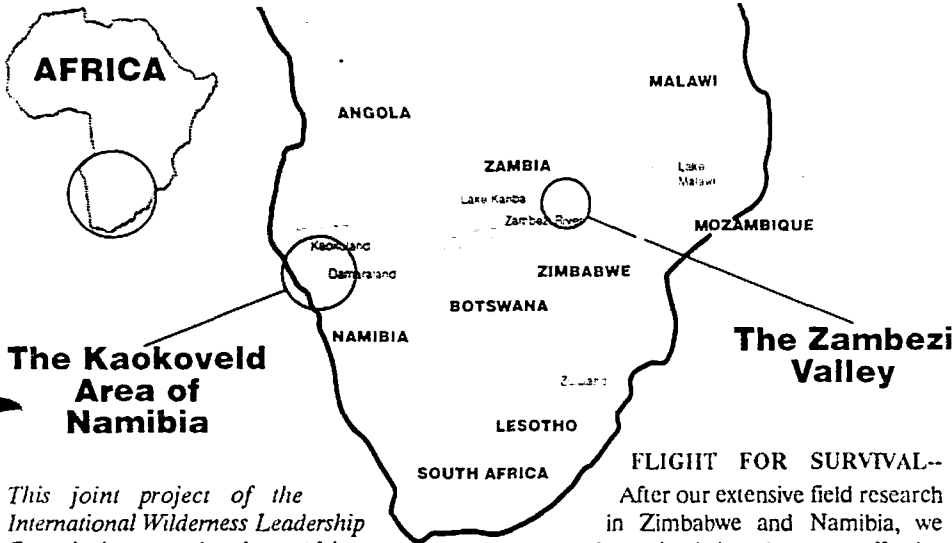


# PROJECT RHINO



## The Kaokoveld Area of Namibia

This joint project of the International Wilderness Leadership Foundation and the African Conservation Trust works with local conservation organizations and government wildlife departments throughout southern Africa.

Gangs of poachers armed with automatic weapons have slaughtered the rhino across Africa. Rhino horns, sold as traditional medicine in the Far East, are worth as much as \$65,000 apiece. As recently as 1960, 100,000 black rhinos roamed across southern and eastern Africa. Now, hardly more than 3,000 remain. In the Zambezi Valley alone, 16 rhinos were killed in a recent two week period.

Because wildlife departments suffer from lack of equipment, inadequate staff and difficult operating conditions, the rhino is almost extinct in every African country except South Africa. However, there are a few small populations in Namibia and Zimbabwe that can be saved if we act now.

PROJECT RHINO works on the ground and in the air:

**THE DESERT RHINO FUND**--The stark but magnificent desert areas of southwestern Africa are the home for unusually adapted subspecies of many animals. Virtually isolated for many years, they are now increasingly under attack by poachers. An endowment fund is being built, to protect the unique desert black rhino and the desert elephant in Namibia, which will:

- o Train local Game Guards who will patrol water holes and provide daily protection.
- o Establish conservation education programs for school children in Namibia.
- o Provide operational costs for four-wheel drive vehicles for game rangers and wardens.

## FLIGHT FOR SURVIVAL--

After our extensive field research in Zimbabwe and Namibia, we determined that the most effective way to reduce poaching now is to provide the right equipment for use by coordinated air/ground anti-poaching task forces. We will provide:

- o Light aircraft for use by the Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. Ownership and oversight of the aircraft will remain with the IWLF.
- o Two way radios for ground-based Game Guards, coordinated by the pilots who will direct the task forces towards immediate and effective action against the poachers.

Dr. Robert Cleaves, IWLF Director and Vice President, Special Projects, has considerable experience in tactical flying and aviation matters, and will oversee personally the purchase, transfer and use of the aircraft.

## Video to Help Rhino

Filmmaker and IWLF Vice President for Communications, Ms. Norma Foster is videotaping Warren Thomas, Director of the Los Angeles Zoo, and Michael Dee, Curator of Mammals, to help publicize the plight of the black rhino. Footage being shot at the LA Zoo, illustrating how their part in the Rhino Species Survival Program (SSP) is helping save the black rhino, will be combined with on-site material filmed in Africa, showing how PROJECT RHINO provides timely, direct assistance to those working in the field. The LA Zoo has two male and four female black rhino, of which three are on permanent loan from the Zimbabwe government. The SSP was formulated by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) and in 1981 designated the black rhino as a candidate species.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your donations to PROJECT RHINO go directly to work on this project. Please complete the response form on page 8, and help stop the poaching now!

## Namibia Poaching

Namibia is one of the major settings in a tidal wave of change occurring in southern Africa. Under the supervision of a United Nations peace-keeping force, the first free elections in Namibia in 40 years will be held in November. This transition is a great step, but these political changes have spawned environmental repercussions in the north of the country, near Ovamboland, and in the Caprivi area, where poaching has increased dramatically since the transition began. At least 12 black rhino and numerous elephant have been poached in the Etosha National Park alone, and recent activity in Caprivi looks to be more serious. A full report will be forthcoming in the next *Leaf*, along with details of new initiatives being undertaken to help save Namibia's unique desert black rhino and desert elephant.

*Francis Buyeye, Head Warden at Mana Pools National Park in the Zambezi Valley, and family. His team needs your help to save the black rhino.*



# *the* LEAF

Newsletter of the  
International Wilderness Leadership Foundation

No. 2

August, 1989

## IN THIS ISSUE

- o Report from Zimbabwe
- o PROJECT RHINO
- o Eco - Sense
- o New African Wilderness
- o Wilderness Leadership School



## Field Report from the Zambezi Valley

*This report is a result of our most recent trip to Zimbabwe, in March 1989, when IWLFF President Vance Martin and PROJECT RHINO partners, John and Melody Taft of the African Conservation Trust, visited the Zambezi Valley.*

The voice on the other end of the telephone line was friendly yet business-like, with a military manner. "We're battling daily incursions of armed poachers from the north into the Zambezi Valley. The situation is very tense, but you can accompany me when you are here in Zimbabwe. No problem." Glenn Tatham, Chief Warden (Operations), Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management proved as competent, energetic and friendly in person as he was over the telephone.

One month later, Glenn was at the controls as our light aircraft headed north out of Harare. As we flew into the Valley, the early morning sun reflected brightly in the Zambezi River. The Valley had done well by the recent rains. The vegetation was lush, green and wet, and elephant grazed in belly-high grass.

We criss-crossed the Valley at about 150 feet in altitude, spotting wildlife and getting the lay of

the land. We then flew low up the river, with water splashing up onto the wind screen. Banking steeply to the north, we looked squarely into the green hills of Zambia. After circling, we settled down on the grass-covered strip at Mana Pools National Park (carefully avoiding an old bull elephant who seemed to think that the landing strip was his own private hay field), where we were met by Francis Buyeye, head warden of Mana Pools.

We headed straight to the Operations Room. From there, a dedicated, courageous and over-worked team of rangers and technicians coordinate Operation Stronghold, struggling to protect the Zambezi's herd of black rhino and other wildlife from further slaughter by increasingly bold gangs of poachers. We were thoroughly briefed by the staff for most of that day, and our admiration for the job they are doing grew by the hour. The remainder of our stay in the Valley was spent in the bush, and in meeting those who are doing the work on the ground. They face a formidable task (Please see pp 2 & 3 for more details).

Our experience there left an indelible memory, not only of the Valley's beauty but also of the

incredible job being done by those protecting it. As we left the valley, with Glenn again at the controls, our aircraft skimmed across the river. We could hear hippos snort and watch them plunge underwater. We saw an elephant matriarch leading her family to the river for a drink. It was reminiscent of the Africa of yesteryear, and inspired us with a faith that all is not yet lost in the Africa of today.

