and participated in various environmental conservation and education programmes. This number of schools translates into more than 1,800 children visiting the centre in less than a year. Assuming that these 1,800 children coming from different schools will share their gained environmental knowledge and wilderness experience with their fellow students and family members, it means Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre might have reached more people, in terms of disseminating environmental information and promoting attitude change in people.



Children engaged in environmental discussion

The number of schools and colleges making enquiries and plans to come and learn more about wildlife and the entire environment continues to increase .

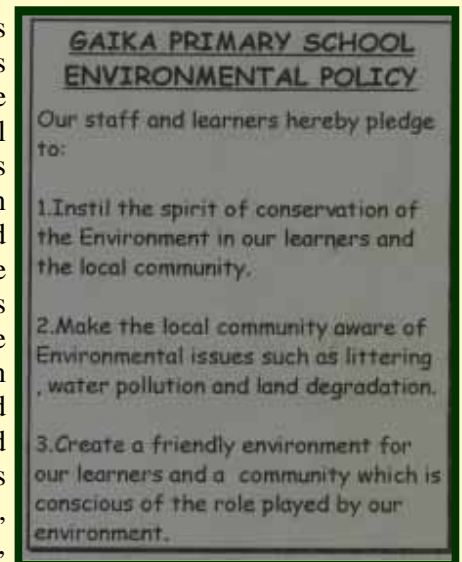
- The environmental conservation centre have initiated, through a teachers workshop, and supported the formation of Wildlife Clubs in 16 local primary and secondary schools. These clubs now experienced a verage effectiveness and growth as follow meetings and feedback from the concerned schools indicated. Through wildlife clubs schools can promote awareness on the importance of all wildlife without necessarily going outside the school premises. Wildlife clubs are also helping to generate interest in wildlife and conservation issues in school children, the idea being that the interest may culminate into meaningful conservation activities both in and out of school.



Teachers attending a workshop session

- Provided training and supported 25 schools in Kwekwe district through a 2 day head teacher's workshop, to draft and draw School Environmental Policies (SEPs).

The SEPs helps the school leaders to better promote environmental awareness activities within their schools, and also guide the school teachers and the administrators in improved management and use of resources such as water, energy, biodiversity, land and soils, and air. Teaching good management and use of these environmental components translates into an improved school environment, conducive to maximum learning and most importantly this will also mean reduced water bills, energy bills and thus affordable school fees for everyone. Most of the schools have finished drafting their school environmental policies and copies have been sent to us for reference. Here is an example from a rural school in Kwekwe district.



- The environmental conservation project has conducted two workshops on community based conservation initiatives targeting all the local village heads in Sebakwe former commercial farming areas, with the objective of forming village based conservation committees in all the villages. This is coming as a response to increased wildlife poaching in newly resettled farming areas, and the urgent need to get the informed and active participation and responsibility of the local people in conservation matters. Through village conservation committees local people will take the challenge of managing their locally available natural resources e.g. wildlife, for their own benefit. The committees act as environmental watchdogs. More training and more support will be given to these established conservation committees. In this initiative Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre is working in close liaison with the Department of Natural Resources and the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority of Zimbabwe.
- We contributed and participated in the commemoration of the World Environment Day (5th June 2005) for Kwekwe District. World Environment Day is commemorated every 5th June of every year and Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre was part of the organising committee for Kwekwe District. Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre enabled school children from rural areas, by offering transport and food, to attend the 2005 World Environment Day Celebrations held in Kwekwe City. It was our way of promoting environmental awareness.
- In line with one of its objectives, to promote research that will contribute to the conservation of wildlife, Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre in partnership with Midlands State University (MSU) is conducting a socio-ecological research in the newly resettled farming areas in Sebakwe. The aim of the research is to establish human-wildlife conflicts and assess level of wildlife understanding of the local people. The findings of this research will guide our conservation decision making processes, inform the design and implementation of intervention programmes to save both the newly resettled farmers and the wildlife within their communities. A student on attachment, Palloma Pachiti is leading this research and is doing everything with advice from the Programme Manager (Clayton Zazu) and lecturers at Midlands State University. Data collection is half way done and the research is likely to be concluded mid 2006. The write up will be published in several environmental journals in Zimbabwe and other countries.
- As a way of strengthening the teacher's capacity to promote environmental literacy and responsibility in schools, a teacher 4-day environmental education course was held in May 2005. Twelve teachers attended this basic introductory environmental educators' course. The majority of them have now completed the necessary assignments and were handed their certificates by the Vice President of Zimbabwe and The Minister of Environment and Tourism during the official opening of the Education Centre on the 30th June 2005.
- From the environmental centre we have managed to distribute a child supplementary feeding porridge drink (mahewu) to selected schools in Kwekwe district. The high energy giving drink was sourced using funds secured by Mrs A. Gripper from various well wishers mainly in the United Kingdom. The drink is coming at a time when drought and hunger is so severe in Zimbabwe. Schools benefiting don't even know how to thank the people who are making it a guarantee that every school day each child has a sweet energy and protein rich drink.
- Since its establishment the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre has brokered very warm, professional and useful networks and relations with local communities, local leadership, other NGOs in Zimbabwe and relevant government departments. This has been one of our strengths. We have made and maintained friendships that will benefit our work.

What we have highlighted in this article is part of the various small and big success stories of the Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre. Besides these stories there are other many and varied achievements, small in nature but too numerous to mention. We take pride in that as a new project, with very limited funding, we have done our best to achieve our set goals. Our impact in Kwekwe district, in the Midlands province and in Zimbabwe is beginning to be felt.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to all the environmentalists, conservationists, economists, politicians, and the general public who have contributed greatly to the establishment and running of the Sebakwe Conservation & Education Centre. These peoples support is greatly appreciated.



Research group working in the bush



Some of the buildings at the centre

Giant Otters

After a two hour boat ride with some great bird watching on the Rupununi River in Guyana, South America, we arrived at Karanambu Ranch - the home of Diane McTurk to be met by two large otters swimming in the river around our boat. Our hosts for the stay were Edward and Melanie McTurk.

2 year old Sopho and eighteen month old Tsunami are two young female otters who are being hand reared by Diane McTurk at her rehabilitation centre for Giant River Otters. She reared her first otter called Frankie (after Frankenstein not Sinatra) in 1985 and over the last twenty years she has now successfully reared and released into the wild 37 of these giant otters.



Giant Otters are listed in CITES Appendix I as endangered species. They were hunted for their pelts which were used for high quality leather. When wet their dark chocolate brown coats appear black with individual white markings around their neck and chest.

Otters are diurnal and live in large rivers and secluded creeks in the rainforest which provide plenty of bankside vegetation for them to make their resting place at night and to have dens for their cubs. They mate with the same partner for life and only have one litter each year. The gestation period is 9 to 10 weeks and the litter size is 1 to 3 cubs. As the female only has four teats, they can only rear a maximum of four cubs. They live in family groups of two adults and their young offspring from several years.

A male adult giant otter will weigh 26 to 32Kg and a female 22 to 26Kg and reach 1.8 meters in length. In the wild their normal life span is eight years but they can live longer in captivity.



Caiman

Fish is their basic diet consisting of characins, catfish and perch but they can also eat frogs, anacondas and caiman. They need up to 10lbs meat a day. They hold their catch with their front paws and devour the fish with the help of their 36 sharp barbed teeth and their bone crushing molars but they can also give you a strong nip in the ankle if you get too close.

Diane McTurk has gained widespread recognition in South America for her work with the rearing and rehabilitation of Giant Otters. Orphaned pups are brought to her each year and she is also given young otters which have been kept as pets but have outgrown their homes and start to eat large quantities of fresh fish each day!



Diane has had no formal scientific training but as an international expert on the Giant Otter, her knowledge is highly regarded especially in the practical aspects of behaviour and the rehabilitation programme she has developed. I hope that one day we can look forward to reading her autobiography.

One evening at Karanambo Ranch we were taken by boat through dark waterways to watch the birds coming to roost in the trees by a lake which was covered with beautiful giant water lilies as well as swarms of biting flies and midges !



Guyana is a wilderness destination that is virtually untouched by mass tourism. The amazing Kaitum Falls is reached by small plane. 40,000 gallons of water per second cascade 741 feet to the basin. From the cliff tops the unending savannah and virgin rainforest of this National Park can be viewed.

Adopt a Rhino - Annie Gripper

This fund raising scheme has been a great way for so many of you to support the Trust with your £25 donation every two years and we are most grateful to you.

Sadly we learnt that two of the rhino which you adopt – Zoetazhana and Ringo have been killed by poachers – the last one on 16th December 2005. We now have photographs of two other rhino the adult female called Rosalind and a five year old male called Sambrero which are for adoption and we have added their names to our list.

We also had the good news that this year Rebecca had a calf in January and Tapiwa had a calf in February. Neither of these calves have yet been named and their sex is still unknown. The guards and monitors check them without getting too close so as not to disturb them – they are all thriving well.

Adopting a rhino is a very positive way you can help to raise money for their protection. The money raised goes towards the wages of the guards and monitors who protect all the rhino in the Conservancy. Please encourage your family and friends to help the rhino in this way – the cost still remains at £25 for two years.



Tapiwa



Rebecca



Rosalind



Sambrero

The other popular fund raiser is our annual Christmas Quiz. This year we raised £250. Thank you very much everybody for sending in your entries to me. If you have any suggestions for a future quiz please tell me as I am running out of ideas.

SBRT TRUSTEES

John Gripper
(Chairman)
Peter Borton
(Treasurer)
Annie Gripper
Paul Holmes
Nigel Overal
David Gripper

In Zimbabwe

Ray Gripper
David Ellman-Brown

SBRT PATRONS

Pam Ayres
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Nicholas Duncan
Dr Jane Goodall
Anna Merz
Dr Willie Nduku
Malcolm Penny
Julian Pettifer
Gregory Rasmussen
Dudley Russell
Tony Soper
Robert Swift

SEBAKWE BLACK RHINO TRUST ACCOUNTS

INCOME	2004	2005
	£	£
Donations & Covenants	38,488	32,355
Membership	1,276	1,111
Adopt a Rhino scheme	1,225	1,500
Gift Aid Refund	1,505	1,702
Quiz	234	173
Dividends & Interest	4,605	4,445
Special Events	5,545	0
SAVE Foundation, Australia	0	2,817
Scholarship Fund	0	2,213
Total	52,878	46,316
EXPENDITURE		
Printing, postage & tel	2,241	2,449
Legacy advertising	895	280
Travel	2,090	1,375
Miscellaneous	115	65
Transfer to Africa	29,156	45,484
Transfer to Reserves	15,000	0
Excess/Def inc over exp	3,381	-3,337
Total	52,878	46,316

Save Foundation

African Safari

Nicholas Duncan is in the process of organising this year's classic Save Foundation African Safari between mid September and early October 2006. There will be various options available, featuring different destinations in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. Tickets will be strictly limited.

Last year the September group had the best game viewing imaginable with 13 different prides of lion, 2 cheetah, a leopard on three separate occasions, 22 black rhino, many herds of elephants, a pack of 19 painted dogs and so much more ! This year will be just as good or better, so be there.



**Interested and want to find out more ?
Then check out the Website www.savefoundation.org.au
or contact:-**

**Nicholas Duncan
President SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia
229 Oxford Street,
Leederville,
WA 6007,
Australia.**

Telephone:- 00 61 8 9444 6550 Fax:- 00 61 8 9444 9270

Email:- save@savefoundation.org.au