

LIFE GUARD

Marwell Zimbabwe Trust

Zimbabwe. For most people outside that country the very mention of the word conjures up images of chaos and repression. Yet it is not all doom and gloom, for there still remain areas of calm where dedicated people continue to operate effectively. One such example exists at Dambari, near Bulawayo,



Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*

where the Marwell Zimbabwe Trust, registered in Zimbabwe as a not for profit NGO, is dedicated to conserving the wildlife of Zimbabwe and its habitats. This small but very effective organisation has been in existence for 10 years and we are now seeking additional partners to enable us to further our important conservation work. The Trust is playing an increasingly important role in conserving Zimbabwe's wildlife and has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) and pursues its main activities through conservation projects on antelope, cheetah and rhino and education. It is also a BIAZA and WAZA "approved" project.

The HQ of the Trust (Dambari) is situated 25km south of Bulawayo and has accommodation for students and visitors. The Trust is managed by Verity Bowman, a Zimbabwe resident, and supported by a staff of 20 with two full-time researchers working on small antelope and cheetah. In addition the Trust's education programme



White rhino *Ceratotherium simum*

provides placements for Zimbabwean students' work experience in research and methodology.

A collection of small antelope is held on site, represented by eight species: blue duiker, red duiker, grey duiker, yellow back duiker, Maxwell's duiker, suni, grysbok and steenbok. This collection is used for *ex situ* study of behaviour, life history and nutrition by visiting researchers as well as a resident researcher who is also carrying out a PhD study on the ecology of three species of antelope in the nearby Matopos National Park.

The second research project, on cheetah, has two objectives: firstly to determine the population size and distribution of the cheetah (this constitutes a PhD study); and secondly to reduce human/cheetah conflict through education and providing advice to farmers on non-lethal predator control.

The rhino project is a component of the Zimbabwe national rhino conservation plan for both black and white rhino, and together with PWMA and like-minded NGOs, the Trust contributes toward the execution of a national rhino management plan. The Trust also



Grey duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia*



Blue duiker *Cephalophus monticola*

provides logistical support for rhino operations such as individual marking, translocations, and emergency snare removal, and training PWMA staff.

Needless to say, this all costs money and the Trust is funded entirely by external funders. The two existing partners, Marwell Zoo and Paignton Zoo, have provided the core costs, with additional funding from grants received from the UK and USA for research projects and some of the rhino work.

I hope that, from this brief résumé of the Trust's activities, you will appreciate that it is fulfilling an extremely valuable role in helping to conserve important populations of endangered species in their natural habitat. Throughout Africa, the increasing demand for land by an expanding human population (in spite of war, famine and disease) is resulting in decreasing space for wildlife. In order for these wild populations to survive, there is an increasingly urgent

need for their planned management, and zoos have a moral responsibility as well as a legal requirement to contribute toward that management. Marwell Zimbabwe Trust offers you a way to meet those obligations, not only in the form of support for this valuable conservation work, but also an opportunity to make a contribution directly as a partner in the organization and planning of this work. Rather than being a passive supporter, here is the chance to become truly involved in sustaining *in situ* conservation of some of the world's most important mega fauna.

If you are interested in becoming such a partner you can find more information about the Trust through links on both Paignton and Marwell Zoos' web sites or please contact me at peter@marwellzimbabwe.org

Peter Stevens - Chairman, Marwell Zimbabwe Trust

Zoos in the 21st Century: Catalysts for Conservation?

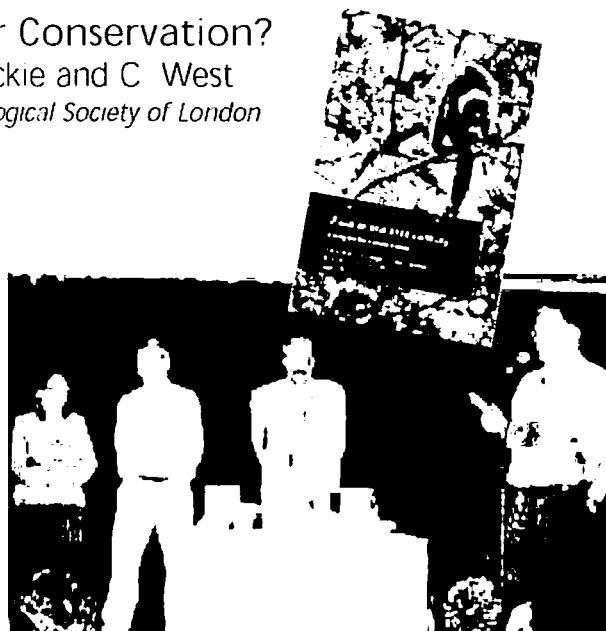
Edited by A. Zimmermann, M. Hatchwell, L. Dickie and C. West

Conservation Biology Series, Cambridge University Press/Zoological Society of London

The launch of the book 'Zoos in the 21st Century: Catalysts for Conservation?' took place on Monday 27 August, the first day of the WAZA Annual Conference, onboard a boat cruising along the River Danube in Budapest.

This, the final book in the Cambridge University Press Conservation Biology Series in conjunction with ZSL, is based upon the symposium 'Catalysts for Conservation: a Direction for Zoos in the 21st Century' which took place at ZSL in 2004. The symposium set out to be challenging, asking searching questions of zoos as to whether they were doing enough to achieve their conservation mission. In particular, the efficacy of zoo breeding programmes, education activities and input into *in situ* conservation were discussed. It also noted where zoos were doing well, with our ability to bring together many disparate groups to work collaboratively for conservation being a key achievement. This book follows on the theme, critiquing our current activities and suggesting future steps to ensure that zoos become a more powerful united force for conservation.

While the Danube has no doubt been the subject for many books, it's likely that few books make their debut upon its grand waters. Hopefully this signals an auspicious bath for this publication.



The launch of the book in Budapest with Lesley Dickie, Matthew Hatchwell, Gordon Reid and Chris West