

WILDERNESS SAFARIS WILDLIFE TRUST

February 2009



WILDERNESS  
WILDLIFE TRUST

# ABOUT THE TRUST

The **Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust** seeks to make a difference in Africa, to its wildlife and its people. These projects address the needs of existing wildlife populations, seek solutions to save threatened species and provide education and training for local people and their communities.

Since its formation, the Trust has supported a wide variety of wildlife management, research and education projects in southern Africa, making use of a number of methods and types of projects to do so.

One kind of project studies and monitors a particular species in its natural environment and in so doing also contributes to its protection. The long-running Maputland Turtle Project in South Africa, the Namib Brown Hyaena Project and the Namibian Desert Elephant and Giraffe Project are cases in point. Moving beyond research into hands-on management is another variation on this theme.

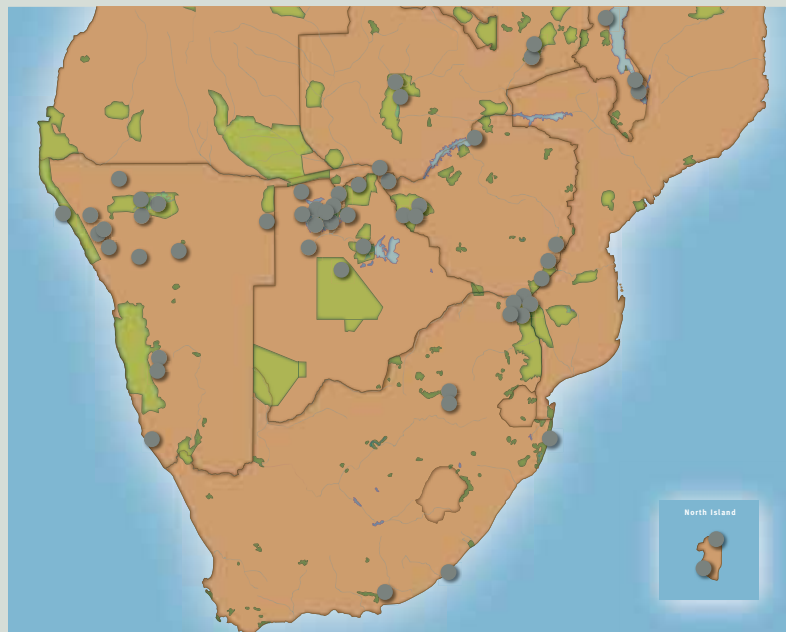
Study of a species sounds like a purely academic pursuit, but within such investigation lie the seeds for its protection and survival. The better we understand a species and its environment, the more efficiently we'll be able to protect it in a world where the struggle for space becomes paramount and human-animal interactions become increasingly conflicted. Most of the Trust's projects have this as an ultimate objective and some amazing headway has been

made, for example in the Lake Ngami Bird Monitoring Project, which brought the Lake and this Important Bird Area (IBA) to the attention of the Botswana government, resulting in its being declared a "no-hunting area."

The Trust is involved financially in a number of such projects, supporting research, habitat management, and practical conservation measures such as anti-poaching projects, while Wilderness Safaris contributes logistically in terms of human resources and equipment.

But conservation of flora and fauna is limited as long as the people who live in the vicinity are unconvinced or left out of the process. Financial and educational empowerment of local communities so that they benefit from the wildlife on their doorsteps is therefore vital, and as such, broad-based and comprehensive initiatives are in fact the bedrock of the Trust, providing skills, knowledge and education necessary to communities to value and manage their wildlife populations.

Wilderness Safaris is acknowledged as a leader in the educational process thanks to its innovative formal and informal education projects, supported by the Trust in the form of grants and bursaries. The Children in the Wilderness programme aims to educate the youth of Africa, inspiring and assisting them to preserve their magnificent natural heritage.



*Trust projects accross Southern Africa 2008*



# FROM THE TRUSTEES

Over the last 20 years, the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust has dedicated funds to improving protection, knowledge and management of Southern Africa's wildlife – from the rare and endangered to the inconspicuous and understudied. Our central aim has always been, and continues to be, the long-term conservation of Africa's rich natural heritage. Looking ahead, we recognise the need to move away from a crisis-driven conservation pursuit to one that plans for the future. For the upcoming year (2009), we are introducing a structure to our funding that will improve the channelling of funds to three critical areas of conservation and which will enable a more strategic approach to our endeavours in southern Africa:

- Research and Conservation
- Community Empowerment and Education
- Anti-Poaching and Management

**Research and Conservation** projects funded over 2008 through the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust have reflected the movement of conservation programmes in Africa to increasingly holistic approaches. Projects that have laid foundations for conservation awareness include the Education for Predator Conservation programme in Botswana, the Namibian Black Rhino Monitor Training Project and a leopard population dynamics survey in Zimbabwe. Investigations have also concentrated on transboundary movements, migration corridors and also human-animal conflict. Investigations into the complex interactions between large mammals, vegetation and climate changes as well as aerial censuses of herbivore communities in Malawi, Botswana and Namibia have also paved the way for better informed conservation management decisions.

Endangered species have also long been a focus of the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust and in 2008 several rhino relocation and research projects were funded in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Other herbivore research projects focused on genetic work on the Thornicroft's giraffe and the ecology of declining grazers in the Okavango Delta while carnivores such as wild dog, cheetah, brown hyaena and black mongoose also received attention. Projects investigating blue cranes in Namibia and two sea turtle species in South Africa also received funding.

A major component of **Community Empowerment and Education** projects has been our Educational Bursaries which have taken a significant step forward with the creation of bursaries for students at several South African universities. Projects such as the long-running Children in the Wilderness and Zambia's Simonga Village also continue to go from strength to strength while in **Anti-poaching and Management** critical projects in Zimbabwe and Zambia continue to achieve far reaching effects.

All of the projects funded through the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust are the result of many generous donations from people who have recognised the need for wildlife conservation and the empowerment of Africa's people. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed to the Trust.

Further thanks go to the people who have ensured the smooth running of the Trust, from Amos Eno and Laura Mass at Resources First Foundation, to Chris Roche, Ilana Stein, Ulrike van der Hoven, Richard van der Wel and Grant Wolpert from Wilderness Safaris, to several organisations who have donated services such as Colorpress, Horwath, Leveton Boner, and Bell Dewar Hall. Without the dedication of these people and organisations, the Trust would not have achieved all that it has in 2008.

Lastly, to all of the dedicated conservation scientists and practitioners who have worked hard to preserve Africa's natural heritage, we are all indebted to your commitment and actions.

The Trustees  
Russel Friedman, Andrew Leontsinis & Jennifer Lalley



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# BOTSWANA RHINO RELOCATION AND REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

Coordinators: Map Ives & Kai Collins



*The Botswana Rhino Reintroduction Project is a true success story: collaborative conservation efforts between Wilderness Safaris, Wilderness Safaris Wilderness Trust, Botswana's Department of Wildlife (DWNP) and the Botswana Government have realised the ideal of the successful reintroduction of black and white rhino into the Mombo area of the Moremi Game Reserve.*

This past year has been extremely successful with the birth of four new white rhino calves with a total of 19 calves born to date (the first was born in 2004). They are all doing well and are monitored regularly.

The second Mombo Rhino Patrol Vehicle – purchased to enable following up on rhino sighting reports in other areas of the Okavango Delta – has proved to be invaluable. Rhino that have not been seen in a long time and are in very remote and inaccessible areas can now be located. Mpho 'Poster' Malongwa continues to monitor the rhino in the Mombo area (Chief's Island) daily, sometimes tracking and searching for rhino for up to 12 hours per day. He also periodically conducts rhino patrols in other parts of the Okavango Delta in collaboration with DWNP's Anti Poaching Unit. The Rhino Project has recently been joined by Njunja 'George' James who assists Poster on the daily rhino monitoring patrols.

A female white rhino and her sub-adult daughter had moved approximately 250km from Mombo to an area close the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. They seemed happily settled in this new area, so arrangements were made to bring in a rhino bull from Kgama Rhino Sanctuary to join them. The three have been spending lots of time together – good news for a new happy family.

The project is currently focusing most of its attention on raising funds in order to bring in a healthy supplementary population of black rhino, most likely from Zimbabwe. The resounding success of the reintroduction of white rhino means that efforts can now being put into building a viable population of black rhino that can begin re-expanding into parts of Botswana where many years ago they once roamed.

