

# SEBAKWE NEWS

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REGISTERED CHARITY : 328461

## THE FUTURE FOR THE MIDLANDS CONSERVANCY

Despite all the political and economic problems in Zimbabwe, I remain optimistic for the future of the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy. However, there has been a big increase in poaching and there is the strong possibility of an upsurge of violence and intimidation of voters, farmers and their workers, in the run up to the Presidential Election, which is due on March 9th and 10<sup>th</sup>.

According to the Commercial Farmers Union there were 326 confirmed Section 8 eviction orders served on farmers this December, including 4 in the Midlands Conservancy. Many of these farms do not meet the Government stated criteria. Section 8 notices mean that the owner must stop active farming immediately and vacate the farm within 3 months.

During our recent visit in December, I met Mr. C.G.Misipa, the Midlands Provincial Governor, to discuss with him our plans for the development of the Conservancy. In particular I told him that we would like to build a Conservancy Headquarters and Education Centre on 37 hectares of designated land by the Sebakwe Club and School and he agreed to give his support to this project



Mr. M.Rushwaya and Mr. C.G.Misipa (on right)

**I am pleased to be able to report that the Conservancy has now received an official letter from Mr. M.Rushwaya, the Provincial Administrator, giving us permission to go ahead with the building of an educational centre and associated housing on this land.**

I also expressed my concern to the Governor about the increase in poaching, especially from Bushy Park and Mopani Park, which was indiscriminately killing wildlife and he promised to investigate this further.

We later discussed the recent issuing of Section 8 notices on Conservancy farms. Subsequently I have written to both the Provincial Governor and the Director of National Parks requesting a special dispensation and delisting of these farms, as they are in an important wildlife area of special value for the protection of rhino and other wildlife species.

During our visit, I met Mr Henry Charidza, the Provincial Warden National Parks Midlands Province at Gweru and we also met Helen Muvirimi, the senior ranger at Sebakwe National Parks. We discussed co-operation between the Conservancy and National Parks on the introduction of educational awareness programmes, once the education centre has been built.

The Midlands Conservancy now has 56 black rhino who are breeding well. I believe we are about to see a dramatic turn around in the fortunes of Zimbabwe and with the continued help from all our donors, now is the time to invest in the infrastructure which is needed to provide the farmers and staff with the buildings, facilities and equipment for a modern Conservancy.



## CONSERVANCY STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

As we have had a good response from our donors this year, the Trustees, in conjunction with The Midlands Conservancy, have developed a strategy and objectives for the future development of the Conservancy. It is hoped that this can be completed within the next three years, but that is dependent on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe.

Our overall strategy is to develop and maintain a secure protected habitat for rhino in the Midlands area of Zimbabwe, within the private sector, financed by charitable donations and tourism. We want to provide scientific and educational resources to enhance our knowledge and understanding of rhino, their environment, and their conservation and of other flora and fauna in their ecosystems.



Africat Education Centre in Namibia

### Our five main objectives are set out as: -

**SECURITY** – To combat the rise in poaching activities by increasing the number of rhino guards and monitors to fifteen, Provide additional accommodation and equipment for the guards and improve their mobility. Erect further perimeter fences around the Conservancy as necessary to maintain security.

**MONITORING** – More accurate identification of rhino within the Conservancy, by the darting and ear notching of younger rhino. Tracking of movements of rhino through the training of monitors in the use of cameras and GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment.

**CONSERVANCY HEADQUARTERS** – On land near to the Sebakwe School and Club, we plan to build an Education Centre with accommodation, a Conservancy office and headquarters with a house for a full time conservator and facilities for the provision of research and postgraduate studies into the conservation of wildlife.

**EDUCATION** – Continue to provide financial support for the development and improvement of local schools. To provide facilities for the establishment of awareness programmes on wildlife and the environment, through the use of the Education Centre and in conjunction with Sebakwe National Parks.

**ECO-TOURISM** – The provision of rhino and wildlife safaris in lodge accommodation within the Conservancy. International marketing of the opportunities for eco-tourism in the Midlands Conservancy, including a return to the Conservancy of a percentage of wildlife revenues for future funding needs.



## ANTI-POACHING PATROLS

The Conservancy now has 8 Guards and Monitors under the command of Sergeant Elliot and the responsibility of Ferdi Terblanche, the Conservator. To meet the need for more accommodation at the guard's camp, we are now going to build a further block to sleep six, with attached kitchens. This will allow us to increase our total number of guards and monitors to fifteen.

The Guards act as regular patrols and also as a rapid reaction response against poaching but at the moment are dependent on the farmers supplying transport – in order to improve the guards response time we would like to purchase a second hand 4WD pick-up truck.

During the last two years there has been a huge increase in poaching of wildlife in the Conservancy. Men on foot are carrying this out. Often they use packs of dogs but they also set numerous wire snares that are quite indiscriminate in the animals they catch or injure. The farms that have been worst affected by poaching have been Circle G, Bushy Park, due to land invasion and Mopani Park, due to the resettlement programme and fast tracking exercise.



Guards on Parade



Guards Marching

We have a long list of requirements for the guards – radios, GPS's, overalls, boots, rucksacks, ground sheets, first aid kit, cameras, waterbottles, weapons and ammunition, jerseys and handcuffs. As well as our regular donors, we are grateful to the following people and organisations who have donated funds specifically for the wages and equipment for the guards:-

**Maggie Heydt** – President of the Black Rhino Foundation in the USA, donated US\$3000 to pay the wages of extra guards. This Foundation is a non-profit organisation promoting and encouraging the preservation of wildlife, specifically the black rhino.

**Nic Davies** - Founder Director of Rhino Recovery sent us a cheque for £1422.66 from the CYCLEclipse fundraising trip to Zimbabwe. This is specifically to be used for the purchase of equipment for the guards. Many thanks to Nic, Dave, Richard and Chris for their fundraising cycle ride.

**Nicholas Duncan** – Chairman of SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia, who is visiting the Midlands Conservancy in January 2002 and will be providing kit and facilities for the guards and monitors.



Sergeant Elliot & John Gripper



Guards Camp



## CIRCLE G FENCE

Work has now commenced on the building of the new perimeter fence at Circle G Ranch. This fence is 7.5km in length and extends along the western bank of the Munyati River, with the resettlement area on the other side of the river.

The cost of the fence will be about £5000, but reusing some of the wooden fencing posts and wire from the old fence will save some money. This new fence will be 2 metres high and electrified, with the mains electricity supplied from one of the nearby farms.



Hilton Bayayi inspecting Circle G fence



Munyati River

Circle G Ranch was designated and purchased by the Government with full compensation paid to the previous owner. It is now run by a seven person farming syndicate who have joined the Rhino Conservancy as full members. Hilton Bayayi acts as spokesman for the syndicate.

There has been a lot of poaching on Circle G which has frightened the rhino away to other ranches. This perimeter fence is being erected as a joint venture with the new occupants to reduce the level of poaching.

## MARATHON RUNNER

Congratulations and thanks to **John Hector Murray** from Craigie, Perth, Scotland, who ran in the Fort William Ben Nevis Half Marathon to raise £93.50 for the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust.

## INTERNET SHOPPING

Internet shopping made easy - with a percentage given back to your favourite charity. Have a look at this site – enter your charity as **Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust** and then start shopping.

**UshopUgive.com**

where retailers give to charity when you shop online

[www.UshopUgive.com](http://www.UshopUgive.com)





## TWO NEW U.K. TRUSTEES

**Paul Holmes** qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Liverpool Veterinary School in 1986.

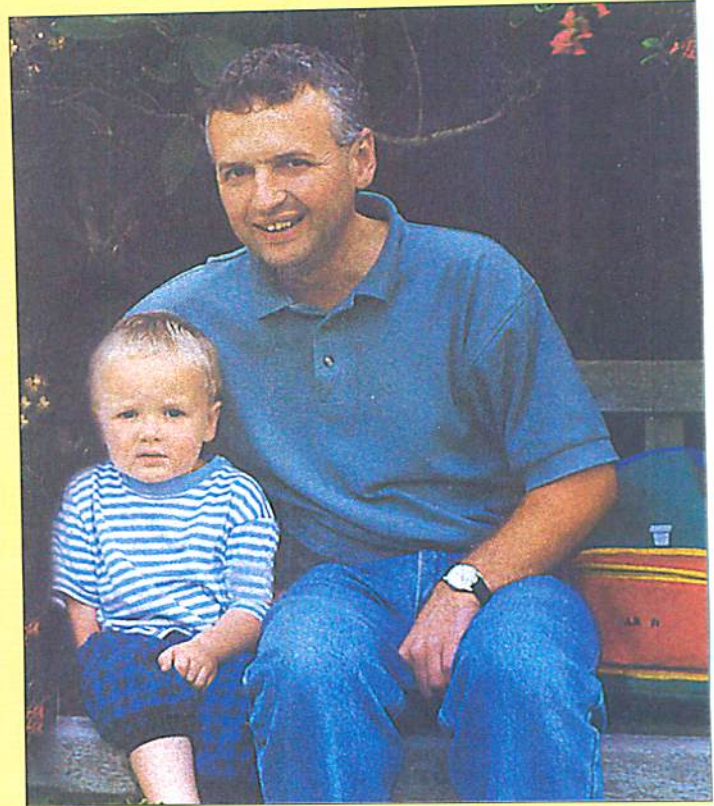
In 1979 he went to the Arctic to undertake biology, ornithological and physiology projects. From 1981 to 1983 he carried out field conservation work in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana with the Vulture Study Group under the supervision of Dr Peter Munday and Dr John Ledger. He assisted in the capture of white rhino in Natal and their translocation to Pilanesburg National Park.

In 1985 he was veterinary consultant to a UNESCO project in the desert region of northern Kenya and carried out research on herds of camels, goats and cattle with Dr Hugh Lamprey and Dr Chris Field, where he set up a field laboratory for the diagnosis of trypanosomiasis and helminthiasis.

After qualification he worked in mixed veterinary practice in the North of England and was involved in different wildlife and ornithological projects including a visit to the black rhino project in Sebakwe in 1994,

In 1995 he passed with distinction, a postgraduate M.Sc. degree course in London as a Master of Science in Wild Animal Health.

In 1995 he was appointed a Government Veterinary Investigation Officer at Shrewsbury in Shropshire and has recently been closely involved in Foot and Mouth disease duties. Paul is married with 3 children.



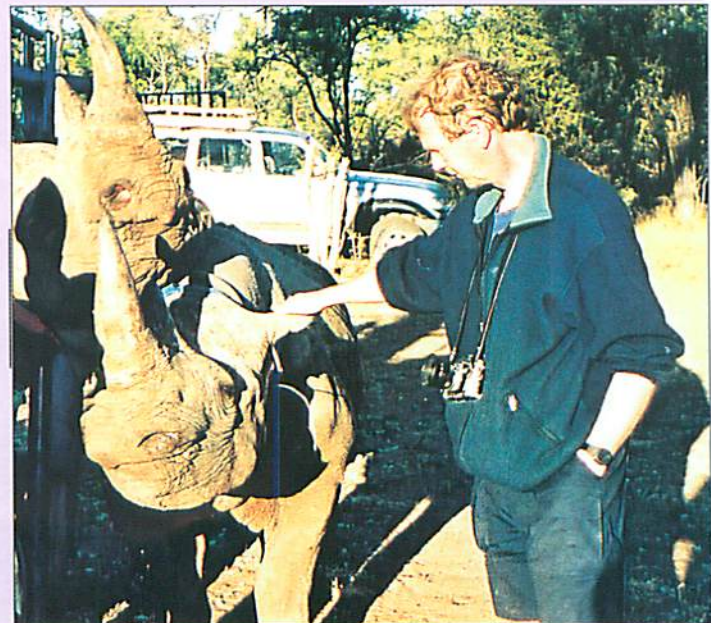
**Nigel Overall** was educated at boarding school in Somerset and graduated from Plymouth Polytechnic in 1982 with an Honours degree in Civil Engineering.

The first few years of his working career were spent with a national contracting company on various civil engineering projects in the U.K. He later specialised in the tunnelling technique of 'Pipe Jacking'. This involved a short spell working in Iraq.

In 1985 Nigel worked for Gloucester City Council in their drainage department but returned to private sector contracting in 1987 on highway-related construction and maintenance schemes.

In 1989 he became Assistant Contracts manager with Gloucestershire County Councils Highways Maintenance Unit.

This was followed by a move to the Surveyors Department where he now holds the position of Operations Manager and is responsible for the maintenance and structural repairs of some 700kms of road, with an annual budget of £2M. Nigel is married to Marion and they have two daughters.





## ANNIE'S PAGE

During our December visit to the Midlands Conservancy, I was able to visit the Sebakwe Farmers School and attend their Prize Giving Day. This was well attended by the parents who came to watch their children perform dances and several small plays. The Guest of Honour was Mr Sibinda, the district education officer.

The Kindergarten Class is worth a special mention as they sang Baa Baa Black Sheep twice, firstly in English and then in Shona. I was able to present the school with a large selection of card and board games, a football, tennis balls, a cricket bat with stumps and some boomerangs, before presenting the school prizes. We are also donating Z\$100,000 to the school from the Trust this year for the purchase of much needed equipment and facilities for use by the children.

Unfortunately, I was unable to visit Guzuzu School, because the heavy rains and thunderstorms had caused the river to flood. It was not possible to cross the Munyati River to reach the school. However the same games and funds have been made available for these children and Mr Cleeve Fairey will deliver them on behalf of the Trust as soon as the floods abate. This school hopes to benefit the children by the introduction of a TV system, so each class will be able to view the school educational programmes.



Mr Sibanda, Mrs F.Chawira & Stephan Weinberger



Schoolchildren at Sebakwe School

Later in the week I visited the Sebakwe Medical Clinic, which is next to the school, and met Sister Benhura, who kindly showed me around her clinic and her small maternity ward, where she delivers babies.

This clinic has a catchment area of 7000 people, but the medical supplies are barely adequate and are for first-aid treatment only; anything more serious is sent to the hospital at Kwe Kwe, which is half an hour's drive away. The clinic has no transport so Sister has to contact one of the farmers to request transport assistance - this may result in a long delay before the patient is seen by the doctor.

Sister Benhura holds a surgery every morning – the commonest conditions are acute respiratory infections, bloody diarrhoea, malaria, AIDS related illness and other sexually transmitted infections. She runs a regular baby clinic and is on-call all the time. Her house is next door to the clinic, where she lives with her family. On our next visit we plan to take out some medical dressings and supplies for this Clinic.



### TRANSPORT CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Many thanks to all those people who attempted the Quiz this year. The winner was Jasper Kay of Cambridgeshire with 83 correct answers. The sum raised from the Quiz was £223.00

If you would like to have a copy of the answers, please send a stamp-addressed envelope to:-

Annie Gripper, Manor Farm,  
Ascott-u-Wychwood, OXON OX7 6AL.





## BLACK RHINO IN NAMIBIA

Namibia has a total of about 700 black rhino – some of these are to be found in Damaraland, which is desert surrounded by spectacular mountain scenery. These desert rhino and also elephant live here outside the National Parks in a unique habitat.

The black rhino survive on the leaves of small bushes like euphobia and virosa. During the heat of the day they shelter under a mopani tree or a milk bush. Rhino need to drink water every three or four days and will walk up to 30 kms from their feeding place to find a water hole, often in a dried up river bed. Despite the arid conditions, the desert rhino appeared in excellent body condition and are breeding well.

In 1984, Blythe Loutit founded the Save The Rhino Trust in Namibia, for the conservation of the desert black rhino. This Trust has five patrol teams with 25 field staff of community game guards, rangers and trackers, who monitor the rhino and patrol their vast rugged home range of 20,000sq kms. There is a strong involvement of local people in their active conservation and education awareness programme, which has been instrumental in the sharp decline of poaching.



Sand dunes in early morning sun



Rhino rubbing stone



Male desert rhino

Wildlife tourism is flourishing in Namibia, but there is an increasing concern about damage to dry riverbeds, which are being turned into speedway circuits by the uncontrolled use of 4 x 4's and quad bikes.

Eco-tourism is provided for the visitor by Bicornis Safaris, which is a company formed by Desert Adventure Safaris and Save the Rhino Trust. They have set up a bush camp in the conservancy area. As well as desert rhino and elephant you may see oryx, giraffe, steenbok, mountain zebra, kudu, springbok, dik-dik, ostrich and if you are lucky, you may also see cheetah lion and leopard. Further details can be obtained from Bicornis Safaris, Box 339, Swakopmund, Namibia.

E-mail: [dassaf@iafrica.com.na](mailto:dassaf@iafrica.com.na)





## VISIT THE MIDLANDS CONSERVANCY

At the present time, there are few tourists in Zimbabwe but better times could be just around the corner. Airfares are now cheap and this would be a good time to book your next holiday at one of the camps in the Midlands Conservancy. A percentage of your accommodation cost is returned to the Conservancy.

### CHINYIKA SAFARIS – run by Ken and Sandy King

They will arrange to meet you at Harare International airport and you stay at Dingaans Kraal Safari Camp, named after a famous Zulu Chief. Set amid waterberry, acacia and karoo trees with a nearby date palm grove, the kraal's open-thatched dining area complements two-bedded thatched rondavels with adjacent showers and toilets.

Chinyika offers the unique opportunity to track and approach the black rhino on foot. Contact them direct for full information and bookings by e-mail: [chinyika@samara.co.zw](mailto:chinyika@samara.co.zw) or contact the UK agent, King & King, African safaris, tel: 01363 866506 or e-mail [en9814@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:en9814@eclipse.co.uk)



Rondavel at Dingaans Kraal Safari Camp



Thatched dining area at Camp

### Nyangombe Lodge – this is a newly built lodge managed by Bob and Jenny Swift of Bemthree.

There is a thatched house, which sleeps six people, has two toilets and shower, and a number of chalets which sleep 2 or 4 people sharing toilets and showers. This lodge is set close to the Sebakwe River with stunning views. There is also a swimming pool.

Dinner, Bed and Breakfast is US\$70 per person per night, with 10% of income going to the Conservancy. Experience tracking a black rhino on foot with trained trackers, eco-walks and rambles, horse riding, bird watching and fishing are all available. You will be met at Harare airport and further visits to Game Reserves, Vic Falls or Kariba can be organised.



Chalet at Nyangombe Lodge



View of Sebakwe River