

*Patrons: The Lord McAlpine of West Green, David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay AM, Nick Price***PRESIDENT'S REPORT****RHINO POACHING CONTINUES AROUND ZIMBABWE**

More than 150 black and white rhinos have been killed illegally since January 2008, some 20% of Zimbabwe's total. As reported in the previous edition of our newsletter, this is the highest level of poaching activity in the past 15 years. There was a slight lull from May to August, after nine poachers had been killed in three separate contacts in the south-east of the country, but they are now back and up to their old tricks!

It has been fairly widely reported, both in the southern African and world media, that the Zimbabwe rhino poaching syndicates are clearly linked to highly placed government officials, senior military personnel, Chinese nationals and some staff within the ranks of National Parks. I'd like to emphasize that the previous statement is based on publicly available media information and not my own personal research. Another concerning fact is that every single poacher who has been brought before the courts in recent years has been released on bail or had the charges dismissed—many times when there had been written confessions!?

Members of the various rhino intensive protection zones and conservancies are to be congratulated on their bravery in confronting the various armed gangs around the country. We are indebted to their courage and commitment to maintain the rhino numbers within Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, their wholehearted efforts are being undermined by just a few people who are hell bent on harvesting the remaining rhino horns whilst the country is still in a state of semi-lawlessness.



On our recent June trip, committee members were joined by **Geoff Day**, a senior member of **Macquarie Private Wealth**. We spent three days with **Raoul Du Toit**, **Chris Fogg** and the **rhino operations team**—all highly experienced and dedicated men and women, and were proud to be able to view their considerable expertise as they tracked, immobilized, dehorned/implanted, and trans-located rhinos from **Bubiana** to **Bubye River**. Geoff was sufficiently

impressed with this amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience, that he and **Macquarie Foundation** have very kindly donated the net sum of **\$9,000** to the **Lowveld Rhino Trust**. So, a very big thank you to Geoff and Macquarie for their splendid support of this vital work.

We started a new project in April in the **Sinamatella IPZ**, a joint project between **SAVE FOUNDATION** and the **Dete Animal Rescue Trust (DART)**, under the management of **Trevor Lane** and **Stephen Long**. This has been tremendously successful, to the extent that the local area manager, **Moses Gomwe**, has asked us to continue to monitor the rhino with his own rangers/staff, in order to prepare a complete dossier on the movements within the IPZ. This is well under way and has been enhanced by the involvement of a number of French volunteers, who each spent six days walking the hills of Sinamatella in search of rhino evidence. Well done to you all and long may it continue and perhaps our joint efforts can be expanded to other parts of Zimbabwe.



The social highlight of the last few months was undoubtedly "**An entertaining evening with Merv Hughes**" at the **Hyatt Regency Perth** on 6 May. **Three hundred and sixty** members and supporters attended this gala occasion and were duly entertained by a very professional and high standard address by Merv. He had the whole audience in the palm of his hand as he rolled out story after story, and it was a great night. To add to the merits of the evening we also ended up with a massive profit of **\$107,000**, mainly from the auction.

I am pleased to report that we have had well in excess of an 80% membership renewal rate and I thank you all for your ongoing support and I also appeal to those of you who have yet to send in your subscriptions to please do so as soon as you can. Thank you. Our members are very important to us and form the basis of all that we do and we're proud to have the loyal following that we enjoy.

At a ceremony in Harare on 9 September attended by 21 Zimbabwean conservation dignitaries and 10 safari travellers, I was delighted to receive from the chairman, **Emmanuel Fundira**, on behalf of SAVE, the **2009 Zimbabwe Council for Tourism Green Globe 21 Award** for services to conservation and the environment.



Our next big fundraiser takes place on 15 December, again in the Grand Ballroom, Hyatt Regency Perth, where we will be joined by the celebrated Channel Nine cricket commentator, **Mark Nicholas**, who you will find to be a most professional and polished after-dinner speaker. Members tickets at the special price of \$99 are still available and we urge you to book soon. Thank you.

Sixty-five members and their guests attended the AGM on 1 July and the following committee was elected:

Nicholas Duncan	President
Mike Palmer	Vice-President
Nia Carras	Treasurer
Kim Hoddy	Secretary
Evelyn Wong	Special Projects
Geoff Hoddy	Committee Member
Steve Harrison	Committee Member
Tracey Bernasconi	Committee Member
David Michie	Committee Member

Retiring member, **Miriam Bauman**, was thanked for all her efforts, in particular, with recent issues of the Newsletter.

After the formalities, **Geoff Hoddy** gave a running commentary to a 30 minute video that he had taken in June of the dehorning programme in Bubiana conservancy. It included great footage and some very nice stories and explanations and enthralled all of our guests.

As usual, your President couldn't resist selling off some of our pictures and carvings and a total of \$2460 was raised on the night, plus six new memberships. Thanks everyone.

Nicholas S. Duncan

ZIMBABWE UPDATE

The rhino wars continue as you have already read! Just about all of the eleven different rhino strongholds have come under attack this year, and we need to pay credit to the hard work, determination and commitment of all those in the front line, in particular, **Norman English, Blondie Leatham, Graham Connear, Mike Ball, Mark Brightman, Natasha Anderson, Dave Strydom, Astrid Heulin**, and **all their brave rangers**, plus the local police, who run the risk of confronting armed gangs of poachers with AK47 automatic weapons. To all these men and women we owe a debt of gratitude for continuing to fight the good fight. Their efforts have been rewarded partly with the demise of nine rhino poachers, all knowingly plotting to illegally kill rhinos for their prized horns which are being systematically slipped out of the country to far-east destinations. The same trend is very evident in South Africa where Kruger National Park has come under heavy siege this year. It is most disappointing to note that a white South African national, a frequent visitor to southern Zimbabwe rhino areas, escapes prosecution and appears to have some form of immunity from justice.



On the positive side, our shared programme with DART in Sinamatella is one of the most pleasing operations that we have undertaken in recent years. Stephen Long has the full support of area manager Moses Gomwe and senior ecologist **Hilary Madiri**, and with his local rangers and French visitors is systematically walking the rough terrain of Sinamatella to establish the rhino numbers. For any of our younger and active members who would like two weeks of challenging bush walking please contact me for further details of this most worthwhile project.



A couple of months ago, a wounded rhino that had been released recently from snare wire by vet, Chris Foggin, charged Moses as he was trying to review the progress of the wound healing. Unfortunately, he was knocked down and then charged again receiving severe rib injuries. He was still under the weather when we visited a few weeks ago. Get better soon, Moses, and congratulations to you and your men for your spirit and courage. Sadly the wounded rhino has recently died.

The various vehicles that we donated two years ago are proving to be invaluable in the field, namely our blue canter truck being used for anti-poaching in the Victoria Falls area, our canter truck on the shores of Kariba, fresh from some recent repairs, and our canter being used for deployment and supply runs in Sinamatella. We are also in the process of refurbishing the five landcruisers we donated in 1991-1992—it's amazing they are still repairable!

For those of you who can't imagine the terrain and living conditions under which the management, the officers and rangers exist, in Matusadonna they have to travel 130 kms in order to buy their groceries and supplies, and it's 50 kms from Sinamatella to Hwange town. All of this is on pretty rough roads and that is where our canters are proving to be a great asset, but also, they take a knocking from the heavy loads they carry and the rough roads they traverse. More spare parts from Japan are being sent to Zimbabwe as this newsletter is being written. But there is no doubt that this has been very wise expenditure on our part and is making life much more bearable for the national parks employees. At our recent committee meeting we voted to buy another 4 x 4 twin cab, an Isuzu ute, which is being refurbished by our expert mechanic, **Steve Harrison of Topline Autos**. This will be in field operations by the end of this year.

Chris Davison, our Bulawayo-based coordinator, is acting as our projects link man with all the ongoing maintenance issues, spare parts, payments and so on. It is a part-time position for Chris working from his family farm. We are indebted to the contribution he has made to our cause this year and we hope that it will continue well into the future. We always enjoy meeting up with Chris on our frequent visits to Zimbabwe and to catch up with all that is going on.

MERV HUGHES FUNDRAISER



As reported elsewhere 360 supporters attended our May fundraiser at the **Hyatt Regency Perth**. The catalyst for their visit was to meet and hear celebrated fast bowler **Merv Hughes** recount some of his funnier moments. They were not disappointed! Merv was kindly hosted by **Jason Giles Chartered Accountants**.

On arrival the guests were welcomed by 50 large items for auction on the front stage, together with another 70 for a silent auction along two of the other walls! Quite a handful! Event coordinators would suggest that this is far too excessive and they are right! However, we like to do things a little differently and because of our amazing passion for the cause, the value for money for the evening, we therefore feel that people will be supportive of our methods. After all, having sampled the fine food prepared by the **banqueting staff at the Hyatt**, tasted the wines and beers so generously donated by **Ferngrove Wines, Fine Wine Partners, Heineken** and **Little Creatures**, being presented with all we do in Zimbabwe and having been thoroughly entertained by Merv, why wouldn't our guests want to spend all their money on the auction items?! To those of you who did support the bidding, we thank you very much as it proves to be one of the biggest totals that we have raised in our history. To all others, we trust you had a most enjoyable evening and we look forward to your further support of future fundraisers.

Our celebrity guest, **Merv Hughes** gave one of the most entertaining speeches that has been heard at one of our cricket fundraisers. The whole audience was in awe of his professionalism and wit as he completely commanded their attention for a full 40 minutes, to be followed by the most generous round of applause and acclamation. Thanks, Merv, so much, for making the trip to Perth to help our worthy cause. In 2002 Merv played in one of our rhino cricket matches.



Auctioneer **Terry Hardie**, despite a very bad back and a need for repeated moments of rest, worked tremendously hard right throughout the auction to help sell just about all of the items. A couple were passed in, not reaching their reserve, but the remainder went for good prices and will be cherished by their new owners. Centre piece amongst our memorabilia were signed albums by none other than the **Beatles** and **Elvis Presley**. These were purchased by two of our guests after the auction for a very satisfactory amount for all concerned. After adding it all up, we raised a whopping **\$107,000** most of which has been spent already on projects in Zimbabwe, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter.

We should like to thank all our generous bidders in the main auction for making this such a success, plus auctioneer **Terry Hardie**, **Carmel Leaker** of **Ferngrove Wines**, **David Bird** of **Fine Wine Partners**, **David Hancorne** from **Heineken**, and **Miles Hull, Little Creatures**.

SYDNEY FUNDRAISER

The SAVE FOUNDATION Fundraiser held in Sydney on 5 September was our most successful to date raising \$38,000. The occasion was to celebrate 20 years of fundraising in NSW.

*The Black Tie Ball was held at the Hunters Hill Sailing Club for 180 guests. Guests enjoyed a wonderful three course sit down dinner, South African wines, and danced the night away to a great DJ. Author **Tony Park**, gave us a fascinating insight into his life in the African bush. He spends six months of every year in southern Africa together with his wife, researching and writing novels set in Africa, whilst also taking part in annual wildlife census counts.*

Taronga Western Plains Zoo presented a short DVD outlining the progress made since the inception of their rhino captive breeding program in Dubbo 15 years ago.

*The Live and Silent Auctions raised a total of \$22,000. The 11-day safari, kindly donated by **African Wildlife Safaris** and **Wilderness Safaris**, raised \$12,000.*

*VIP guests included the **Botswana High Commission's First Secretary Mr Mokoto**, who flew up specially from Canberra for the event, and **Mr Matthew Fuller, General Manager of Taronga Western Plains Zoo**, who made the trip from Dubbo together with a group of rhino keepers.*

*Funds from the night will go towards much needed equipment for the **Mombo Rhino Trust** in the **Okavango Delta**, where white rhino have been successfully breeding since their reintroduction into Botswana in 2001.*

Dee Williamson

Chairman, SAVE FOUNDATION (NSW)



AN EVENING WITH
MARK NICHOLAS ...

Grand Ballroom
Hyatt Regency, Perth
15 December 2009

\$99.00 all inclusive

Book now!



SEPTEMBER SAFARI

I was not sure what to expect when I went on the SAVE FOUNDATION's September safari. It exceeded my expectations by a long way. Was it because Nicholas had arranged a program with such a heavy emphasis on conservation of animals or was it because of the fantastic accommodation where we dined with our hosts and guides and learned so much? I am not sure, but I loved every moment of the tour! Of course we did get to see the wonderful animals of Africa including the Big Five, plus giraffe, zebra, impala and hippos and much more. We had great companions on the tour and we all benefitted from Nicholas explaining SAVE FOUNDATION's contribution to many projects in Zimbabwe including Save the Black Rhino, anti-poaching activities, and schools in Main Camp and Sinamatella.



Highlights were being made part of the family when dining at Imire Game Reserve and The Hide, patting lions at ALERT, looking at the Painted Dogs' display, the Presidential Elephants and meeting and working with the anti-poaching team in finding snares and learning about the lion project in the Main Camp area. The accommodation was first class—all self-contained, clean, functional and mainly mossie and baboon-proof—if one remembered to shut doors and windows! The food was fantastic and in many places, we just helped ourselves to the fridge. It is amazing how little one drinks when given open access to the bar. Our guides took tea, coffee and biscuits when we went out on safari in the morning or early afternoon. In the late afternoon, they brought cocktails, beer, wine and snacks for us to enjoy as we watched the sun setting in magnificent surroundings.



The tour was a photographer's dream. We vied with each other for the best photos of Victoria Falls from the chopper, for the best lion shots (who took the photos of the lions mating or the lioness drinking from The Hide waterhole?), the leopard yawning, the elephants and buffalo on our morning walks and the more than 70 different birds including the vultures and Maribou storks on the elephant carcass in Chobe. Some took magnificent action shots of carmine bee-eaters, lilac breasted rollers, Pell's fishing owl and the African fish eagle.

Victoria Falls Hotel was magnificent and just so colonial. We were back in the time of Dr Livingstone we presume! Luckily the tour was organised to enable us to have our laundry done every three or so days. We were limited by what we brought because we volunteered to help the SAVE FOUNDATION by bringing with us badly needed equipment such as batteries, chargers, school clothes, books and even five litres of cod-liver oil.

I certainly felt safe the entire tour and am arranging to go back again next year.

Helen Fairnie



WHERE OUR FUNDS HAVE BEEN SPENT OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Lowveld Rhino Trust	103,040
National Parks projects	96,656
Tikki Hywood Trust	25,831
Veterinary drugs and equipment	22,953
Hwange anti-poaching unit	12,880
SAVE FOUNDATION co-ordinator	10,781
Tracking and communication equipment	10,701
Midlands Rhino Conservancy	7,738
Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia	6,022
Other projects	19,924
TOTAL	\$316,526



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