

Sebakwe News

Editor : John Gripper

www.blackrhino.org

Registered Charity : 328461

Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust, Manor Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxon. OX7 6AL ☎ +44 (0)1993 830278

ZIMBABWE

The Road To Recovery

The world has been following the results of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe and the power sharing deal agreed between the politicians, but the question now being asked is: - How soon can Zimbabwe make a recovery?

The control of the economy is a first priority with hyperinflation running at 230 million percent and daily price rises in basic commodities, the value of the Zimbabwe dollar has plummeted so that it is virtually worthless. The recent decision for shopkeepers to be able to accept the US dollar, the Rand and fuel coupons is a first step in the right direction to stabilise the currency.

Following the occupation of many of the farms there has been a collapse in agricultural production and a shortage of food which has occurred because the new farmers had little experience of farming and were unwilling or unable to put up the necessary capital into agricultural production. Some way must be found to encourage back the farming expertise that was lost. The question will arise as to the ownership of land that was seized by the government and the judgement of the SADC Tribunal will be closely followed.

Zimbabwe has a great asset in its tourism but the wildlife must be fully protected. The continuing economic decline has produced a surge in the poaching and killing of wildlife. Sadly, this recent increase in poaching has affected all the National Parks and rhino conservancies, including the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy, which has suffered from the further killing of rhino and other wildlife by snares and shooting.



The economic situation in Zimbabwe will not improve until a democratic Government is recognised by nations around the world, who will

be able to provide much needed international aid by the injection of capital and expertise for the reconstruction of agriculture, tourism and the business community with the establishment of sound finances for the country.

Once a process of regeneration has started then this should encourage the return to the country of the millions of Zimbabweans who have left. They will bring back with them their professional knowledge and skills to help with the process of recovery.

Robert Fana Tizayi



Robert Tizayi joined the Conservancy in August 2008 as an Assistant Conservator. He will be replacing Norman English who has left the Conservancy for greener pastures.

Robert was previously employed by National Parks at Lake Sebakwe as Senior Wildlife Officer. He has been with Parks since 1973 and he came highly recommended by Norman English who has worked with him at Parks. He has a vast knowledge and experience in the monitoring and management of rhino and also has experience in the training of conservancy scouts and guards.

We are extremely fortunate to have him working in Dave Strydom's team and welcome him to the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy.

Garrett P Killilea



Gary Killilea is the new Chairman of the Conservancy and replaces Lockie Baird who, following eviction from his farm, is now working outside the country with an aircraft freight company.

Gary is owner of Moreena Ranch and has worked for many years in Zimbabwe as a consulting engineer. He plans to retire from his professional work and spend more time on his farming and wildlife interests.

We are very fortunate to have Gary take on this difficult job of keeping all the different members united with the common purpose of protecting the rhino and other wildlife. His natural Irish charm and quiet persuasive approach have already been appreciated by his appointment as the Honorary Consul of Ireland to Zimbabwe.

Storm & Robin Morrison

Storm has acted as secretary to both the Education Centre and the Conservancy over the last few years and is an essential and important part of the team. Storm *has gotten engaged* and is to be married to a dairy farmer and will be moving to Chegutu.

Robin Morrison, who already works in Storm's office, is being trained up to take over the secretarial responsibilities from Storm after the wedding.



Pauldale and Rockvale Schools

Although it was at a weekend when we visited these two schools, we found many of the villagers and the schoolchildren waiting to welcome us. Pauldale School now has 320 pupils and they pointed out to us that it was important to get the roof on the main classrooms by the end of September when the rains were expected, as the alternative was for the children to walk 17 kilometres each day to get to the nearest school at Sebakwe.

We had previously purchased asbestos sheeting for the roof but had had difficulty in obtaining the right timber to finish off the supporting wooden beams. However on this visit we managed to purchase all the rest of the timber required and the remaining sheeting needed for the roof at a cost of US\$2000.



We also had to explain that we had been unable to obtain and distribute the Mahewu protein drink this year because we had been advised not to hand out any food as this could be seen as politically incorrect at the time of the Presidential Elections. We now plan to start the distribution of Mahewu again to the school children in six schools in our area.

At Rockvale School we were asked to help with the provision of clean water as they had no borehole in the village and got their drinking water from surface pools. Pauldale School did have a water borehole but we were told that this was for the whole of the local community and did not have a sufficient capacity for the many school children as well. We are helping the two schools to apply to water charities for two new boreholes.

The rhino scholarship scheme is going well and we now have eight children at secondary boarding school and six children at day secondary school. This year we plan to give two boarding scholarships and four day scholarships to the local children.

All the local schools had benefited by the container which had been sent in conjunction with School Aid and we are planning to send a further container of school books and games to schools in Zimbabwe.

Growing from strength to strength: the case

Established in 2003 and officially opened by the Vice President of Zimbabwe, Dr. J. Msika in 2005, the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre (a project of the Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe funded by the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust-UK) continue to grow from strength to strength in terms of its set goals and objectives of promoting environmental education, awareness, and sustainable development in and around communities surrounding the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy in Zimbabwe. In order to achieve the set objectives the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre runs three environmental conservation programmes, namely;

- **Sebakwe Environmental Education Programme (SEEP)**
- **“Making Rhino Conservation Make Sense” (A Community Based Natural Resources Management Programme)**
- **Environment and Wildlife Research (in collaboration with local and international universities and institutes)**

Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre continue to grow and flourish irregardless of the current political and socio-economic climate in the country. Thanks to our main donors and other supportive partners. The following is a representation of some of the landmark achievements for the centre within the period December 2007 to September 2008 and these are given in relation to the centre's three flagship programmes referred to above;

Sebakwe Environmental Education Programme

Within this programme we managed to;

- Organize and run 5 teachers workshops on environmental education and sustainability.
- Conducted 2 professional development environmental educators' courses for local teachers. Four of the participants went on to qualify and participated in SADC REEP Attachment Fellowship Environmental Educators' course run in South Africa at Umgeni Valley (WESSA's Environmental Education Centre in Howick).
- Help establish School Environmental Policies (SEPs) in 28 local schools (These policies are aimed at strengthening environmental learning and management in schools and provide the driving force that keep SEEP moving. Plans are underway to reward these schools by either a kind of flag and certificate).
- Organized, and secured sponsorship for the 2008 Midlands province Wildlife Quiz Competition. 15 schools participated.
- Worked with local schools and other stakeholders to commemorate the 2008 World Environment Day, 2008 World Wetlands Day and the 2007 National Tree Planting Day.
- Established 40 School-based Wildlife Clubs in Kwekwe District.
- Supported and was part of the Save the Rhino International Awareness.
- Organized and hosted 21 school environmental education/bush camps for local primary and secondary school children. These camps provide learners with great opportunities to experience and learn from nature. More funding is needed to further benefit more schools. *A game drive 4x4 truck/ tractor is needed to allow bigger numbers of learners to participate in the activities undertaken within the camps.*
- Established a thriving tree and herbal nursery supplying the communities with trees and herbs to plant at their homesteads Campaign 2008 programme in Zimbabwe.



of Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre by Clayton Zazu

Making Rhino Conservation Make Sense

The programme is aimed at helping local communities to actively participate in the conservation of natural resources within their areas and at the same time be able to draw benefits from their conservation efforts. The programme is also heavily biased towards making local communities appreciate the need to help protect the endangered black rhinoceros population in the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy.

Under this programme the centre have managed to;

- Conduct 6 community outreach and awareness activities.
- Conduct 4 community sensitization workshops targeting the local village leaderships
- Establish 6 village conservation committees (VCC) in the villages forming the southern boundary of the conservancy. More work is underway to go round the entire conservancy
- Help establish and train Village based Anti-poaching Scouts (VBAS) in communities around the conservancy. These local youth act as village environmental watch dogs and informers to the local police and national parks. Up to date we are pleased to announce that these scouts have managed to reduce cases of poaching, bush fires and other unsustainable practices within their villages. The same scouts have conducted very effective snare sweeps and so far have collected more than one million wire snares and thus saving wildlife and even their own livestock.
- Distributed school text books and other educational materials to 10 local schools. These are donated by SBRT and School Aid. This move is making great impact in alleviating shortage of learning support materials in the impoverished schools.
- Continue running the Rhino Scholarship project. To date a total of 15 children are benefiting from this project. All their fees, uniforms, stationery and related educational needs are being met by SBRT.
- Support the construction of a classroom block at a local school, and now helping to secure funding to provide clean and safe water supplies for the identified 6 schools around the conservancy.



Funding of all these community projects is raised in the name of rhino conservation and it is only because of the rhino that local people are getting this benefit. The same communities are now very much aware of this important link and are thus now actively supporting all activities related to rhino protection. *Is this not making rhino conservation make sense?*

Environment and Wildlife Research

This is a programme run in collaboration with local and international colleges and universities and has so far;

- Funded and supported 8 university students drawn from Midlands State University, Chinhoyi University of Technology and National University of Science and Technology, to carry out research focusing on Wildlife and Environmental issues and risks.
- Research areas covered ranged from social sciences (exploring the human wildlife relationship and interactions) to purely ecology oriented research focusing black rhino ecology.
- Collaboration with international universities is being organized as a way of promoting the sharing of expertise amongst researchers in Zimbabwe and the outside world



In order to get value from the research being done plans are also underway for a Research Symposium (Seminar) to which local and international colleges and universities are invited. The aim of this seminar is allow the researchers to share results and implications of their research projects on real conservation work. A lot of wildlife and environment research is being done in Zimbabwe as evidenced by the number of graduates and post graduates in environmental related fields every year. There is therefore need for a forum where questions on quality, relevance and impact of all our research efforts can be openly critiqued and discussed.



Poaching

There has been a recent upsurge in the poaching of rhinos, thought to be associated with the continued deterioration of the environment.

On the 13th of August 2008, a patrol on Pitiscottie found the carcasses of a dead rhino and her calf in very thick bush. They had been shot with an AK47 rifle and the horns removed. These carcasses were 2/3 months old. The rhino cow was identified as Sighambe and the calf as Mukamba.



On the 21st August a rhino carcass was found on Pitiscottie and the horns had been removed. This carcass was in a bad state of decomposition and thought to be three months old. It had been shot with an AK47 rifle and had large chop marks visible on the spine half way along its back. The identity of this rhino was not known and appears to have come from Iwaba.

On 26th August a rhino cow and calf were found dead on Kavija. They had both been shot with an AK 47 rifle and the horns removed. This rhino was identified as Siphon and the calf Siyabonga which had been born in May 2008. These two rhinos had also been axed through the spine in a similar way to the previous three rhinos killed by the poachers suggesting that the same gang had killed all five rhinos.

On 29th August shots were heard on Kavija in the same area. The scouts were immediately deployed to the area and located 2 poachers in camouflage uniforms each carrying an AK47 rifle and skinning out a zebra. These two poachers were arrested and taken into custody at Kwe Kwe Central police station.

When the Army took over Iwaba Estates it was thought that there were about 45 black and white rhinos on this farm. Until recently, we have not had full access to monitor the present position on Iwaba but it is feared that many of these rhinos have now been killed.

After Piggy was snared and killed by poachers in February 2008, Rebecca and her calf have been wandering outside the conservancy and in great danger from poachers who have been leaving out cable snares and oranges laced with cyanide poison. It was decided that for her own safety she should be moved and it was arranged that she and her calf would be translocated to Buvi River Conservancy. Unfortunately the calf was injured during the translocation and died the day after it arrived at Buvi River.

g Report

hing of wildlife and rhino in Zimbabwe, which is
erioration of the economic situation in the country.

Recorded Wildlife Poached Data 2008

Species	Poached in August	Poached Jan - Aug
Black Rhinoceros	5	5
Elands	5	11
Sables		7
Zebras	6	30
Kudus	6	18
Impalas	9	26
Warthogs	2	25
Giraffes		2
Tsessebes		5
Wildbeest		3
Duikers	1	4
Bushpigs	1	6
TOTALS	35	142

The total number of wire snares removed from all properties :-
August = 219
Jan - Aug = 881

The total number of poachers arrested :-
August = 9
Jan - Aug = 70



Donkeys by John Gripper

On my recent visit to the Midlands Conservancy in Zimbabwe, it had been arranged that Nicholas Duncan, the Director of SAVE Foundation, Australia would visit the Conservancy with me. His Trust has been very supportive to the Midlands Conservancy over the years and we are most grateful for their continuing interest and support.

Driving back one afternoon from the Education Centre to our Camp, we passed a donkey cart and saw that the occupants were using sticks to beat three donkeys with unnecessary force to try and make them go faster.

We stopped the cart and Nicholas then gave the two people a very stern lecture on animal welfare and told them in no uncertain manner that they should love and respect their donkeys and not mistreat them.



This photograph shows the extent of the injuries the beatings had caused the animals.

The following day we passed on the information over this cruelty to our Conservator, Dave Strydom and also to Dee Gilpin who will both be keeping a close watch on the future welfare of these donkeys.

Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust Accounts

	2006	2007
Income	£	£
Donations and Covenants	36,396	17,885
Memberships subscriptions	1,418	1,226
Adopt a rhino scheme	925	923
Gift Aid refund	1,890	2,132
Quiz	215	485
Dividends & Interest	4,486	4,779
Grants -SAVE	3,710	8,780
Grants RCVS & EAZA	0	25,634
Scholarship Fund	1,585	725
Total	50,625	62,569

	2006	2007
Expenditure	£	£
Printing, postage & telephone	2,753	2,587
Legacy Advertsing	350	490
Travel	2,221	5,310
Miscellaneous	139	291
Transfer to Africa	38,222	47,346
Vehicle purchase /repair	0	14,205
Container costs	0	533
Surplus/Def inc over exp	6,940	-8,193
Total	50,625	62,569

The Need for Water

Provision of clean water for school children is very vital and a pre-requisite for a healthy school. However because of the declining economic situation in Zimbabwe, most communities including the Sebakwe area do not have access to safe drinking water.

A base line survey that was conducted by SBRT centre in Zimbabwe (Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre) revealed that the lack of access to clean and safe drinking water inherent in the Sebakwe area constitutes a health and environmental risk which if not rectified might lead to outbreak of water borne diseases.

Whilst SBRT is doing very well in sourcing funds to support and sustain its community conservation projects, we are seeking support from other charitable organisations or individuals for the sinking of 6 boreholes within the local schools in Sebakwe community. The names of the schools targeted are; Pauldale School, Rockvale School, Mopani Park School, Bushy Park school, Msena School, and Guzuzu School.

None of these schools have safe water sources and all draw their water from shallow unprotected wells. Teachers in these schools have to bring their own water from nearby town

The Costs

Current estimates for the drilling, casing and installation of a hand pump is approximately US\$10,000.00 (Ten thousand American Dollars). This includes the diesel required, the prospecting for suitable water table, and the installation of the hand pump.



This teacher is fetching water from a shallow unprotected well. The water is not safe for drinking *but* he has no choice !!

If you can help us with funding the costs of providing clean fresh water to these schools then the back page of this newsletter has details of how and where to send your donations. Every little drop will help !

Stop Press !!

As we were preparing this news letter we received the following information:-

On Friday 5th September, in a well planned and executed operation, a green BMW dropped off two shooters in the early morning and continued to drive around the area. Tapiwa was grazing close to the road; she was shot and killed by a USSR made 7.62 long range rifle.

The car was stopped at Lalapanzi and two people were arrested, they were later released. Subsequently the weapon and spent cartridges were found and these have been sent for ballistic testing.

WWF have issued a Press statement saying that rhino poaching has escalated in Zimbabwe with 70 rhinos killed since January 2000 and despite many arrests not a single Zimbabwean poacher has been convicted.

Tapiwa's five month old male calf, Tenashe, has been caught and moved to Buby Valley for hand raising where he will be with Carla and Lisa Marie.

Tenashe is already bottle feeding and is settling into his new home. The girls are not sure about him yet but we wil give them time and I am sure we are going to have a formidable gang on our hands. He will need bottle feeding for at least a year and we will be needing more skimmed milk powder.



Tenashe has been added to our adoption list

A Gorilla Family Called Rushegura by Annie Gripper

The Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is a designated World Heritage Site and lies in the south west of Uganda, near to the Congo border and the Virunga Mountains. It is home to some 360 Mountain Gorillas and four groups have been habituated to allow people to visit them.

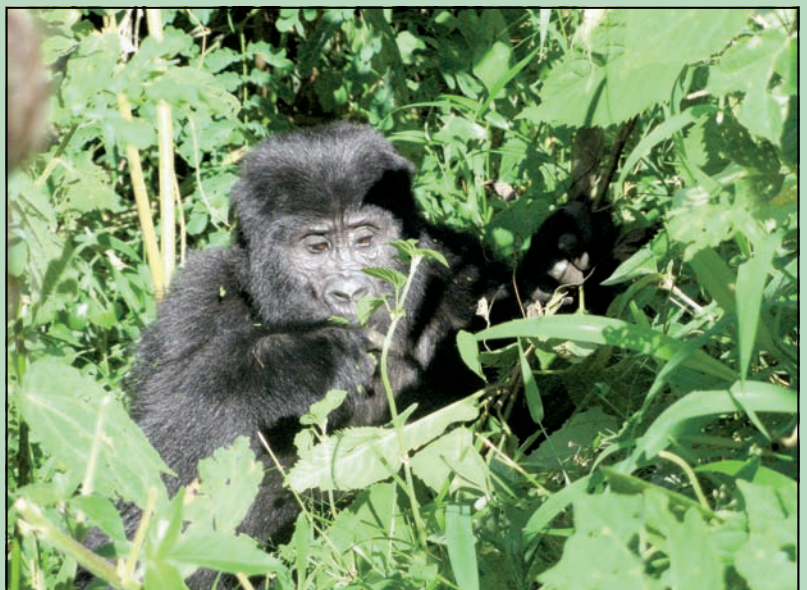
In May 2008 we were fortunate to be able to stay overnight in the village and to trek up a mountain to view one family of 15 Gorillas with one Silverback in charge. Early in the morning we were well briefed on the gorilla rules, no one with a communicable disease such as flu or diarrhoea was allowed to visit, keep a distance of at least 5 meters from the gorillas, avoid sudden movements or noise, bury all human faeces, no flash photography, no eating or smoking within 200 meters of them and if they approach you - do not make eye contact but move back slowly. Contact time with the gorillas was strictly limited to one hour.

The gradient up the mountain was very steep but the guards, guides and porters were relaxed and happy to travel at my slow pace and insisted on regular stops for drinks of water.

Finally after an exhausting two hour trek, we reached the summit having climbed from 1000 meters to 2200 meters and suddenly we found ourselves surrounded by the Rushegura family of gorillas who were moving down a slope eating their breakfast from the bushes.

They completely ignored our small group of humans – even the small baby gorilla just got on with its eating. We sat watching and following them for our allotted time of one hour – taking lots of photos before they moved off to another area.

The whole experience was amazing. The size of the silverback was huge – his one hand was the equivalent of three of my hands put together but the gorillas were all very gentle and hardly made any noise as they moved along - only shaking tree branches and bushes on their way as they ate the leaves.



We felt very privileged to have shared one hour with them and the exertion of the climb was well worth it. The return to base camp was an eye-opener as I couldn't believe I had trekked up such a steep mountain, but I must have – because I did see the gorillas!!!!.

Please Help Us !!!

Adopting a rhino cost just £25 for two years and is an excellent Birthday or Wedding present for your friends or relations. Our Website (www.blackrhino.org) has a full list and display of pictures of the rhinos for adoption.

Membership, Adoption, Quiz, Scholarship & Donations form

Tick		Amount £
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership -	£20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult Membership -	£12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Junior Membership - £5 (12 years and below)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adoption Donation -	£25
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiz -	£
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scholarship Fund -	£
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools Water Project -	£
<input type="checkbox"/>	General donations -	£

PLEASE PRINT

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Tel:.....

Total enclosed £

Completed forms to be returned to:-

Annie Gripper
Manor Farm
Ascott under Wychwood
OXON
OX7 6AL

Tel: +44 (0)1993 830 278

Fax: +44 (0)1993 830 395

Cheques - Please make payable to SBRT

Visa/Mastercard

Card Number

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Valid From

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Expires End

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CV2 No (last 3 digits on rear)

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For Adoptions - Send (with or without) card to:-

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post Code.....

From.....

.....

Tel:.....

Signature.....

I wish to ADOPT for TWO YEARS:-

TANGARIRA

TENASHE

THABANI

ROSALIND

Name of Adopter for certificate.....Special date (if required).....

Please sign the following form so that we can reclaim 28% GIFT AID tax relief.

I am a UK taxpayer and want the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust to treat all donations I have made since 6th April 2000 and all donations that I make from the date of this declaration, unless I notify you otherwise, as gift donations.

Signature.....

Date.....