

wildlife

MATTERS



David Shepherd
Wildlife Foundation

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE **DAVID SHEPHERD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION**
SAVING CRITICALLY ENDANGERED MAMMALS IN THEIR WILD HABITAT

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Dundi's with her calf saying hello to father Ombika
Courtesy: Lucky Mavrandonis



Dundi and her female calf, Vuyakasi – July 2007
Photo: Johan de Klerk



Cheetah male at MZNP

Adopt Dundi and save more rhinos like her.

Five-year focus on black rhinos

Report from **Sue Downie & Lucky Mavrandonis** in South Africa

This June saw the expansion project at South Africa's Mountain Zebra National Park culminate with the release of four cheetahs into the area. With the help of David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) the first phase for the Mountain Zebra National Park (MZNP) has been completed. The overall size of this vital habitat has been extended from 6,500 to 28,800 hectares providing much needed space for the black rhino and other animals such as Cape mountain zebra, buffalo, gemsbok and cheetah.

Our success has been underlined by the birth of sixteen calves during the project period. A very special moment occurred when Shibula's first calf, Dundi, gave birth to her own calf in March. We had almost despaired of Dundi producing any offspring, but she surprised us all when the calf arrived. The staff at MZNP have named the baby female Vuyakasi which means "Happy". She was the second female calf to be born this year and gives us much hope for a continued increase in the rhino population there.

Despite our excitement at the births we are never complacent about the safety of the rhinos and always have to be vigilant. Reports from around the world tell us that poaching is on the increase and that rhino are the target of well-organised and professional gangs. In Zimbabwe alone, at least 40 black rhino have been poached in

State Parks and conservation groups are desperately trying to protect them by de-horning once again.

In South Africa, we have heard reports of elephants and rhino poaching in parks bordering Mozambique and Zimbabwe and in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. Here, the terrible trade in rhino horn has

claimed as many as 70 rhino in the last six years with 17 in 2006 alone.

On just one day during the week of 15 July 2007, a combined exercise between the Environmental Management Inspectorate, SA Revenue Service, Customs and the SA Police Service Border Police, proved just what we are up against when they seized a suitcase stuffed with four rhino horns on an international flight at Johannesburg Airport.

All this highlights the importance of the generous support of DSWF in South Africa. Regular monitoring of all our black rhino has become an absolute necessity and intervention where necessary in attempts to save injured or sick animals.

Since the Black Rhino Monitoring Project began in 2002 with only 12 rhino to monitor, we have increased our responsibility to cover four national parks, six areas and five times more animals to protect.

The South Western black rhinoceros population in South Africa has been supplemented by the translocation of rhinos from Namibia. In a regional exchange programme in May this year, DSWF sponsored the move of several black rhino to National Parks in the Cape provinces of South Africa. DSWF is a committed partner in the regional programme and will encourage other similar exchanges.

DSWF support has been vital to the success of our projects and we have had some wonderful successes, but complacency is not an option, and with your help we can continue to fight for the survival of black rhino, ward off evil poachers, and ensure the rhino's health and safety.

South African National Parks recently sponsored the publication of our report "Focus on Rhino – monitoring black rhinoceros in South African National Parks". To view this report visit our website www.davidshepherd.org

