

National Parks Board and the Department of Water Affairs & Forestry. The Rhino & Elephant Foundation also sponsored the public liability indemnity policy for a period of two years.

After a period of almost two months, the elephants were released from a boma at the Diepwalle State Forest and daily movements were monitored with radio collars. Three weeks later, they met with the last remaining Knysna elephant and stayed together for a period of seven weeks. Tragically, one of the Kruger elephants died, four days after joining the resident Knysna cow and it is believed that her premature death was as a consequence of the demands of adaptation, feeding and social changes, resulting in acute interstitial pneumonia.

Survey

During mid 1995, a survey was conducted to establish beyond doubt, what the status of the original Knysna elephant population was. This survey indicated that only one elephant, a cow of approximately 45 years of age, remained. This new information on the population status, and the fact that the elephants did not remain with the Knysna elephant cow and spent most of their time outside of the forest area, became a major concern and it was decided to call a public meeting. This meeting, held on the 5 October 1995 in Knysna, was attended by several expert advisors and it was decided to maintain the status quo and monitor the situation for another year.

However, since release, the elephants have spent less and less of their time in the indigenous forest and have spent a large part of their time on private land consisting of plantations and grazing. The unfortunate consequence of this, was irrefutable damage to the property of Mr Frik van Huyssteen, affecting both irrigation systems, fences and commercial flower beds. This called for swift action and a meeting was called with all interested and affected parties in Knysna on 24 January 1997 and after much deliberation, the decision was unanimously taken to find a suitable new home for the animals as soon as possible.

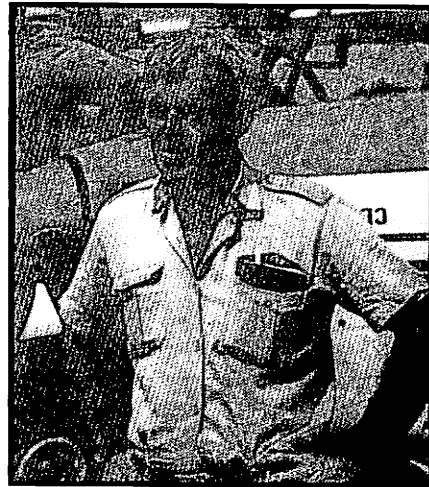
Birth of a Rhino at the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, Botswana

The Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust have announced the birth of a new rhino calf at the Sanctuary, during February 1997. This

brings the total number of rhinos resident at the Sanctuary, to twelve.

The Sanctuary, a community based wildlife project, was established in 1992, in response to the impending threat to the survival of Botswana's remaining rhinos and bears testimony to the achievement of one of the major objectives of the Trust.

Members may recall the aerial survey conducted in Botswana during September 1992, which was a joint undertaking by the Rhino & Elephant Foundation, National Parks Board, Natal Parks Board and the Namibian Ministry of Wildlife, in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife & National Parks, Botswana. Funding for the census was provided by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong, in conjunction with REF. The results of the survey, carried out when it was recognised there was an urgent need to know more about the status and distribution of both species of rhinoceros in northern Botswana for their long-term conservation, revealed an alarming decrease in numbers of both black and white rhinoceros. A total of seven white rhino were counted, with no black having been sighted.



Peter Hitchins

Peter Hitchins, Trustee of the Foundation and a key player in the survey, stated in his report to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Botswana, that in-situ protection of both species of rhinoceros in the vast areas of northern Botswana were probably logistically and financially impossible in the long-term. The ultimate goal, he believed, was the capture of the free living rhinoceros and the placement of them in a well managed sanctuary with suitable habitat.

It was imperative, he added, that the remaining rhino were placed in bomas, where they should be held until their eventual release. Hence, the establishment of the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, outside Serowe, which took place in 1993 with the involvement of an enthusiastic local community. The Foundation pledged their financial support for the construction of these bomas and the ongoing success rate of this Sanctuary, speaks for itself.

Ssangyong Midrand, supports Rhino Conservation

We are delighted to announce that Ssangyong Midrand, have pledged donations on the sale of every Musso, from this dealership on an annual basis, to assist in ongoing rhino conservation projects undertaken by the Foundation. For our members' interest, 'Musso' is the Korean word for rhino!

Our grateful thanks to Mr Mario Beltrame, Sales Manager of Ssangyong Midrand, and the management and staff of Overlander King.

Assistance from REF

REF has assisted the Rhino Management Group, under the chairmanship of Dr Martin Brooks, with part funding towards the compilation of a report on the status and management of black rhino in South Africa and Namibia in 1995. Further assistance with printing requirements has also been provided to this body.

The foundation has further assisted, together with SAVE Australia, and an independent South African benefactor, in obtaining much needed avionics equipment for Zimbabwe.

New Chief Executive for WWF South Africa

The Chairman and Board of Trustees wish to extend their warm good wishes to outgoing Dr John Hanks, Chief Executive of WWF - SA since 1990, who would be tasked with the full-time investigation into the viability of trans-frontier conservation areas, also known as 'peace parks', between South Africa and its neighbours.

We further extend our congratulations to Dr Ian Macdonald, former Director of Conservation for WWF - SA, who will be succeeding Dr Hanks.

Words of thanks

The Chairman and Board of Trustees of the Rhino and Elephant Foundation, wish to sincerely thank attorneys, Messrs Bell, Dewar and Hall, and especially Mr Paul Botha, for the ongoing gratuitous assistance they have provided to the Foundation with various matters. We are extremely grateful for the time and expertise afforded us.

We wish to extend a big welcome to all new REF members and a special word of thanks for all generous donations/support received from the following individuals and organisations, at the time of going to press:

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Editor: Lucinda Scholtz