

Autumn
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SEBAKWE NEWS

Editor : John Gripper

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Rhino Poaching in the Midlands

On the second day of our recent visit, whilst the rhino darting exercise was being carried out in the Midlands Conservancy, a juvenile male rhino was shot and killed by poachers who hacked off both the horns.

Chris Foggin, the vet, carried out a post mortem and with the help of a metal detector found three bullets from an AK47 in the chest cavity – death had been due to multiple injuries and haemorrhage around the heart.

The local Police and National Parks were notified and we immediately offered a reward of 10 Million Zimbabwe dollars for information leading to an arrest and conviction of the poacher.



Three further cases of rhino killed by poachers were found by the tracking teams – they were killed by AK47 bullets and the horns had been taken. This brings the number of rhino killed by poachers in the Conservancy in the last 12 months to a total of eight.

The killing of these rhino by poachers is very distressing and deeply upsetting to all concerned. The Conservancy is increasing its security and strong efforts are being made to catch the poachers and bring them to justice.

The Official Opening of the Education Centre



The programme included speeches by the Vice President Dr J. Msika, The Midlands Governor Cephas Msipa, John Gripper, Dr W. Nduku, Director of Wildlife, Environment Zimbabwe, and F. Nhema M.P., the Minister of Environment and Tourism. It was also attended by the Mayor of Kwekwe, the Chairman of Zibagwe Rural District and senior representatives of the Police, National Parks and the War Veterans.

On Wednesday 30th June 2005 the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre was officially opened by Dr Joseph Msika M.P. The Vice President of Zimbabwe.



The Governor strongly congratulated the donors for doing such a good deed to make a dream come true. The Vice President stressed the importance of the centre to wildlife conservation and for the benefit to the community and advocated for a true partnership for a better country.





The opening ceremony included a tour of the centre lead by the Program Manager, Clayton Zazu and entertainment by schoolchildren, which was followed by lunch for the 300 people who attended the ceremony.

The Centre has been awarded a grant from the Beit Trust to complete the furnishings and this will enable us to purchase computers, IT audio visual equipment, dining room tables and chairs, kitchen cooking utensils, beds, mattresses, curtains and office furniture.

Education Officer

A new Education Officer, Chiedza Maisiri has been appointed to the Education Centre. She will also work some of her time at the Wildlife Environment Zimbabwe centre at Sable Park near Kwe Kwe.

Chiedza was born in December 1984. She obtained her certificate from a Rhodes University Environmental Course in 2002 and a year later took a teaching course and has since worked as a secondary school teacher. She has traveled widely and has a passion for environmental issues. She is engaged to be married and plans to soon have a wedding.



Our Special Thanks

Bemthree Kindergarten

The mothers and children arrived in force when they were told that lego, balls and squeaky toys had been brought for them from England. Thank you to Helen Davies and other supporters in Gloucester for providing this very acceptable bag of goodies for the children.



British Airways allowed us to take an extra 50kg of luggage on our last trip. The children of Zimbabwe say thank you to Karen Lovett at BA's Community Relations department for organising this for us and therefore helping us to get some more much needed toys out to them.



The Quakers from Friends Meeting House at Burford donated the proceeds from their annual plant sale. Thank you to all involved and to those who supported this event.

Footballs & Team Strips

Due to the shortage of fuel, I was not able to visit all the schools on this trip. However I was able to leave behind two footballs, a valve and a pump for each of the six schools with Mrs Chawira, the Headmistress of the Sebakwe Primary School. She will distribute them later to each of the schools. The children are all enjoying their Mahewi drink each morning especially as it is now their winter with colder weather.

I was also able to deliver complete team football strips to the Education Centre for their own football team as well as two footballs, a valve and pump and hope that they win their matches. Many thanks to the Giles Sports shop at Carterton for finding the strips and footballs at an affordable price.

Thanks once again to The Wychwood Surgery and Centaur Services for all the medicines and medical supplies which we were able to take for the Sebakwe Medical Clinic. This clinic now has a new Sister in charge - Mrs Itai Bonas, and she was delighted to fill up the bare shelves of her stock cupboard.

Thanks to all the girls in class 10LB of The High School for Girls in Gloucester who nominated SBRT as a form charity. They raised funds through an awareness assembly and cake stall, and have now joined the Rhino adoption scheme.

Many thanks to Christine Halliday and her friends for the supply of knitted baby clothes which were very welcome at the AIDS orphanage - especially to keep out the cold winter weather prevailing at the moment.

We also want to thank Gwen Strong for all the beautiful hand written adoption certificates.

Rhino Scholarships by Annie Gripper

I am delighted to tell you that we have been able to commit the Trust to provide six scholarships for both boys and girls to attend secondary school for four years. Three scholarships will be awarded in January 2006 and three more the following year.

Our thanks are due to the generous donations from our members to the Scholarship Fund. If the scholarship fund increases we shall be able to send even more children to the Rio Tinto Zhombe Boarding School at Kwekwe. The scholarship will provide each child with the boarding fees, tuition, travel expenses, school books and uniform (renewable every two years).

Following a meeting with Judith Kumire, the Regional Director of CAMFED Zimbabwe, we have agreed to enter into a partnership with CAMFED, which is a well established organization in Zimbabwe. They already provide for the costs of secondary education for over 3000 girls, and they are very willing to help boys as well. CAMFED organize a local committee with village chiefs, community workers, teachers, police, church officials and parents to select the children and ensure that each child is taken care of properly and they provide the necessary back-up support with regular visits from appointed guardians.

The rhino scholarships will be given to children from the four schools in the Sebakwe area under Mrs Chawira, the Head Mistress. They will be awarded to the neediest children, who may not necessarily be the brightest. Having the local people involved in the choice of child means that there will also be support within the village to help care for the siblings of the candidate if their parents have been affected by AIDS and are no longer able to provide support. These children will be given the opportunity to continue their education at secondary school and will return to the community far better equipped to provide for their siblings and neighbours.

Thank you to the people who have generously donated £200 or more to help pay for a scholarship for a child for one year. We hope that our fund will receive further financial support so that we can continue to provide more rhino scholarships each year.



Judith Kumire



Children from Rio Tinto Zhombe School on a recent visit to the Education Centre



1) The vet in the helicopter darts the rhino and then lands nearby. The vehicle response team drives in with the equipment to assist with the operation.



2) The rhino is propped up on its sternum cool. Its eyes are protected by a damp cloth checked by a digital thermometer in its ear. Oximeters are clipped to one ear to provide a pulse tone. The ear is notched and artery forceps applied.

Rhino Darting Exercise

The objectives of this darting exercise are to help identify and monitor the rhino in the conservancy through ear notching, implanting transponder microchips, insertion of radio transmitters and some dehorning.

It requires a team of rhino trackers on the ground, a response team in a vehicle, a fixed wing aircraft. When they get a visual of a rhino they contact the fixed wing plane by radio with the GPS reading. The plane, helicopter and the response vehicle.

The full procedure outlined above takes about half an hour. It requires a skilled veterinarian but we were fortunate to receive the help of an excellent tracking team from Bubiana Conservancy.

It is estimated that the cost of this procedure is between US\$1000 and US\$1500 for each rhino, including flying time involved. A helicopter costs US\$350 an hour and the fixed wing plane US\$200 an hour. The cost of a darting exercise for 20 rhino was US\$30,000, and I would like to thank The Marwell Trust, SA for funding of this exercise with SBRT & MBRCT.

7) The body condition is scored and recorded. The back and flank is sprayed with yellow dye for future identification from the air. The tranquilliser dart is removed and the puncture holes sprayed with antibiotic. Equipment is packed and cleared away. The anaesthetic antidote is injected. All personnel stand out of range as the rhino recovers quickly and is liable to charge !!!

6) Adhesive is then mixed and poured into the holes to secure the unit in place. An ice pack is applied to overcome excessive heat as the adhesive quickly sets firm.





and sprayed with water to keep it cool. The body temperature is monitored at the rectum. Leads from the pulse monitor are attached to an audible monitor of the pulse rate to help control haemorrhage.



3) A blood sample is taken from an ear vein. Microchips are implanted under the skin. A plastic tag with individual number is inserted into one ear. A notch is made in the hoof so that spore can be identified by the trackers.

cy. This is done by tranquillising the rhino and lifting it.

craft and a helicopter. When the ground trackers find the rhino then helps follow the rhino and guide in the field.

acked up by an experienced support team. We have a team of trackers and a support team.

started, the cost is dependent on the amount of fuel. The total cost for the Midlands Conservancy, Wildlife Australia and the IRF who helped share the cost.

4) The smaller horn is removed



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the

5) The horn is drilled to receive the transmitter and the aerial antennae.



Turtle Island by Annie Gripper

In March, we had the opportunity to visit Selingan Island in North Borneo - this is one of three small islands in the Sulu Sea which form a turtle sanctuary.

The island was a three quarters of an hour boat trip from the jetty at Sandakan. Fishing is banned around these three islands to preserve the area for turtles of which there are two main types - the Greenback turtle and the Hawksbill turtle. These turtles come to the islands to lay their eggs all the year round although some months are more popular than others. In other parts of the world, turtles may only nest from August to November.



On approaching this tropical island, we could see what looked like giant wheel tracks in the sand leading from the shore up the beach to the tree line. We discovered that these lines were turtle tracks made by their front flippers. The shell of the adult female is about 40 inches long and almost 36 inches wide

The turtles come ashore at night and having reached the tree line, they use their front flippers to dig a hole in the sand 34 inches deep.. Next they turn around and balance over this 'nest'. If they feel safe they start to lay their eggs a few at a time and usually will lay over a hundred eggs at each sitting - we watched one turtle lay 107 eggs in 20 minutes.





The eggs are white, round and soft to the touch and bigger than a golf ball but smaller than a tennis ball. Once the egg laying is completed she fills in the hole, covering the eggs with sand using her back flippers and then pads the sand well down. After resting for about an hour she returns to the sea. From one mating, which takes place at sea, the female can store the sperm inside her body and fertilises a batch of eggs every two weeks. She may come ashore to nest three or four times to lay her eggs from the one mating.

The turtle wardens patrol the island 24 hours a day and closely monitor, identify and measure the turtles. When the female comes ashore she is watched closely and once she starts to lay her eggs, the wardens carefully remove these eggs from the hole as she lays them. The eggs are collected in a bucket and then transferred to the hatchery. The turtle is oblivious to the fact that she has covered up an empty nest, but in any case she would have nothing more to do with raising her offspring. At the hatchery, the eggs are first covered in warm sand and then buried into a similar sandy hole like the nest. The wardens protect the eggs by lining the hole with a surrounding wire mesh cage which prevents predators digging them up. The eggs will hatch after 50 to 60 days and the hatchlings, which measure two and a half inches long, dig their way out of the sand up to the surface.



In natural circumstances they would then head off straight for the sea and swim non-stop for two days until they reach deep water where there are less predators to attack them. On the island at the turtle centre these hatchlings are collected up by the wardens as they hatch and then at night released on the sandy beach close to the edge of the sea. Our visit was a very special experience and I wanted to share it with you.



Henry Buss by Annie Gripper

Henry Buss is a school boy, now aged eleven, who has been raising money to support our Black Rhino Trust over the last two years. During this time Henry has organized a cake and drinks stall at his school with support from two of his classmates Freddie Earle and Katerina Merrifield.

He has also organised a toy sale and a special rhino Sunday at his home where there was an auction, a bring and buy stall, tea and cakes, music and a raffle. Henry, his Dad and Freddie completed a 30 mile sponsored bike ride.

This young man over the last two years with the help of his family and friends has raised more than £2000 for the black rhino. Thank you very much Henry from all of us – you are a ‘star’. Very best wishes for success in your exams this year.

Henry is the Harry Potter look-alike in the middle of the picture.



Stop Press !!!!

Just as we were preparing to go to print with this copy of our news letter we received the following email and pictures from the Midlands Conservancy:-

29 July 2005

Dear Friends, due to a slight mishap from some bad winds, our rhino operation has had to stop. Fortunately no one was killed. The vet Chris Foggin has been taken to Harare Hospital with what are believed minor injuries, Will give you an up date later - Ken King



The Rhino Christmas Quiz 2005

All the answers are related to the 'Garden'. You are given the number of letters in each word of the answer.

Please send your completed entry by 10th January 2006 to :- Annie Gripper, Manor Farm, Ascott under Wychwood, Oxon OX7 6AL

If you would like a copy of the correct answers then please enclose a s.a.e. - they will be available after 10th January 2006 !!

Many thanks to Jennifer Bonetta from North Devon for this quiz - she hopes that you have many hours of fun doing it !!

1	Milker on the slide ?	7	51	Busy Lizzie's real name	9
2	Twin Tree ?	4	52	Old Queen's fruit ?	8,4
3	Toilet Water	8	53	I lovetree	3
4	Hay Fruit ?	10	54	Greek self-loving youth ?	9
5	Panda leaf food	6	55	Cloth season ? Almost !	11
6	Comes out of the fore ?	3,3,5	56	Give me an answer do !	5
7	Highland girl ?	7	57	A prickly lass ?	5
8	Fake Stone ?	8	58	Usually wet girl ?	5,4
9	Foolish posterior !	7	59	Fruity coloured wood ?	6,4
10	She's not from the hills ?	4,2,3,6	60	Late perfumed animals ?	5,7,5
11	An eye catching pupil	4	61	Could make syrup !	5
12	Mixed private ? nearly	6	62	Main French herb	6
13	Don't play it !	10	63	Ruin game (anag)	8
14	Popular paint colour	8	64	Once an Irish blight	6
15	Stingers !	7	65	The truth always pays !	7
16	Veggie & Scandinavian	5	66	A new one sweeps clean	5
17	Good for the heart ?	9	67	Up she stood	4
18	Also a sea animal	7	68	Envious measure ?	9
19	Greek goddess of youth	4	69	Nearly a lady and her boy !	6
20	This oil flavours gin !	7	70	Picture I throttle	9
21	A wise man	4	71	Salad Leaves or coffee ?	7
22	A creeper	3	72	Crustacean fruit	4,5
23	Grim Load (Anag)	8	73	A stringed instrument	5
24	They might fall in the winter !	9	74	Molly-coddles lawn ?	6,5
25	Long racing greens ?	6,5	75	Crush my anthem (anag)	13
26	Left out of the dance ?	10	76	Stylish beast not wanted	9
27	Flanders flower	5	77 and Hardy	6
28	Mad March ringer	8	78	A coy number 42 ?	8
29	Mainly greens	8	79	Roughly scrape this fruit?	9
30	Could be nut, girl or tree	5	80	An odd girl ?	4,4
31	Salvador and a flower ?	6	81	Penny with an O for an N	5
32	Colour church ones ?	9	82	Tree in your hand !	4
33	Two girls herb ?	8	83	Cooler for food? Almos !	7
34	Not quite astern !	5	84	French one is a Tournesol	9
35	One from Amsterdam ?	5	85	Gives a covering leaf ?	3,4
36	2c's and sour (Anag)	6	86	Could you wear this ?	3
37	A non-moving buzzer ?	7	87	Felines like it	7
38	Prickly animal leg joint !	9	88	Welsh Vegetable	4
39	Fast growing nuisances!	5	89	Well liked tree	6
40	Album run (Anag)	8	90	Big boys on bikes ?	8
41	In a special arch !	5	91	Desert ship and ail backwards	8
42	Adam's downfall	5	92	Red, hot in salad	6
43	Tobacco plant ?	9	93	From little acorns it grows ?	3,4
44	On which wine grows	5,4	94	Yellow spring trumpet	8
45	Precious metal for corporal punishment?	6,5	95	Throw no stones if you live here !	10
46	Sweet bees feed ?	11	96	Could come from lake !	4
47	Sugary and nice to eat ?	5,3	97	Strong Potters first name	5
48	A lonely little one !	7	98	Crying softwood tree	7,6
49	Vaulting-block and nut	5,8	99	Red fruit for salads	6
50	A killer when its dark !	6,10	100	Fire remains on the hill ?	8,3