



NEWSLETTER – April 2011

Volume 24 Number 1

Patrons: The Lord McAlpine of West Green, David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay AM, Nick Price

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My apologies for the long gap between Newsletters! There is a lot to report, so here goes.

The last twelve months have been our **biggest and best for fundraising**, as well as supplies made to Zimbabwe.....and we're getting even bigger! And it's coming at just the right time as the future of the rhinos is at a **major crossroad in its path for survival**. For the calendar year of 2010, a total of **333 rhinos were killed in South Africa**, 327 whites and 6 blacks. We are not directly involved with South African rhino conservation but we need to be aware of this alarming trend. In the same period, **some 45 were poached in Zimbabwe**. The reason for this massive increase in South Africa is that the **price of rhino horn has rocketed to a reputed \$60,000 per kg retail**. This is fuelled by the ridiculous claim from some **Vietnamese government authorities that rhino horn can cure cancer!** Finger nail chewers keep nibbling!

Last September we were absolutely aghast to read that a network of a dozen alleged rhino poachers were arrested, including two vets, two helicopter pilots, a professional hunter and other members of the wildlife industry. And most were released on a mere \$3,000 bail to re-appear in court in April. It would appear that the South African judiciary are not taking this heinous crime too seriously.

Because of all this we have to be even more prepared for increased onslaughts in Zimbabwe. This year started badly with seven rhinos killed in the first 2 weeks of January. We are in the process of improving our levels of support right around the country, with **donations of 4wds, motorbikes, radios, kit, rations and tracking equipment high on our agenda**. A significant rhino strategy workshop is being planned for the very near future at which we will be well represented.



At our well-attended AGM last July, besides the usual administrative duties that were performed, we were also treated to **Simon Reeve's 35 minute documentary** filmed the previous month. This was on our annual late May/early June 'behind-the-scenes' committee trip, taking in rhino de-horning, Matusadona, Hwange and Victoria Falls. Anyone with the slightest interest in what we are doing in Zimbabwe should try to come on one of these trips—a **couple of spots remain for 28 May!**

We were involved in three commercial safaris during

August and September, and two private tours, raising funds in **excess of \$70,000**. And everyone had a fantastic time!

Our main sources of funding for the year were the **two dinner/auctions with patron, David Gower, in Sydney and Perth**. The combined result was a **fantastic \$160,000** for our work in Zimbabwe. David has been the catalyst for more than a **million dollars being raised since 1991**—wow and thanks so much!



We were very pleased to also have been involved in our **New South Wales branch dinner/dance** just recently, where their **best ever total of \$50,000** was raised for Kenyan rhino projects. We were very pleased to recently receive a cheque for **\$10,000** from our **Sydney colleagues** to be used with our projects in Zimbabwe—thanks so much and we look forward to working more closely with them in the future.

During the past year, Zimbabwe wildlife conservation has very sadly lost two of its pioneers, **Norman and Gill Travers**, who passed away in March and November respectively. They are buried beneath the large granite kopje on their beloved **Imire Game Ranch**—we send our **deepest condolences to their family**.

I don't doubt that there are many difficult challenges ahead for the rhinos in years to come, and for this reason, at the David Gower dinner I announced that I would be donating the sum of **\$200,000 per year for the rest of my life**, in the hope that we can get on top of all these wildlife crimes. I invite any of our readers to also consider making a donation please. Your committee will continue to make wise and responsible decisions in achieving this goal.



Nicholas S. Duncan

FUNDRAISING WITH DAVID GOWER

Perth—December 2010

SAVE was honoured to welcome its patron **David Gower** to the splendid fund raising dinner at the luxurious **Perth Hyatt Regency** Grand ballroom last 15 December. The former captain of England, graceful left-handed batsman and articulate cricket commentator, was in sparkling form later in the evening when he regaled some beautifully embellished tales of playing against the West Indies in the 1980s. David was hosted by our event sponsor, **Jim Gill** of **Travel Directors**.



Earlier a packed audience of **SAVE** supporters heard from our Master of Ceremonies for the night, long serving founding **President Nicholas Duncan**. In his inimitable direct non-nonsense style, he explained the tragic state of rhino numbers in Zimbabwe, the difficult processes of attempting to put a stop to this and the dangerous nature of doing so. Large and shocking pictures supporting Nicholas were there for all to see. The importance of raising essential funds by moving the fascinating array of memorabilia about to be auctioned was patently clear.

Amidst a fine three-course dinner, ideally supplemented by **Gage Roads** beers and impressive **Frankland River Ferngrove Estate** wines, David Gower, our master storyteller, delighted everyone with his accomplished wit and humour, evoking laughter after rollicking laughter from the expectant crowd. We may have heard and read the tales before but it is the telling of the story not the story itself that is the key component and the reason why so many came along to listen. David rose to the occasion in his gentlemanly self-effacing manner as he told of the sorry efforts sometimes put up against the powerful and rampant West Indian sides of the 1980s. *'When you are out of form, every ball looks like a hand grenade'*.

As the dinner took place on the eve of the Perth Ashes Test match, David explained almost pitifully how he was hopeful of a change in fortunes for what appeared to be one of the best English sides to play here for quite some time. Most of the audience were provoked into granting him a smug smile, probably hoping for quite the opposite. It is certain that the Perth test result shrouded the eventual caucophony and out-

pouring of fervent patriotism that resulted from an outstanding English Ashes series. You were granted your deepest wish David and we are sure few would begrudge it to you after surviving

the sometimes claustrophobic commenting conditions (if the WACA is anything to judge by!) served up in Australia.



It was then a wonderful evening for those fortunate enough to be present. Thanks go to David but also to many more! The hard working and efficient staff of the **SAVE committee must be thanked for their tireless efforts**, covering all those extra jobs that are so essential to capturing a maximum return on the sale of the memorabilia.

Nicholas Duncan made an astonishing effort during the evening too—not simply as MC, but also auctioneer. His dedicated organisation involving hundreds of hours of planning and preparation are to be wondered at! His generous final gesture at the dinner involved the promise of **donating a sum of at least \$200,000** each and every year towards **SAVE** fundraising. This is to be in the place of searching, finding, boxing, framing, marketing and auctioneering the memorabilia. Obviously these dinners will take on a different character in the future—but make sure that you are there to enjoy the next! This was a really lovely evening made even better by knowing that the **fantastic sum of \$120,000** was raised around this event.

We'd like to thank the following guests for their great support of the auction—**Ross and Mienke McDonald, Domenic Licastro, Terry Gardiner, Sue and Syd Chipchase, Simon McDonald and Danny Ambrose**. Thanks also to our donated safari sponsors—**The Hide, Victoria Falls Hotel, Chobe Mowana and Xakanaxa Camp**.

Alex James

Co-geography teacher with Nicholas 1969-71

Sydney—November 2010

Our resources were stretched to the full in arranging a Sydney fundraiser with **David**. Having been motivated on our Zimbabwe causes by being on the previous May trip, **Shaun Smith** was the backbone for making this function happen—thanks so much!

Very kind donations were received from **Karin Keighley, David Griffith, Goldman Sachs, Leo Muggleton** and **Syd Chipchase**, ensuring the financial success of the night. The scene was set for a marvellous evening as guests arrived at the lovely **Jones Wharf** venue, greeted by a delicious array of canapés, **Leaping Lizard** wines and **Gage Roads** beer.

In recognition of the fine support shown us by **REMS Systems** and long time sponsors, **Hunter Hall Investment Management**, beautiful framed rhino photos were presented to **Paul Paras** and **Peter Hall**.

David enthralled the audience with his stories and put everyone in a good mood for the auction. A number of inter-



esting items were sold and by the end of the evening we'd raised a further **\$39,000** for the good old rhinos of Zim.

Thanks also to **Simon Reeve** of the

Sunrise programme for being our MC and for providing the fantastic background video of the dehorning trip.



Sydney—February 2011

On 18 February an extraordinary event, with the sponsorship of **Bench International**, was hosted by the **NSW Branch of the SAVE FOUNDATION at Doltone House, Sydney**. Themed '**African Chic**', some 200+ guests dug deep into their pockets during the night's festivities bidding on African safaris and artifacts in both the live and silent auctions.

Members of the Perth Committee—**Nicholas Duncan, Nia Carras and Kim Hoddy**—flew to Sydney especially for the event where Nicholas enthralled guests with his knowledge and recent experience in the field.



The initiatives of the night were to raise funds to fight illegal poaching of the African Rhinoceros and to provide them

with safe havens for breeding.

At the moment the black rhino is critically endangered.

We wanted to educate people as to the plight of these magnificent beasts across the African continent. Rhinos would live to some 40 years without intervention from mankind slaying them for their horn. This horn has been proven to have no medicinal properties whatsoever, yet is currently fetching \$US60,000/kg on the black market.

These goals were achieved on the night with \$50,000 being raised. This will be used in the immediate future where it is most needed."

Cheryl Smith

BRYCE COURTENAY – we thank Bryce for his kind personal donation of many signed books and a cheque and wish him well in his recovery to full health.

ZIMBABWE UPDATE

The rhino operations for last year were jointly funded by **US Fish & Wildlife Services** and ourselves, with a budget of **US\$92,000**. This was to pay the costs of helicopter hire (\$800 per hour), fixed wing aerial cover (\$300 per day), veterinary services, truck hire, accommodation and assorted

other costs. It averages out at about **\$1,200 per rhino** to track, catch and administer whatever procedures are necessary. This programme was managed by **Verity Bowman of Marwell, now Dambari, Wildlife Trust**, and took place in a number of national parks, both black and white rhinos.

During May and June, and again in August and September, the amazing team of specialists '**processed**' **78 rhinos**—very well done everyone! This team was most ably led, as always, by **Dr Chris Foggin** from the **Wildlife Veterinary Unit**, with back up help from **Drs Lisa Marabini** and **Keith Duttlow** of the **AWARE Trust**. Helicopter expertise came from **Nick le Grange, Barney O'Hara** and **John McTaggart**, and **National Parks rangers** were superb on the ground. On two occasions we were lucky enough to have groups witness these extraordinary events unfold, and each saw 13 rhinos being dehorned.

During the colder months of late June and July, **Raoul du Toit** and his experienced team were applying their magical touch to the rhinos of the lowveld areas, dehorning and translocating. Overall, a total of 180 rhinos were processed during the year.

Despite these magnificent efforts we were devastated to learn that in the first two weeks of January, seven had been killed, of which five had been dehorned just a few months earlier. Such are the challenges facing rhino conservation at the moment.

Our programmes in **Hwange**, in partnership with **Dete Animal Rescue Trust (DART)**, are moving along well and we welcome **Nicholas Long**, son of



Stephen and Ann from **Sinamatella**, to the team. Nicholas is now responsible for transporting four National Parks rangers around southern Hwange in their quest to determine how many of the 40 introduced white rhinos still exist. We hope to expand this programme over the next few months and are indebted to **Wardens Jura and Makwehe** for facilitating this operation. **Paul de Montille** is returning to this part of the world in April and we hope he quickly settles back into the conservation world.

The five remaining rhinos in the **Midlands conservancy** were successfully dehorned by Chris and his team in October, and congratulations to conservator **Dave Strydom and his monitors** for their good work over the past three years.

We have been very busy in the past year with refurbishing our 1991/92 land cruisers and there are constant ongoing problems with their maintenance. We struggle to know where and when to draw the line! We are in the process of buying **five ex Singapore army, low mileage, land rover pickups, plus 20 trail bikes**. These will be freighted to Harare in the coming weeks.

Poaching has occurred in most of the rhino strongholds during the past year, about **45** in total. Plans are under way to intensify the ranger training. A **major rhino workshop** took place in late March to map out a plan for their future protection and growth. Much will depend on the decisions made here and their degree of implementation.

We should like to thank **Nico Nel** from Johannesburg, who is taking a big interest in what we are doing in Zimbabwe, and is getting some very good corporate support from South African businesses. He recently drove all the way to Bulawayo to deliver a complete load of gear for us—60 tents, 36 sleeping bags and 6 pairs of off-road trail bike tyres that he purchased on our behalf, plus 10 low maintenance batteries kindly donated by **Probe**, 500 AA batteries courtesy of **Duracell** and 20 litres of diesel engine oil given to us by **Castrol GTX**.



JANUARY 2011 TRIP

The first day was in Harare meeting with Wildlife conservationists, trainers, trackers and veterinarians. We divided up the cameras, two-way radios and spare parts for vehicles we had brought, to go to the areas that needed or had requested them.

During the trip we were lucky enough to meet two amazing people who epitomize why SAVE FOUNDATION wants to assist Zimbabwe conservation efforts. One of these is **Steve Edwards** from Lake Kariba. We stayed with Steve at his beautiful **Musango Camp**, which borders the lake and where we talked about saving black rhinos and then we met with local rangers. We also got to see hippos, elephants, and crocodiles fighting. Steve survived a dreadful hippopotamus attack many years ago when he was a guide in Kenya. This put him in hospital for months and then a wheelchair and walking frame for a year.



RIP—Norman and Gill Travers

Last March, we learned of the sad passing of **Norman Travers**. Norman was indeed a **legend and a pioneer for Zimbabwe game ranching** and would have had worldwide respect for his contribution to farming and wildlife management. His passing is a big loss to the industry and to the world as a whole.

My first memories of **Gill and Norman** were obviously from my first visit to **Imire** in 1989—how I was captivated by the whole scenario and by Norman—pipe in hand, lion in garden, leopard in enclosure and rhinos in a wallow. I couldn't stop taking photos and those memories will last forever. That's when I became hooked on Imire, and countless return visits have kept up the magic. We always make Imire our first port of call for our safari groups.



Norman, in his way, was an inspirational leader for the semi domestic rhino movement. **He was always very kind, polite, charming and interesting**, and I know his family will all miss him terribly. Their comfort in his passing is the knowledge that they shared so many years of their lives with a remarkable human being and they will know just how full a life he led, and shared, with them all.

Then, in November, the Travers family lost Gill. **Gillian was the matriarch of Imire**, and with Norman, pioneered all that Imire stood for. I'll always remember her going on the rhino catch on elephant back before they were sent to Tashinga. **She was such a lady, so kind, polite and sweet.** She'll be so missed by all her family.

From us all and all those who've visited Imire on one of our trips, we send our best wishes to the Travers family.

Rest in peace, Norman and Gill, and thanks for everything you've done for wildlife in your country.

He acknowledges his survival was due to his teaching a local Kenyan guide how to give an intravenous drip and showing another guide how to drive his land rover in the week before his injury. Both assisted in his emergency treatment and getting him to hospital. He is now recovered and is an exceptional guide and knows so much about local birds. We really learned a lot from Steve.

Another person who also experienced horrific injuries is **Greg Rasmussen** who runs the **Painted Dog Project in Hwange**. Greg was in a micro-light plane crash experiencing shocking injuries to his lower body. He was found 28 hours later by a colleague but not before he had to contend with lions and the worst predator of all, hyenas. He was taken to a Harare Hospital where he was regarded as a hopeless case and allocated an experienced African surgeon.



Luckily for him, the surgeon had honed his skills operating on injured Africans in Johannesburg Hospital and who opted not to amputate his legs but to try to save him. The surgeon worked on him for hours and saved not only his life but patched him up. He had to have many more operations after that. Greg is also committed to saving wildlife, especially the painted dogs, in Zimbabwe.

Listening to the tales of such people helps keep us motivated especially when we learned that 7 rhinos had been poached since the beginning of 2011. What was saddening for us is that 5 had been killed at Matopos most of which we had dehorned in September last year. The poachers would only have got about half a kilo from each rhino, which is so depressing that there are people like this willing to kill such beautiful creatures for so little. Some poachers in Zimbabwe who kill game are desperate, all who kill rhinos for their horn, are greedy.

Helen Jones-Fairnie

REMINISCENCES OF A SAFARI

Harare is a long way from Perth so this safari needs to be good. Crammed in Economy it seems even further, but at least I've got my complicated new camera to master to help pass the time.

Although I grew up in colonial Rhodesia, and left long before the bush wars and independence, I see nothing much appears to have changed in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. Fix a few potholes and paint a few buildings, and superficially you could be back in the 1960s.

*Our first morning's drive out to **Imire Safari Ranch** had me deep in thought. I used to be driven along this very road to boarding school as a kid and every mile re-awakens a long-since-forgotten memory. The spectacular high veld countryside of open grasslands, msasa trees and granite kopjies brings back fond memories of a simpler, quieter time. And the maize and tobacco fields, and the smells of the bush and the people. It was like I had never left except for the decay.*

Imire is fun. To see the broad collection of animals still living here yet surrounded by ramshackle farmlets of Mugabe's war-veteran thugs is sobering. They even have a herd of my favourite antelope, the beautiful scimitar-horned Sable. But



it hasn't been easy. The owners are continually threatened and some of their breeding black rhinos were ruthlessly slaughtered a few years ago. I could get very angry about the whole situation, but choose to just observe and take photos. They are the only rhinos we see.

*The next day we drive back to Harare for our flight to Victoria Falls. But nothing is simple in Zimbabwe. The pilots haven't been paid for months so are on strike. We wait at the airport. Tourism, and especially the foreign exchange it brings, are vitally important. Somehow a charter aircraft arrives to pick us up and takes us via Bulawayo to get more stranded tourists and on to our destination. Relief! We drive down to **The Hide in Hwange National Park**. The lowveld is fantastic—the baobab and mopani trees, the wide sandy river beds. The Hide is even more fantastic. The way this five-star resort is nestled in among the acacia trees and focused on a beautiful pan full of water even at the end of the dry season is very special. The early morning and afternoon game drives are such an adrenalin rush—a fresh surprise around every bend. We see elephant, kudu, sable, roan, buffalo, bushbuck and all the birds! The native language I haven't used for more than 40 years comes back slowly as I converse with the genuinely friendly and very knowledgeable guides. I don't want to leave so soon.*

*After three days at The Hide we visit **Sinamatella**. When I grew up this was the main tourist camp of the national park.*

*Now it's sadly run down, but where the **SAVE** funded anti-poaching unit is based so we offload all the urgently needed supplies we've brought. Also gifts for the primary school children who entertain us in beautiful harmony and dance as they sing the Zimbabwe national anthem and other songs.*

*Next stop the magnificent old colonial **Victoria Falls Hotel**. I was last here in 1970 when we used to stay for a few days R&R, driving for almost half a day from our exploration camp in Botswana. We spend three days here having fun—helicopter flights over the falls, elephant rides, walking with lions, rafting on the Zambezi and of course visiting the famous falls and craft markets.*



*Next we transfer by road to **Chobe National Park in Botswana** and stay at the **Marina Lodge**. Here the game drives are different—one type of bush near the river and a totally different scene away from the water. But the game viewing is magnificent, the highlight probably being as we wait and watch a leopard resting under some dense bushes. Just before dusk she makes a move and we get superb action shots (photographic, that is).*

*After Chobe we fly by charter plane down to the **Okavango Delta** to stay at **Xakanaxa**. Another luxurious five-star resort with excellent game viewing. Here we see almost everything all over again—a photographer's paradise. Highlights include a mock charge by a lone bull elephant out in the swamps, and the large pride of lions walking past us on the track one morning. My favourite place!*

After three fantastic days here we sadly have to leave and take our charter flight to Maun and on to Johannesburg. It's been a frenetic ride but I have a few thousand digital images to sort for reference in my art work. I decide, having come all this way, to go down to Cape Town and catch up with my few remaining relatives still stuck in Africa.

Downside—unfortunately, we don't see any rhino in the wild. Hopefully they are hiding from the poachers and us, but I know their numbers have sadly been decimated. Upside—who wouldn't want to do this trip over again and again and again...

Chris Wiles

There is one spot available for a single man for this September's trip.



IN THE FIELD



ON SAFARI





Do you know who I am?

Perth International Airport: 9 pm—meeting members of SAVE committee at check-in so we can organize our luggage.

9.45pm—everyone's suitcases are lying on the floor in front of the Business Class check-in, contents sprawled on the floor for all to see. Glad I invested in some new undies! Out goes the veterinary supplies and in goes several oil and air filters.

10.15pm—we are still way over-weight, more re-packing; the Business check-in looks like a garage sale. Camera traps are shoved into our hand luggage and we're told to carry them as though they are very light.

Our special thanks go to **Thevan Khrishna** and **Greg McKeone** of **South African Airways**, our preferred airline on this route, for their kind assistance with our luggage requirements.

Quick skoll and I'm then coercing some gentleman to please lift my (extremely) heavy back pack into the overhead locker.

"What have you got in there?" he asks, "Oh a couple of Landcruiser air filters and some camera traps." Essential travel items for every girl!

We land in Harare with all pieces of luggage accounted for, we hope! Did we have 16 or was it 17 suitcases? We fumble amongst the 17 suitcases counting and recounting the bags but none of us is quite sure how many we were supposed to have. All this in front of customs officers who are fed up and tired and want to go home, so instead of checking this band of 'spare parts traffickers' and smugglers from Perth, they wave us through to the heat and humidity of Harare. We make quite a sight in the airport as the five of us go about trying to manoeuvre 17 large heavy suitcases between us. Now all there is to do is find Nicholas so that we can cure our curiosity and see this country we have heard so many frightening stories about. All is rather sedate, streets are clean (compared to Perth) and traffic relatively quiet.

Whilst the committee meets with numerous SAVE contacts throughout the afternoon, we head off to visit **Lisa and Ellen** at the **Tikki Hywood Trust**. Not only are we entranced by their animals but also humbled by these lovely women who have endured so much, yet still make conservation their priority. We stay for several hours feeding and playing with the genets, bat-eared foxes and serval to name just a few animals.

Next day we drive to **Imire Game Park**, the road through Harare is pot-holed but rubbish free. The countryside is lush and green and we pass numerous small tenements growing maize along the verges. School children wave to us and smile.



Imire is quiet and we are taken on a game drive shortly after our arrival, we meet two black rhino Tatenda and Shanu, and

feed them pellets. Nicholas shows a new side and we watch him croon to his babies. They have an armed guard to protect the rhino from poachers. We are amazed at the gentleness of these huge beasts and their almost whale like singing while we continue to feed them pellets. A stark contrast to their huffing, snorting and stamping when we stop feeding them!

A surprise awaits us as we come across a herd of elephants, "Would you like to ride an elephant?"

We're out of the vehicle in a flash and ride bareback into our picnic spot. Verdict—great fun, but painful! We spot numerous other animals and enjoy our one night stay at Imire.

Next morning is the flight to **Lake Kariba**. Wow, what a spectacular place!

Flying into **Bumi Hills** we have a bird's eye view of the beautiful scenery. **Steve Edwards** is our host at **Musango Camp** and we spend three idyllic days (for us—the committee had to attend meetings), bush walking (yes, those were lions in the nearby bushes!), cruising the lake and relaxing. A special thanks must go to the cheeky **Neil** who made the best G&Ts in Zim!



We visit the local fishing village and donate supplies to their school. It is a reality check when we learn of the orphans whose parents have died from HIV and malaria. Steve, Neil and staff are excellent hosts providing a steady stream of interesting stories, meals and gin and tonics. We vow to return with our families.



Our next leg is a long journey in the mighty Delica. We are warned of the numerous speed cameras manned by enthusiastic police officers. At one stop we are sure we're going to cop a fine until the police officer returns to the van grinning and tells us to keep an eye on "Naughty Nicky."

"How much was the fine?" we demand to know. "Nothing, I told him who I was and offered him some bananas instead", smirked Naughty Nicky. He can talk his way into or out of anything as we were to find out. His opening line frequently being "Do you know who I am?"

This became our catch cry as we toured the country, Nicholas browbeating salesmen and hotel managers into giving us better prices by explaining to them the wonderful work SAVE is doing in Zimbabwe.

We overnights in **Bulawayo** enjoying the hospitality of **Verity Bowman (Dambari Wildlife Trust)**. In Bulawayo we learnt the depressing news that 5 rhino had been killed so far this year in neighbouring Matobo, two of them being black rhino, and recently dehorned. We met with staff at **National Parks to distribute supplies and reward the good work being done by some of the rangers and locals.**

Next we stayed at **Hwange** for three nights splitting our stay between **Ivory Lodge** and **Hwange Safari Lodge**. Game drives provided cheetah, black backed jackal, several sightings of lion, giraffe, zebra, impala, roan antelope, multiple beautiful and extraordinary birds and surprisingly only one elephant! Luckily we had seen plenty at Musango.

All of us were thrilled to see painted dogs running down the road, these were on my 'to see' list. The **Painted Dog Conservation Centre** is a wonderful venue and we were impressed not only with the interpretive displays but also with the Education programmes they run. The **two Gregs** and **Xmas** were both informative and entertaining—keep up the great work!

On to **Sinamatella**, horrified at the progressive spread of a coal mine located on the outskirts of the park. **Sue and Stephen Long** had organised a veritable feast for ourselves and the guests who came to catch up with **Nicholas, Nia, Helen and Geoff**. The lodges had been renovated much to our relief, as we had been warned of bed bugs. Thankfully they didn't tell us of the black mamba found in our house several days earlier!

Chobe was our next stop and where we enjoyed not only excellent accommodation but also game viewing. The highlight being a lioness walking the track with her three cubs aged two weeks, on possibly their first outing from the den. We followed them slowly laughing at the antics of the playful cubs until the lioness spotted their dinner (a warthog) and headed off into the bushes, her cubs in hot pursuit.



Our last stop was **Victoria Falls**, the recent rains had the falls pumping and we were soaked when we viewed them from the ground. However from a helicopter it was a different story! A whole different perspective, you could clearly see the cascade of volumes of water and the spray billowing above the edge of the falls. Plus the helicopter flight was exhilarating! Great fun!

Walking with lions was wonderful; we couldn't resist the opportunity to get our hands on real lions. In a small group we were able to stroke and walk with three, seven month old cubs. Then armed with a flimsy stick for protection (or was it

a surrogate security blanket for us?) we patted and walked with two, seventeen month old lions.

Our enthusiasm was tempered with the question of what happens to these lions once they are too old to engage with tourists? There is the belief that they may be sent to game farms to be hunted. We hope not.

Meanwhile the committee were engaged in more meetings, but Nicholas did give them time off to go shopping. Here is a man who not only enjoys shopping but is an expert!

We watched in awe as he haggled his way around the markets snapping up wooden hippos, rhino and giraffe for bargain prices, filling the van. All for our next dinner auction!

He would ask us "Do you like that? Do you want it? What do you want to pay for it?" We'd reply "Hmmm I don't know, \$20?" "Ridiculous! Offer him \$5!"Inspiring!

10am—Victoria Falls International Airport—5 giraffe each 5 foot high and 2 giraffe measuring 7 foot in height and.....50 kilos overweight! Here we go again! Enter 'Naughty Nicky' "Do you know who I am?"

*Footnote

We had a wonderful trip, at no stage of our trip did we worry for our safety, everyone we met was friendly and helpful, asking us to tell other Australians that Zimbabwe is safe for visitors. **We found Zimbabwe to be beautiful, relatively untouched, the people friendly and the animals awesome.**

Next on the bucket list is a de-horning trip (don't groan Nicholas).

The Girls - Sweetheart and Gorgeous
(alias Candice Lynn and Annette Stewart)

EXPENDITURE	
APRIL 2010—MARCH 2011	
National Parks projects -	
Sinamatella, Matobo, Chipinge, Main Camp, Matusadona, Hwange water	149,000
Lowveld Rhino Trust	92,000
Veterinary drugs and equipment	24,000
Private anti-poaching units	19,000
Other rhino projects	17,000
Zimbabwe running costs	16,000
Tikki Hywood Trust	12,000
Other wildlife projects	8,000
TOTAL	\$337,000

24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia (Inc.)
Thursday 16 June 2011 at 7 pm
Perth Zoo Education Centre, Labouchere Rd
 Nomination forms for positions on the Executive and proxy forms are available from
 Kim - 9279 8911
 Nominations should be lodged at our office
229 Oxford Street, Leederville
by 7.00 pm on 11 June 2011
Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

VALE BOB PIACHNIARSKI



It was a great shock to us all last November to hear of the sudden passing of **Bob Piachniarski** and our deepest sympathies were immediately passed on to **Yvonne and their family**. Bob and Yvonne entered the Zimbabwe wildlife world when they went on a safari in 2008 and found the pleasures of animals in the wild. The following January, Bob returned with a committee group to offer his **brilliant mechanical skills** as we toured our projects. We will remember his marvellous efforts at Tashinga with our canter truck and at Main Camp with their unimog, plus the Victoria Falls canter. He was in his element having to fix things up, and what a master he was! Bob planned to return last January for some more repair work but was taken from us all, way too soon.

RIP Bob

animal. With a flurry of oxygen, thermometers, cooling spay, blindfolds, drips and a lot of medical mumbo, the rhino was ready for the very unfortunate, but necessary procedure of having his or her mighty horn removed.



This is a sombre moment, requiring a chainsaw and a heavily armed presence to prevent ambush from the bad guys. The horn, worth tens of thousands of US dollars per kilo, is well guarded and tagged by the National Parks guys. After the ears are notched and the back marked for easy identification, the rhino is given a reversal drug and in 10 minutes is trundling back, slightly bewildered to the bush.

JUNE 2010



Born and bred in Cape Town, South Africa, and having been to game farms and interacted with animals all my life, one would think I was prepared for our trip to Zimbabwe with the SAVE FOUNDATION. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we experienced over 9 days of “in-your-face” conservation and seeing the desperate commitment of people in Zimbabwe, left our small party with a powerful snapshot of the difficulties of protecting rhinos.

With Nicholas Duncan in charge, or more like a charging wounded rhino, we made it through customs with **loads of sponsored goodies** destined for the numerous charities and NGOs that are dedicated to the saving of the ever-dwindling rhino population.

After a night of getting to know each other in Harare and meeting some of the country's most interesting folks, we were off on the short drive to **Chivero National Park**, where we spent two days with the renowned and remarkable vet, **Chris Foggin**, and his team.

Chris is an inspirational fellow and the dehorning process a slick and smooth operation under his guidance. After the tracking team, including Zim National Parks staff, had located a rhino, we were off in pursuit in a convoy of 4x4s to find the creature and guide the helicopter in.

In what looked like a scene from *Apocalypse Now*, the rhino was darted from the air. Rhinos funnily enough, don't like this routine! After giving chase over several crucial and chaotic minutes, we would locate the massive drugged and slowing

We witnessed all this no less than thirteen times over a couple of intense days!!

We were also lucky enough to be invited to **Lisa Haywood's** small cat retreat in Harare where she has managed to make a difference in, not only the conservation of the smaller cats, but also in legislation around stricter penalties for rhino poaching. **Lisa punches well above her weight and has a fervent passion for her cats and her country.**

After this hard reality of the extreme measures needed to save rhinos, we headed by charter flight to beautiful **Bumi Hills** overlooking the shores of Lake Kariba. In stark contrast to Chivero, this oasis provided 6-star treatment and accommodation. They welcome, indeed are desperate for, international business. While there and learning more about the rhinos, we became hands on participants in what later became an **international rescue operation** reminiscent of Operation Noah when Kariba was built. The flood waters of the Zambezi had caused the grazing plains to be submerged on **Starvation Island** right in front of our **Bumi Hills Safari Lodge**, leaving waterbuck and impala well ... starving. Some of the waterbuck tried to make a desperate swim for the mainland as we watched from the deck of the lodge. We leapt to action, managing to save a number by assisting them to shore with the Bumi boats. Bumi Hills Safari Lodge also seems to be on the right track in rhino conservation with its own Anti-poaching Unit. The private operators have a big role to play here.



Across the water lies **Matusadona National Park**. Here we found total chaos at the Tashinga base camp. Just about every vehicle we saw was in desperate need of repair. Some equipment we brought with us would help, but the need is too great and sadly the will too small on the part of those on the ground. Patrols go out for prolonged periods, but transport over these vast distances seems to present a constant hurdle.

After such conflicting and contrasting worlds, we flew by private charter to Victoria Falls and on to the sprawling **Hwange National Park**. Touching base with the local **lion and wild dog organisations and researchers, was again inspirational**. Their tireless efforts in the education of the local communities seem to hold the elusive long term answer to the constant poaching in the area. But as with so much in Africa, nothing is an easy fix.

Our trip ended with the *Flight of Angels* over **Victoria Falls**, a little white water rafting on the Upper Zambezi, walking with lions and the obligatory booze cruise sunset to discuss all we had seen.

All in all, the work being done by the **SAVE FOUNDATION** and the dedicated people from the other side of the world, is a light of hope for the remaining animals of Africa and specifically the rhinos of Zimbabwe.

Every little bit helps a country like Zimbabwe that has seen so much torment in recent years. Even drinking G&Ts on the Zambezi River!

Bryan Sher, Cape Town

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Zimbabwe Rhino Workshop and Annual Rhino Management Meeting: Harare: 16 - 22 March, 2011

During March, **Nicholas Duncan** and Vice President **Michael Palmer** attended these very worthwhile meetings in Harare, funding their own attendance as usual.

The 'Rhino Workshop' was actually a highly structured series of workshops held over three days, with worldwide rhino experts attending, including **Dr Rob Brett** (*Regional Director, Africa, for Fauna and Flora International (UK)*), **Dr Richard Emslie** (*Scientific Officer, IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (South Africa)*), **Mr Tony Conway** of KZN Wildlife (South Africa) (*an expert in regional wildlife security*), key Zimbabwean stakeholders, including **Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife (ZNPW)** and the major private rhino conservancies, and major donors including ourselves (Australia), **Save the Rhino International (UK)**, **International Rhino Foundation (USA)**, **WWF**, and **Dambari Wildlife Trust**

(Zimbabwe), the Workshop's organiser.

The first workshop considered the security aspects of rhino conservation during which it was revealed that South Africa lost 333 (black and white, but mostly white—not quite as biologically harmful as it may seem as South Africa has close to 20,000 whites) rhinos to poaching in 2010, and Zimbabwe lost about 45 (mostly black) rhinos. The figures are dramatic in that although South Africa has suffered a far greater number of rhino losses to poaching than Zimbabwe, the percentage-of-population-loss in Zimbabwe is far greater than in South Africa, to the extent that unless poachings in Zimbabwe can be halved quickly, the total Zimbabwe rhino population will continue its current significant decline. As a result, it was concluded that **even greater efforts to properly train and equip anti-poaching teams** in both National Parks and private conservancies need to be made. There was a lot of discussion and agreement on how this could be done, with it being fairly clear that significant funding from the major international donors, including **SAVE FOUNDATION** of Australia, one of the biggest donors for black rhinos (the critically endangered species) in Zimbabwe, is needed.

The second workshop considered the biological implications for Zimbabwe's populations following a decade of poaching losses, and how these populations can be best managed to ensure continued viability. This included several discussions on small rhino populations in some national parks and some private conservancies, where the small total number is genetically non-viable, or the gender-mix is unsuitable, or the continuing huge poaching losses are completely unsustainable. Also discussed was how and when relocations can be undertaken where agreed as necessary, with the implied hope that these relocations could be funded by international donors, including ourselves.

The third workshop included all stakeholders, bringing together the first two workshops, and it considered and developed a revised national five-year rhino conservation strategy, and developed the criteria for measuring (via performance indicators) and monitoring rhino population management in ways that were agreeable to all those stakeholders.

It was a very successful and meaningful series of workshops, and we came away feeling optimistic. It now remains for all the stakeholders to carry out their individual undertakings and responsibilities quickly and effectively if Zimbabwe's rhino population decline is to be reversed.

Nicholas and Mike on the final day also attended the annual (Zimbabwe) Rhino Management Committee Meeting, which finalised the rhino management work (micro-chipping, dehorning, ear-notching, relocations, etc.) for 2011, where national and international contributions are necessary for the programme to be carried out effectively and fully.



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We are indebted to the following for their very generous supply of assorted veterinary products, as listed:

- i-Stat machine from **Vladimir Ostoich of Abaxis North America**, with full local back up and supplies from **Nicolette Newell, Business Manager – Veterinary-REM SYSTEMS**
- Nellcor pulse oximeter from **Tyco Healthcare**
- Surelorin from **Peptech Animal Health Pty Ltd** (for lions)
- Oxygen flow meter from **Mega Medical Equipment and Gases, Australia**
- Microscope from **CURTIN University**
- Anaesthetic machines from **Peter Adamson and Alan Taylor**
- Betadine scrub and long acting antibiotics from **Ian and Helen Fairnie**
- Various drugs for lions from **David Jones**
- Assorted veterinary supplies from **Katy Horton and Vets on White Hart Lane, Barnes, London**



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