

Zimbabwe Update

As reported above, we have continued to lend as much support as possible to various wildlife projects within Zimbabwe and surrounding countries, but with special emphasis on the black rhino in Zimbabwe. We are involved in projects within Save Valley conservancy, Bubiana and Bubiye River conservancies, Gourlays Ranch, the Midlands Conservancy and Imire Game Ranch. In addition, the Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) of Matusadona, Sinamatella, Chipinge and Matobo are also part of our plans, these all being within the Zimbabwe National Parks.

After the outbreak of poaching in 2003 and early 2004, particularly in Sinamatella, we are happy to report that there have only been 2 known cases during the past 12 months, one at Main Camp, Hwange, and one in the Midlands. The Main Camp incident was in November and was most disappointing as it involved a local National Parks Ranger, who subsequently admitted to the slaughter. Due to particularly good follow-up work by National Parks and Simon from CIRAD, the horns were tracked to a house in Hwange town, some 80km from the poaching site. Four culprits were arrested and charged with possession of rhino horn, and are currently out on bail awaiting their court appearance. The self-confessed poacher (Parks Ranger) has died in custody and will not be able to give evidence against them! We await the outcome of their trial with interest.

Stop Press: The rhino horn has mysteriously disappeared from Hwange police station!

We continue to support the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy, our main contribution being towards the running expenses for the conservator and the anti-poaching units. We welcome Stan Elliott, the new conservator since November, and commend him for the great work that he is doing with the anti-poaching guys throughout the whole Conservancy.



Mike Palmer, Eleanor Lowe (Midlands rhino monitor), Nicholas Duncan and Evelyn Wong discuss latest happenings in the Midlands Conservancy by the Perth beachside (March 2005).

The black rhino poached in the Midlands was on Circle G Ranch, and was a 4 year old female sub-adult. Her fate is graphically displayed below. This occurred last October and subsequent investigations are still in progress; at this time, we are unable to comment further.



RIP Fungai, Zimbabwe

New field kit was delivered to the specially trained monitoring scouts in Save Valley, Bubiana and the Midlands and this will certainly act as encouragement in their ongoing motivation with the very important duties of rhino identification that they perform. Keep up your great work, fellows, and we will be happy to continue to support your field operations. They are certainly delighted with their new uniforms, which are a mixture of ex-British and French army outfits. They are of a very high quality and similar products have been with the Sinamatella Rangers for the past 8 years.



Save Valley Conservancy rhino monitors with their new kit.

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management has recently transformed into National Parks and Wildlife Authority, to be run independently of the Government. This meant that all current staff within the Department had to re-apply for their positions with the Authority, together with infrastructure changes towards the top level of