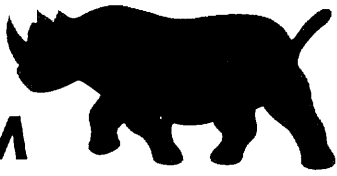


**RHINO  
MUSEUM**



**Rhino & Elephant Foundation**

**Newsletter No 22 December 1998**

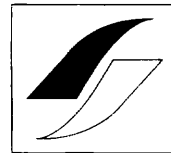
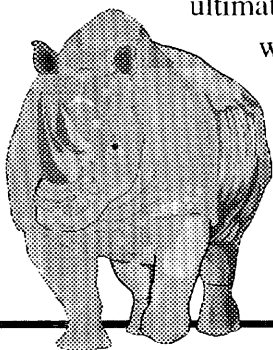
P O Box 381 Bedfordview 2008

Tel (011) 453-9829 Fax (011) 453-7649

## **Message from our Chairman**

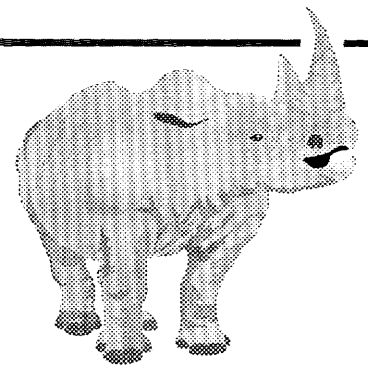
**1998** has been a year of change, both politically and economically. This has effectively raised a good deal of concern at the reduced levels of funding available to official conservation agencies within southern Africa. Now, more than ever, it is going to be incumbent upon the private sector to expand their role in the management of rhinoceros populations and that they have the capacity to do this, is borne out by the excellent results arising from the latest follow-up White Rhino Survey on Private Land in South Africa, conducted by AROA (The African Rhino Owners Association), with support from WWF South Africa and the REF. This is surely a remarkable demonstration of the collaborative roles than non-governmental organisations can play in the conservation arena.

Whilst the increase in especially the black rhino is encouraging, one should not be under any illusion that the threat to rhinos in the wild does not remain. It is wishful thinking to believe that the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn will disappear and as stocks of rhino horn decline, the pressure will increase to acquire this commodity which must ultimately come from rhinos in the wild. The Foundation's mandate is to continue to keep the public aware of any future threat to Africa's rhinos and to provide support wherever appropriate.



From the  
**REF DESK**

## **Rhinoceros Museum**



It is indeed our pleasure to announce that the Rhinoceros Museum in the Waterberg Mountains, is now open to the public. The opening of the museum represents a milestone in REF's history and this is entirely due to the support of corporations and individuals alike. Although far too many to single out here, all donors will be duly acknowledged on a plaque at the official opening, to take place in the first quarter of 1999.

This unique museum, with its ongoing process of development, is well worth a visit. Take time if you are in the area, to pay us a visit and sample the splendid cuisine of our restaurant, set amidst a colourful indigenous garden. You won't regret it!

In conclusion and on behalf of my Board of Trustees and staff, I would like to wish all our supporters a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year. We are fast approaching an exciting new millennium – help us to make it the most significant conservation era ever!

**CLIVE H WALKER**

*Chairman: Rhino & Elephant Foundation*



# From the horse's mouth – An update on the Tuli elephants for members

by Dr Andrew McKenzie

As most members will know, the last few months of this year were characterised by an epic battle over the future of thirty young elephants from the Tuli Block in Botswana. These elephants had been captured in Tuli and moved to African Game Services in South Africa for training, taming and eventual export to zoos and safari parks. What became known as The Tuli Elephant Saga was ultimately about divisions. Deep destructive divisions between people, organisations and countries. The Rhino & Elephant Foundation (REF) became involved in the Saga in attempting to highlight the serious devastation and drought situation that exists in Tuli, where the young elephants originated.



REF felt that the destructiveness had to stop, before South Africa was once again classified as a pariah state, and before the South African tourism and export industries were brought to their knees through international boycotts. Conservation and welfare are not mutually exclusive – differences can indeed be reconciled for the common good. Our initiative to bring on board Chris Styles, as Deputy Director of the Foundation, proves this. As a student, Chris worked with me in the Tuli Block in Botswana, where we both grew to understand and love the elephants of that region. Later, Chris joined the animal rights movement and we had numerous vitriolic confrontations – the pragmatic conservationist versus the animal activist, and it seemed that we would never resolve our differences. So this initiative, of bringing Chris Styles into the heart of a conservation NGO, truly involves a healing of wounds. A realisation that grandstanding and threats will not solve South Africa's conservation problems. True progress is made by building bridges and by finding solutions. "In Africa, For Africa".

Throughout the Tuli Elephant Saga, REF never condoned cruelty in any form. In opposing the NSPCA, the perception was, however, created that REF was "anti-welfare". The truth of the matter is that certain elements within the NSPCA were working very closely with radical animal rights activists whose agenda it is to stop ALL forms of animal use, whether of domestic or wild animals. This philosophy, and the methods that go with it, hold grave implication for Africa, as was seen by the pickets, demonstrations and riots that were organised by one of these organisations. Against this backdrop, REF had to stand up, at great risk to its stature and credibility as a welfare-orientated conservation organisation, and prevent a scenario from unfolding, which at first glance appeared such a wonderful 'liberation' for the elephants. This route was ultimately a carefully orchestrated campaign against South Africa's wildlife management fraternity.

As things turned out, REF's stance was in time supported by the institutions who were supposed to receive the elephants, the South African National Parks, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Elephant Management and Owners Association, and a host of other organisations and individuals. In the end, after a desperate plea for help from REF, the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Mr Derek Hanekom, was called upon to hear out the case (the NSPCA falls under the jurisdiction of the Department).

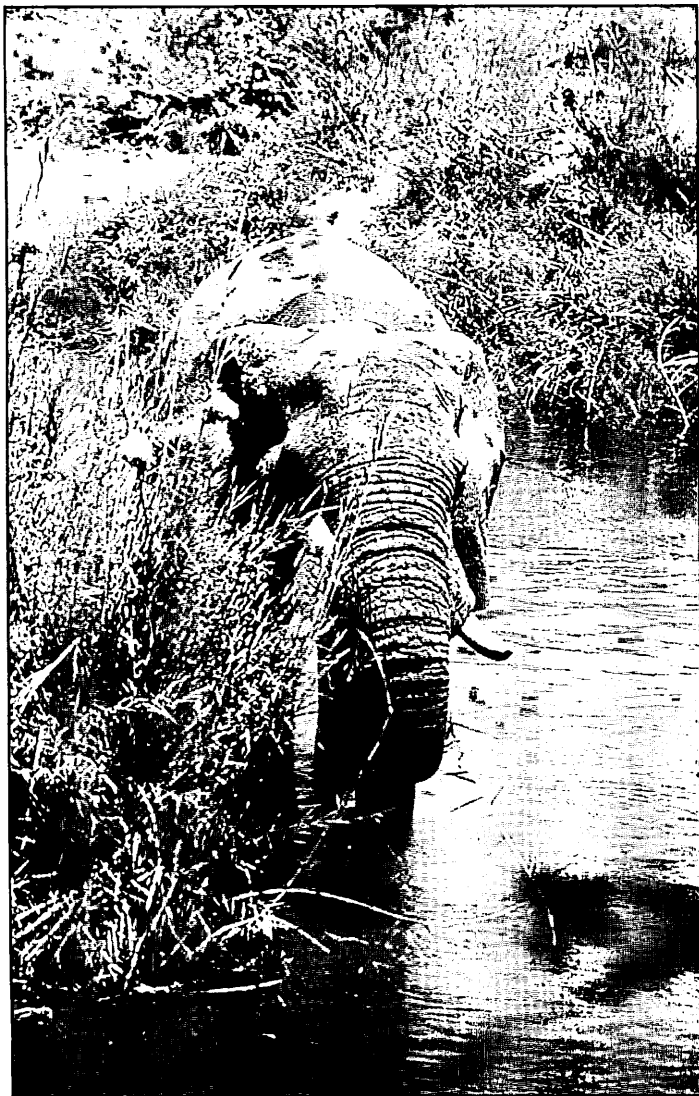


In a parallel initiative, an informal meeting hosted by REF, in October, revealed that there was a lot of common ground between individuals involved in

• *continued on page 3*

conservation and welfare in this country. This initiative deserves nurturing and by building on its proud history as a conservation organisation and bringing the welfare credentials of its personnel to the fore, the Rhino & Elephant Foundation is following it with vigour. At the same time, REF will soon be launching a massive local and international campaign. This campaign coincides with the opportunity for supporters from around the world to ‘‘Be Part of the Solution’’, by participating in one of several distinct programmes:

- An educational programme, including REF’s involvement in the Rhino Museum in the Waterberg;
- A programme to expand the Tuli/Dongola Game Reserve;
- A programme to relocate elephants from over-populated areas; and
- A welfare programme aimed at all wildlife.



*‘‘Everybody’s wish, but not always attainable.’’*

Photo by kind courtesy of Dr A Hall-Martin.

One of the questions posed to me by concerned members of REF has been ‘‘how did taking 30 young elephants out of an ecosystem, assist in saving the vegetation of Tuli?’’ I can truthfully say that these initial numbers probably did not help the vegetation of the region very much, but that it was the beginning of a process of a planned elephant reduction programme. Given the grave circumstances of the drought conditions, can we afford to apportion blame on the desperate Botswanan situation, when they were forced to look at all options available to alleviate their plight – that of a harsh inhospitable climate and the overpopulation of some 1 000 elephants, in an area that could only safely sustain 300.

Persecuted by man throughout the ages, elephants were offered protection in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, which subsequently proved so successful that numbers flourished to the point of total overpopulation, and consequently, resulted in habitat destruction and the extinction of other lesser species. Coupled with this are the very real requirements of neighbouring local communities. Can anyone afford to disregard the fact that rural people are being killed by marauding elephants, and that their very livelihood is being threatened? When presented with an opportunity to raise funds for the erection of elephant-proof fencing along the Reserve’s western boundary to protect these communities, can we afford to sit in judgement of the decision taken?

Tuli is a microcosm of southern Africa. What we see in Tuli today, will be the situation throughout the region, if we do not find a solution fast. Help us to expand the already earmarked trans-frontier conservation area surrounding the Tuli Reserve. All that is needed is funding, and the constraints on the Tuli elephants will be removed.

Keep in touch with all developments by logging onto REF’s website at [www.ref.org.za](http://www.ref.org.za). All the news and press releases pertaining to the Tuli Elephant Saga are archived there, together with any updates.

**Help us to make the difference that will ensure the posterity and safekeeping of southern Africa’s most magnificent pachyderms. Be part of the solution ‘‘In Africa, for Africa’’.**

Sincerely,

ANDREW A McKENZIE  
Vice Chairman & Director

# Time to say Thank You

The Foundation wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the following supporters:

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Mr Derek Fulton	Mr Serge Nauwe-Laers
Mr Riaan Drotsky	Mr Michael Berger
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Miss J O Trautmann	Mrs G E Phelan
Mr Jan Havenga	The Inanda Club

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The Bidvest Chairman's Fund    G W Brakenridge High School

The Foundation would like to take the opportunity of thanking The Inanda Club, for generously providing the venue and snacks for a recent Corporate Briefing. We would also like to thank Stellenbosch Farmers Winery for providing the wine for our function.

We were also generously supported by Radio Safari & Wire Works, who provided the venue for a recent journalist evening and by Cellarmaster (Mr John Mason-Gordon), who provided the wine for this event. A big thank you to South African Breweries (Beer Division), for the provision of beer for the evening.

Our grateful appreciation to all concerned.

Do not forget to visit REF's  
exciting internet site at:

<http://www.ref.org.za>

and e-mail us your comments at:

[boma@ref.org.za](mailto:boma@ref.org.za)

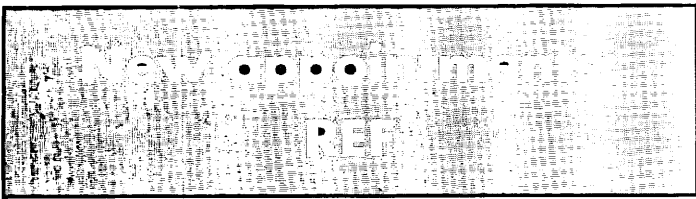
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The Foundation has pleasure in announcing the following appointments.

### **Dr Andrew McKenzie**

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Saturday 24 October, Dr Andrew McKenzie was unanimously appointed Vice Chairman and Director of the Foundation. In accepting this position, Dr McKenzie has taken over the responsibility of upholding the proud mandate of the Foundation in all its activities.

Good luck Andrew, the public are still reeling from your dynamic input and that's just for starters!

### **Christopher Vaughan Styles**

Chris Styles, former Director for Southern African Affairs for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) was appointed as Deputy Director of REF with effect from the 14th of December. Through his proactive initiatives in the wildlife industry, Chris Styles is probably already known to many of our supporters. Chris brings with him a wealth of experience, not least in the wildlife arena: *'I firmly believe that unless wildlife is managed in a manner in which it contributes positively to socio-economic upliftment of impoverished areas, the people who share land with the animals will unwittingly force extinction upon these animals in their quest for survival. That reality does not, however, mean that we have to compromise the welfare of wild animals in our efforts to conserve them and their systems through responsible utilisation'*.

We are delighted to have you on board, Chris!

Do not forget to visit REF's  
exciting internet site at:  
<http://www.ref.org.za>  
and e-mail us your comments at:  
[boma@ref.org.za](mailto:boma@ref.org.za)

## **NEWS FLASH**

### **Officials propose culling in Park**

*P E Evening Post: 2 November '98*

Conservation officials have proposed killing some elephants in one of Africa's largest parks, saying elephant overpopulations threatens other species.

The practice of "culling" elephants in Kruger National Park was suspended in 1996. This was pending a review of the controversial policy. After conducting the review, park officials now recommend that the park be divided into six zones. In some, elephants would be allowed to multiply, but in others, their populations would provisionally be reduced by 7% per year. Elephants in those zones would be moved elsewhere or killed by marksmen in helicopters, according to the recommendations.

A single elephant, the world's largest land mammal, devours up to 300 kg of grass, leaves and twigs a day, and often winds up killing trees. With 8 600 elephants currently in the park, "their numbers will at some stage grow to a level where their impact will result in irreversible loss of biodiversity and the local extinction of some tree species", according to a report containing the recommendations.

"The Parks Board would consider the recommendations in November. If the Board approved them as expected, they would be implemented next year", said Leo Braack, Kruger's Conservation Manager.



## **NEWS FLASH**

### **12 held for hunting rhino, 8 horns seized**

*East London Daily Despatch: 27 October '98*

Twelve people were arrested for illegal hunting of rhino between October 1 and 22, the Endangered Species Protection Unit, said yesterday. It has confiscated eight rhino horns weighing about 26 kilograms. Four of the 12 suspects were allegedly involved in killing a rhino cow and calf on a game farm outside Thabazimbi in North-West about 2 weeks ago. "Both (cow) horns were removed, as well as the front horn of the calf".



*Piers Bunting from TDC – Team Development Concepts, and Chief Mdluli.*

## **Mdluli Tribal Trust to develop eco-tourism projects at Kruger National Park**

**T**he Mdluli Tribal Trust, representing the Mdluli Community, which resides in areas surrounding the southern part of the Kruger National Park, is to embark on an existing tourism development on land it owns historically, perceived to be in the Kruger National Park. The Mdluli Community, through the Trust, was recently granted the Title Deed to the farm Daannel 33JU, which lies just inside the fence of the Kruger National Park, south of Numbi Gate and west of Pretoriuskop.

Chief Mdluli said that the development would benefit his people in many ways. "Every effort will be made to create jobs and business opportunities for the local people" he said.

For further info, contact:  
Communications Consultants.  
Tel (011) 646-9992.

# **STOP PRESS**

## **TULI ELEPHANT CLOSER TO A SOLUTION**

**O**n Wednesday the 9th of December, at the request of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation, the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Mr Derek Hanekom, called a meeting of affected parties in the Tuli Elephant Saga.

The NSPCA were insisting on moving the elephants to designated game ranches, even though two of the ranches had declined to accept the animals and the SA National Parks had retracted its offer to move them. The Minister differed with the NSPCA's stance, and the meeting ended in a stalemate. Shortly thereafter a judge in the Pretoria High Court ruled in favour of an application that the elephants should stay at African Game Services.



### **SEE FOR YOURSELF**

You can now see the Tuli Elephants for yourself on an internet camera or "webcam" at: **[www.wildcam.net](http://www.wildcam.net)**.

On Friday the 11th of December, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism spent three hours at African Game Services where he saw the finishing touches being put to the webcam. "The Rhino and Elephant Foundation's initiative to show the world what is going on at African Game Services is in the interests of transparency and accountability", the Deputy Minister said, adding, "However, South Africa, which supports the principle of the sustainable use of natural resources, should not allow itself to be forced into compromising its principles when certain sectors of the international community disagree with us over wildlife matters. We should simply all be big enough to agree to disagree".