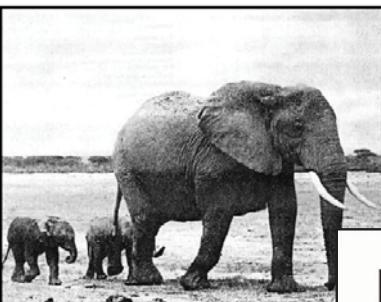


Pachyderm

SPECIAL 50th issue—*Pachyderm* past and present

AFRICAN ELEPHANT &
RHINO GROUP
NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 1

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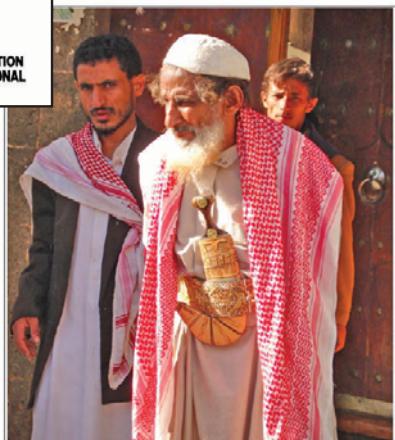
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Pachyderm

Journal of the African Elephant, African Rhino
and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups

SPECIAL 50th issue—Pachyderm past and present

- 1 Looking back over 50 issues of *Pachyderm*
Lucy Vigne
- 4 How I chose conservation work over a PhD
Lucy Vigne
- 10 How I met Clara, the Dutch rhinoceros
Kees Rookmaaker
- 12 Reflection over years
Kes Hillman Smith
- 13 Rhino memories
Jan Robovský
- 14 Thandi's Story: An account of a hand-raised black rhino's journey and close encounter between pachyderm and human
Sue Downie, Lucky Mavrandonis
- 16 Experiences with reintroduced rhinos in Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh India
Dr Satya Priya Sinha
- 17 Then and now
Markus Borner
- 18 Virunga elephant population grappling with poaching
Leonard Mubalama Kakira
- 22 Tribute to farmers
Julien Marchais
- 24 The *Pachyderm* path: Bridget McGraw asks Iain Douglas-Hamilton how he sees the journal
Bridget McGraw

Looking back over 50 issues of *Pachyderm*

Lucy Vigne

As the longest standing Editorial Board member, and early Editor of *Pachyderm*, let me look back at how it all started, and evolved from a newsletter of 15 pages to a high quality journal of over 100 pages, and my memories in those early days and to the present.

My involvement with the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG) started in Nairobi in September 1983 when I met David Western (known to all as Jonah), its Chairman, on the third floor of Embassy House on Harambee Avenue. On the door of his small room was NYZS (New York Zoological Society), which he shared within the African Wildlife Foundation offices. Along the passage was another door labelled WWF/IUCN where Rob Malpas sat in another small room. He had just edited the first issue of the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group's Newsletter. He and Jonah both agreed they needed help with their additional workload, and I was asked to help with the next issue of the newsletter and to compile data from those in the field on the numbers and distribution of elephants and rhinos throughout the African continent, at a time when poaching was rife and little was understood about the level of poaching and trade routes for ivory and rhino horn.

I had just spent a couple of months travelling from Cairo through Egypt, Sudan and Uganda to Kenya, on trains, boats, lorries and on foot. I had seen massive herds of elephants escaping from poachers in south Sudan that darkened the skyline. Following quite a gruelling journey, I was delighted to be working for elephant and rhino conservation in the comfort of a carpeted office, surrounded by papers and desks and typewriters and the photocopying machine, enjoying the company of fellow zoologists! And after three months of voluntary work I was asked to stay on, being given the grand title by Jonah of Executive Officer for the AERSG, and I also became the Editor for the second issue of the AERSG Newsletter, which we established as a biannual publication (funds permitting).

I would walk across town to Kijabe Street to the typesetters, and each correction was typed with a 'golf ball' typewriter by an efficient typist and cut and pasted (literally) over the mistake on the page of text. It was thus easy to check corrections as one could see or feel them stuck onto the page. There was no fear of words or lines being dropped due to a computer error. The cut and paste man did a brilliant job with steady fingers under a bright anglepoise light, and cow gum by his side, and it was a pleasure to work with him. For the cover of the second issue I chose Gertie the rhino from Amboseli Game Reserve in southern Kenya who had been tragically poached but had had the longest of horns. For the third issue I chose for the cover rows of rhino skulls from 88 black rhinos (about 60 poached) lined up in South Luangwa Valley in 1983 and for the fourth Iain Douglas-Hamilton gave me an aerial photo taken in 1976 of large numbers of doomed elephants south of Murchison Falls in Uganda.

By then Jonah and I had decided that the name *Pachyderm* was a more succinct title for the newsletter, encompassing both elephants and rhinos in the dictionary definition. And so *Pachyderm* was born! It had been a 20-page newsletter, with every space occupied to the fullest, making pictures and graphs regrettably small, but everything was smaller in conservation then. In those days there were fewer staff, less bureaucracy and more compact offices with the main wildlife NGOs grouped together on one floor of Embassy House allowing daily discussions and exchange of ideas. And it was a dynamic time with field biologists working in Kenya and other African countries joining us for coffee in the large communal sitting area, exchanging stories, knowledge and experiences. We were all united in our wish to conserve and study wildlife, with elephants and rhinos dominating our thoughts in those days of heavy poaching.

It was time to move on by the fifth issue. David Cumming in Zimbabwe replaced David Western as Chairman of the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group. I was invited to continue there as Editor of *Pachyderm* and Executive Officer of the Group, but I had met my future husband and opted to stay on in Kenya, working instead on a WWF project to close down the international trade in rhino horn with the Vice

Chairman of the AESRG at that time, Esmond Martin. David Cumming and Raoul du Toit in Harare edited *Pachyderm* in Zimbabwe for the next several issues. David Cumming stepped down as Chairman of AERSG in December 1987 with David Western resuming the role, and the AERSG office moved back to Nairobi. Thus, by issue 11, the editorial board was in Nairobi once more, under Chris Gakahu. It was noted in that issue that *Pachyderm* produced ‘technical articles relevant to elephant and rhino conservation... for scientists and authorities actively concerned or involved in elephant and rhino conservation.’ It was noted also that those concerned with the future of elephants and rhinos came from diverse backgrounds and in order ‘to sustain and encourage this support we must keep them informed on issues concerning these animals.’ Thus *Pachyderm* was to be ‘restructured to reach a wider audience’ with future issues being less technical, covering broader elephant and rhino conservation issues.

By issue 12 the cover photo was in colour, the famous 1989 scene of Kenya’s first ivory burning, and it has remained in colour. The issues were also getting bigger with 50 pages of A4 size by issue 14. A shift occurred by issue 15. The AERSG members had been united by the fact that poaching pressures and trade were common ground for both elephant and rhino specialists to overcome together; but then the Group decided to split with the general expansion of issues concerning both elephants and rhinos. So it was that Holly Dublin became Chair (and remains so) of the African Elephant Specialist Group in Nairobi and Martin Brooks became Chair of the African Rhino Specialist Group in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Pachyderm continued to be produced in Nairobi for both Groups, with French included for the Chair reports, and for articles from French-speaking African countries, later with abstracts in French. The quality of paper (100 g) and printing were considered to be important to maintain a high quality publication, and this has remained so. To keep costs down, photos remained black and white within the publication, with all efforts made to keep them to a high standard.

By the 18th issue we had invited the Asian Rhino Specialist Group to join *Pachyderm*, to share conservation information in order to benefit the protection of the two African rhino and three Asian rhino species. Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan and Tom Foose were co-Chairs providing the first report for the AsRSG in *Pachyderm* 18. By issue 23 Nico van Strien joined in as a third co-Chair. Tragically Tom Foose died in May 2006 (his tribute in issue 40) followed by Nico van Strien in February 2008 (his tribute in issue 44) and Asian rhinos lost their greatest supporters at the time. Bibhab Khumar Talukdar took over as Chair from Assam, India, and he remains actively engaged in that role for *Pachyderm*.

Issue 18 was edited by Ruth Chungo who continued until issue 23 with Greg Overton taking over until issue 27 when Martina Hoft was Editor, followed by Helen van Houten (our most long-standing Editor) from issue 29 until issue 44. Corrine Archer then stood in for one issue, and since then *Pachyderm*’s Editor has been Bridget McGraw. But issue 50 will be her last as she, regrettably for *Pachyderm*, returns to the USA. We must thank her for all her effort and patience with the last few issues as changes and developments have been considerable to meet the expanding needs and challenges.

While we have welcomed in issue 49 a new Chair for the African Rhino Specialist Group, Mike Knight in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, who took over from our previous long-standing Chair, Martin Brooks, Holly Dublin faithfully remains Chair of the African Elephant Specialist Group. She and her office must be congratulated on the thankless task of somehow always just finding enough funds for one more issue of *Pachyderm*! We have saved costs substantially by going on line and reducing our print run to 300 copies for issue 49, but for this commemorative 50th issue we have splashed out with a print run of 500. A little income comes in from those wishing to buy hard copies, although most go out as complimentary copies to the three Specialist Group members and their associates.

From its humble beginnings as a one-man show, *Pachyderm* has grown in size with a large editorial board and a distribution to an ever-broadening readership, thanks to the Internet and the *Pachyderm* web site. While members of the three Specialist Groups continue to tackle the concerns of elephant and rhino poaching and conservation in Africa, along with rhinos in Asia, it is only the Asian Elephant Specialist Group that remains separate producing a publication called *Gajah*. Elephant and rhino poaching has surged recently—meeting the demand for ivory and rhino horn for many newly wealthy East Asians, coupled with the pressures of an increasing human population and conflict in elephant and rhino range states. The role of *Pachyderm* as a vehicle to disseminate information, provided by Group members and other experts in their fields to an ever growing audience, is thus as important and urgent as it was when *Pachyderm* started, in fact, even more so with rhino and elephant populations under increasing threat of survival in so many regions.



© Lucy Vigne

Lucy Vigne looking at one of the six tame southern white rhinos in Meru National Park in Kenya in March 1984. On the right is one of the guards who looked after the rhinos on a 24-hour basis. They were all poached one night in 1989, and their horns were taken.

How I chose conservation work over a PhD

Lucy Vigne

I left Oxford University with a degree in Zoology in the summer of 1983, setting off with four university friends on a journey from Cairo to Cape Town. Before leaving I had stayed on the Isle of Rhum with Chris Thouless who had started his PhD there under Tim Clutton Brock. I told him of my wish to travel through Africa to look for possible PhD subjects. He advised against it, saying slightly tongue in cheek ‘a PhD is a sure road to unemployment.’ I was not convinced and with names he had given to me I sent postcards from Luxor to a number of his friends in Africa researching wildlife, to warn them of my possible arrival and that I would love to meet them.

It was an exciting journey on trains, buses and boats, including through the Sud: a two-week adventure where I saw herds of hundreds of elephants across the length of the horizon, like one dark line, moving fearfully from poachers in massive numbers—for protection I later learned. From Juba we hitched a ride in a lorry that got stuck at Nimule, where there was a several kilometer line of lorries that had been stuck for three weeks in the mud. After a night with the mosquitoes under the lorry, we proceeded on foot across the no-man’s-land stretch of 40 km from Nimule in South Sudan to Atiak on the North Uganda border. At the border, after having walked, as the only woman with five men at that stage, and having negotiated our way past drunk, marauding Idi Amin soldiers, the border official told me to return to Sudan on foot again alone, as my visa was stamped upside down. It was a stroke of luck that I had been given the embossed card of an official when receiving my visa at the Trafalgar Square Uganda High Commission. After momentary panic, I produced the card and said that I was expected in Kampala by this important person! And I was reluctantly waved through.

Our final journey was from there to Nairobi in a vehicle we later learned was smuggling goods above our heads in ceiling lining of the Land Rover (we never learned what) all the way! Our driver rolled the car climbing the Rift Valley, but we finally reached the New Stanley Hotel and it was a joy to visit a clean bathroom and sit on a loo seat, the first time for two months. I quickly decided—forgetting the PhD—it was more important to do urgent conservation work. I was delighted at the idea to work in an office, having been in the field, as it were, for several weeks.

Photos from the collection of Clive Walker



© Clive Walker

Can you help identify any of the people in the picture below? Who's that on the left? (Ok. That one is not so difficult.) But, if you can help us identify some of these conservationists, please email us at PachydermEditor@gmail.com.



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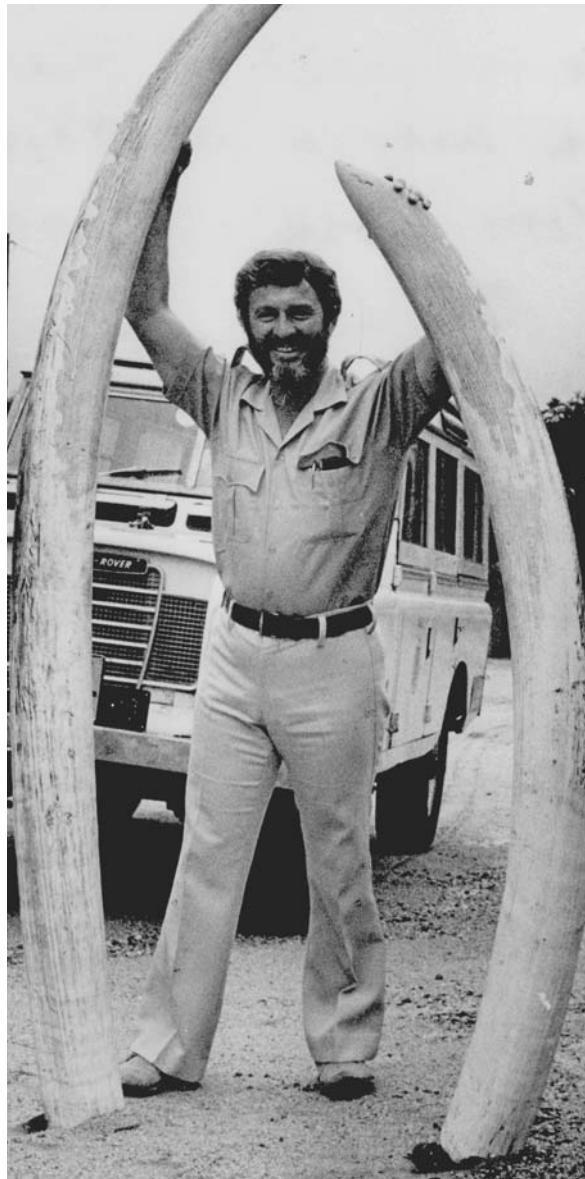
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We can all spot Esmond in the front row on the left. Who else can you name? The Editor will send you a special gift for naming more than five people! Send your answers to PachydermEditor@gmail.com.

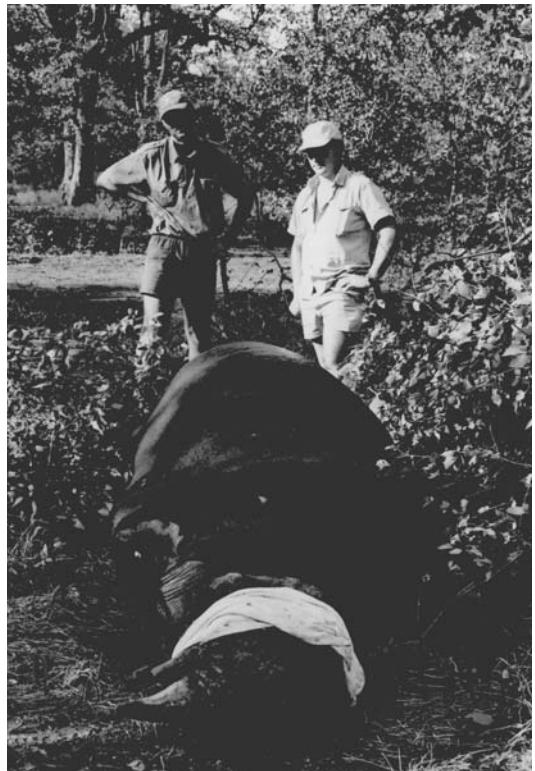


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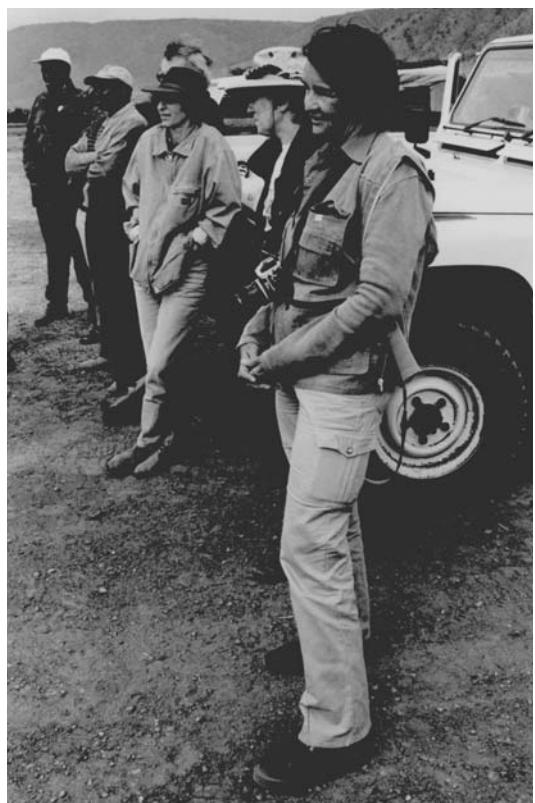
Dr Anthony Hall-Martin and
Dr Danie Pienaar at KNP.



© Clive Walker



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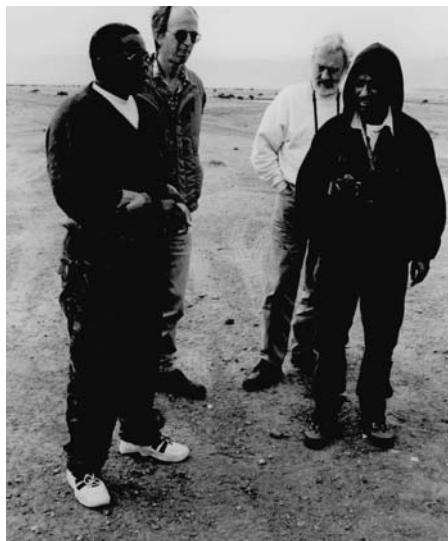


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Above: Name this handsome fellow!

Top-right: Pete Morkel and Micky Reilly in Zimbabwe.

Bottom-right: Tell us who you recognize for a special prize from the Editor. Email us your best guess: PachydermEditor@gmail.com.



All images © Clive Walker

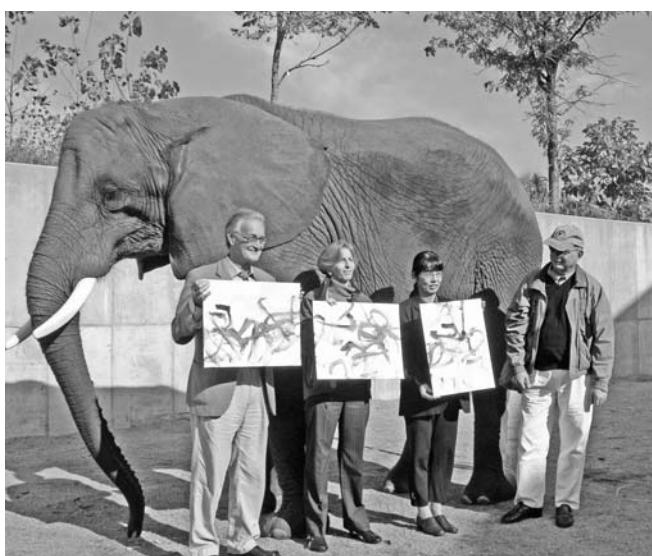
Top: Again, we would love to put names to these faces (at least the visible ones...).

Bottom-left: Holly Dublin talking to Brett in Nairobi.

Bottom-centre: The contest to name these chaps is on! Send your answers to PachydermEditor@gmail.com for a special prize.

Bottom-right: Blythe Loutit delivers a paper at a meeting in Manyara. Who can name the event?

Photos from the collection of Holly Dublin



All images © Holly Dublin

Can you help identify any of the people in these photos? Who is that with Holly and a document? (Naming the Iain Douglas-Hamilton or artistic elephant with them does not count.) Email us at PachydermEditor@gmail.com to help us name those in the group shots.

How I met Clara, the Dutch rhinoceros

Kees Rookmaaker

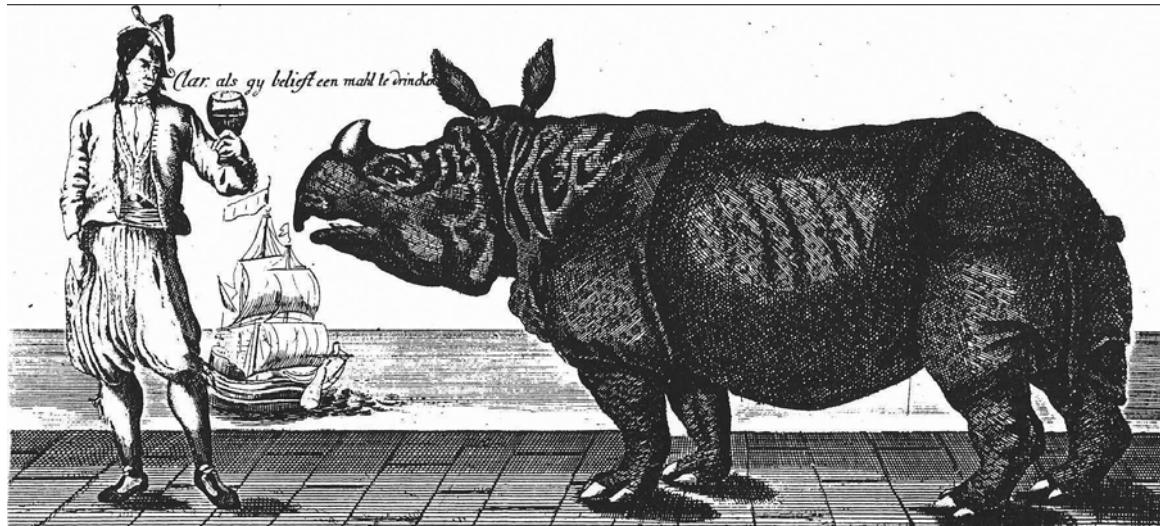


Figure 1. Sailor toasting Clara, the Dutch rhino—as we toast the committees and editors who have been responsible for the publication of *Pachyderm* 1983–2011.

Living in a suburb of Amsterdam as a young man, there were few opportunities to observe a living rhino. There were a few in the zoos around us, but for practical reasons I chose to start my investigations into the natural history of the rhino in one of the greatest zoological libraries of the country. Every Wednesday on a school-free afternoon I would make my way to the Artis Library, which was founded in the early 19th century as part of the zoological gardens in Amsterdam. Although initially baffled by the variety and age of the books on the shelves, I slowly got to grips with the library's extensive holdings and started to learn more about all aspects of rhino biology and history.

When looking through the older books in the library, I noticed a remarkable change in the depictions of the rhino during the 18th century. Before the middle of that century, the rhino was always illustrated by copies of the woodcut made by Albrecht Dürer in 1515. These were easily identified by the heavy body armour and the characteristic twisted hornlet on the animal's shoulder. After 1750, this image was gradually replaced by one which on first sight was a more naturalistic representation of a single-horned rhino. I saw the plates in the famous *Histoire Naturelle* by Buffon, in an anatomical atlas by Albinus and in a host of other books, many of which were seldom referred to and seemed quite obscure to my inexperienced eyes. It turned out that the later illustrations of the rhino were drawn after an animal which had been exhibited alive in all major European cities by a Dutch captain.

When I tried to discover more about the history of this animal as well as about a few other rhinos which had been imported into Europe before the French Revolution, I found that references were few and no comprehensive survey had yet been published. Hence, even before completing my secondary school education, I was encouraged to collate all material, which was then published in the scientific journal of the Artis Library (*Bijdragen tot de Dierkunde*, Amsterdam 43 (1): 39–63, 1973). A large part of this paper traced the route of the Dutch rhino, captured in Assam in 1738, taken to Holland in 1741, shown across the continent and died in 1758. It was a puzzle, of which even now the last pieces have not yet fallen into place.

I had only just received my copy of my first scientific publication, on 14 June 1973, when English friends called my attention to a similar study published in the *Connoisseur*, which unlike mine stressed the value of iconography in historical zoology. I soon met the author, Tim Clarke, one of the directors of Sotheby's in London. We shared a passion to learn more about the history and the art of the rhinos which entertained and educated the European audiences and which engraved the image of the rhino on scientists and laymen alike. A decennium later, this quest of the rhino in Europe culminated in Clarke's book, *The rhino from Durer to Stubbs 1515-1799* (1986), as well as in a variety of smaller papers.

The Dutch rhino has become famous after this. Her curious story was kindled by the restoration of Oudry's full-size painting of her by the Getty Museum and its exhibition in Schwerin. We had no name for her, until one copy of an obscure copper engraving came to light in Krakow, where a sailor proposed a toast to the rhino calling her 'Clar'. This must have been a version of the Dutch name Klaar or Klaartje, but in the largely Anglo-Saxon world this has rightly become Clara.

Clara died in April 1758, when she was about twenty years old. She not only delighted the public during her tours, but she changed the popular perception of the rhino forever. Sure enough, her presence hampered the discovery of the African rhino, double-horned and smooth-skinned, but that is quite a different albeit equally fascinating story.

Reflection over years

Kes Hillman Smith

I should like to thank the wonderful pachyderms of Africa, their amazing habitats and the really cool people who work with them, for an incredible life experience over the many years that Pachyderm has been a voice for the Rhino and Elephant Specialist Groups.

As a young scientist in the early 1970s, I was working in Kenya when there was a major panic about the rate at which elephants were disappearing. With my first husband Chris Hillman, I vomited my way through several elephant total counts in the sweater parts of Africa, with some of the wise *wazee* of aerial counting... people like Harvey Croze and Mike Norton Griffiths. Then as assistant to Iain Douglas Hamilton, one of the wilder pilots of the world, I learned to vomit less, counting elephants over Africa and vertically photographing them from door-less aircraft, as we did the first pan African Elephant Survey and Conservation Action Plan. The IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group emerged in strength from Iain's work and from many dedicated elephant conservationists.

What also emerged was the suffering of the rhinos in this poaching frenzy. Less to start with, their deaths meant proportionally more to their populations. David (Jonah) Western gave me the chance to do a similar rhino survey, supported by the then New York Zoological Society and through this process the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group was born. I was its first Chairperson, but really more in the role of Executive Officer at that stage. We tried to start with at least one person on the protection side and another on research, usually one from a government agency and one non-government in each rhino range state. The rhino group has expanded over the years, with so many really great individuals, pulling together for the survival of rhinos. I am honoured to still be part of it and commend those who have led it.

The work of everyone in these two groups really brought elephants and rhinos back from the brink in those early years. There have been ups and downs, but pachyderm conservation has had very many successes and is a strong force to face the challenges.

Travelling and communicating throughout Africa, doing the rhino survey, was a great experience, and made far more so by doing it with the venerable Major Ian Grimwood. Ex Indian Army, ex Chief Game Warden of Northern Rhodesia and Kenya and initiator of Operation Oryx, he was a fantastic character, well known and respected wherever we went. Built like a stick of biltong he only drank water mixed with his whiskey and breathed clean air in the brief interludes between cigarettes, but he could still walk me off my feet in the bush. We had many an adventure, especially in his old Land Rover that frequently broke down.

From this we went into battle to raise support to save the Northern White Rhinos and their habitats. After studying the introduction of black rhinos to Pilanesberg and churning round Sudan and Zaire looking for northern whites, Fraser Smith and I started with the Garamba National Park Project. Although I had initially committed only to a year, Garamba, Zaire/DRC and the rhinos and elephants were our life for well over 22 years, followed by more rhinos in Selous.

Africa is never without its challenges, and that is part of what makes it so worthwhile. I have been arrested four times by AK 47 toting youth, and three times our aircraft have been hit by the bullets fired at us. We have had 'incidents' three other times too, but we have been lucky. Over the years we have lost many brave colleagues in the conservation battles. Politics and negotiating one's way through the myriad of what some call corruption and others consider a way of life, give times of frustration, depression, resignation and amusement! In Garamba we were always up against the challenge of the war in adjacent Sudan, and two wars in DRC disrupted efforts even more. However, the success of the first project aimed specifically at tackling conservation in war, backed by UNESCO and UNF, and the way that it brought together all the stakeholders in World Heritage conservation in Congo was especially thrilling, even though that success had to be measured in minimizing loss!

Most of all however the thrill came in finding each new baby rhino born, watching them grow, interact and gain their own territories or produce their children and grandchildren, running free in these beautiful wild places.

Rhino memories

Jan Robovský

Faculty of Science University of South Bohemia

České Budějovice Czech Republic

Elephants and rhinos have fascinated me since childhood, but my affection for rhinos was dramatically increased when I had an opportunity to get very close to them at the Dvůr Králové Zoo (Czech Republic) in 2007. Since that time I have perceived rhinos as very gentle and co-operative animals, and also, obviously, as different personalities, which were always ready to receive endearment and a ‘kind word’.

Northern white rhinos were co-operative and peaceful at the Dvůr Králové Zoo, therefore we were able to take many body measurements and collect hair samples from different parts of their bodies (both surveys are being prepared for publication) without anaesthesia. My study of hair distribution along flanks was gladly accepted by them, because mud first had to be properly removed with brushes. The most cooperative were a male named Sudan—despite his age he was in perfect condition—and a female called Nabire who had the shaggiest ears in the group. They were both rather different from Fatu, a young female with fast reactions. The male Suni seemed to be dominant in his behaviour, whilst the female Najin was solicitous about her Fatu and old female Nesari was simply ‘the old lady’ with a somewhat different perception of the world.

Black rhinos were difficult to deal with because of their mercurial temperament. Even so all of them (!) allowed us to collect hairs for morphological and genetic comparisons. Rhino babies were often suppressed by their mothers when we attempted to get close, partly due to their protection, but the main reason was simple: mothers did not want to ‘share’ as far as our stroking was concerned.

My survey of captive rhinos was enabled by many experienced and kind zoo curators and zookeepers and at least five names deserve mentioning. They are Luděk Čulík, Jiří Hrubý, Roman Lár and Jan Ždárek of Dvůr Králové Zoo and Pavel Král of Ústí nad Labem Zoo. Roman was especially helpful—he repeatedly took with Jan Ždárek shoulder heights of all the northern white rhinos, with me their body lengths and we also collected hairs from all possible body parts. All these activities required many days, but these days were really glorious for us. Tragically, Roman died in 2011 at a traffic accident; he was only 31. I miss him greatly...

I am very happy that I have personally experienced many rhino personalities and also people taking care of them, mainly in zoos of Dvůr Králové, Ústí nad Labem and Plzeň. Considering this, the cruelty of some people towards rhinos is something I absolutely cannot imagine; it must be admitted that along with the rhinos’ decline internationally, we also face a crisis of our humanity.



© Jan Robovský

Figure 1. Nesari, an old female in the Dvůr Králové Zoo. Born in Sudan, 1972; died 26 May 2011. Photo taken 8 March 2011.

Thandi's Story: An account of a hand-raised black rhino's journey and close encounter between pachyderm and human

By Sue Downie and Lucky Mavrandonis

Black Rhino Monitoring Project in South African National Parks Sponsored by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Thandi arrived unexpectedly; her mother Sasha gave birth to her in the holding bomas after relocation from Namibia. Thandi got separated during the night and was found cold and alone at first light. Concerned that Sasha may reject Thandi, she was airlifted by helicopter to a rehabilitation centre.

We visited Thandi every month to photograph and monitor her progress. It was a unique opportunity to study this rare and endangered animal at such close quarters. After nine months Thandi was moved back to the bomas where she had been born because she had chronic diarrhoea and needed to start ingesting natural browse. We were committed to giving Thandi the best opportunity to make it in the wild. At two years she was moved to a 400 ha fenced-in camp to begin breaking the human contact.

A very young female, Mia, arrived and Thandi immediately took to her and they formed a close bond. A year later they were moved to an arid park 500 km to the north. We intensively monitored Thandi and Mia's introduction to the harsh environment until we were sure they could find water, adapt to the new browse and meet the resident rhinos.

After brief stays in a boma, then a fenced camp, the gate was opened late one afternoon and they walked out. This was a critical time, two years earlier a young female died shortly after a veld-to-veld introduction—Thandi had always had a concrete reservoir from which to drink, so we were concerned about her ability to find water in such a vast arid land when she was only five-and-a-half and Mia three years old. As dark fell, we left them to explore. Before sunrise we found them at the top of a small flat-top hill (koppie), and that night they drank water outside the camp.

On the third morning they were on top of a much higher hill with a steep slope. It was getting hot on the treeless koppie and there was not a cloud in the sky. We established that they had not found any water since the previous morning. Up on top of the koppie the rhinos stood up, looked down the steep slope. They must have been thirsty and did not know where to find water—a very stressful situation.

The field rangers knew of an easier way down. We had 20-litre containers of water and two troughs. We believed that intervention was essential—what was the point of all the effort by so many people over the last 5½ years if we left them to die like the young female in 2006. It was 38° C at midday when the field rangers called us for help; Thandi and Mia would not move any further and they thought that she may respond to Sue.

Both rhinos were exhausted, I talked softly to Thandi and hoped that she would follow me down the hill. I tried several times but she always turned and walked back to Mia. Finally, I remembered correct rhino greeting etiquette and instead of turning and walking away from Thandi, I stood still and held my hand out as she walked hesitantly up to me. Thandi smelt my hand, as she had done many times during her stay in the bomas. Slowly her prehensile lip moved up my arm, smelling and greeting and I talked non-stop. Soon her soft nostrils were touching my cheek and I breathed gently into her face. I cannot begin to describe the astonishing feeling of the trust Thandi had given to me. But again, she returned to Mia.

We carried the water and troughs back up the hill. Both drank thirstily and now knew the troughs contained water. Thandi followed us, as did Mia reluctantly, squeaking constantly, as they came down the hill. The rest of the water was ready as the rhinos reached the bottom of the hill. They were now close to a thicket and stayed to rest and recover.

That was three years ago and Thandi is now the proud mother of a female calf.

To put Thandi's story in context, we have been monitoring sub-populations of *Diceros bicornis bicornis* in four South African National Parks for ten years, with generous sponsorship from the David Shepherd Wild-

life Foundation (DSWF). Recently, with the massive escalation of poaching by unscrupulous gangs in South Africa, we initiated a review and implementation of security and protection plans in each area and received emergency grants from DSWF.



Thandi (3 weeks) and Sue, 9 June 2003.

© David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation



Sue, Thandi and Mia walking down the hill, 23 November 2008.

© David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation



Thandi and calf, 7 February 2011.

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Experiences With Reintroduced Rhinos In Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh India

Dr Satya Priya Sinha

HNO.IV Wildlife Institute of India, Chandrabani Dehradun—248006, Uttarakhand, India

I started my career in wildlife with fieldwork on the Gir Lion study in Gujarat and the Snow Leopard survey in trans-Himalayas. In 1987, the Wildlife Institute had an ongoing collaborative project with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department on monitoring reintroduced rhinos in Dudhwa National Park (NP). I got an opportunity to undertake monitoring of reintroduce rhinos in Dudhwa.N.P. Before beginning the work somebody told me that the rhino monitoring project is a challenging assignment and that one researcher had left the Salukapur Rhino monitoring center because he was feeling uneasy about staying at Salukapur FRH. The FRH has ghost stories & also Dudhwa National Park was well known for the man-eating tigers.

In the past Salukapur FRH was heaven for *dacoits* (armed robbers) who regularly occupied the area during the monsoon season. This forest rest house was renovated by a well-known figure in Asian wildlife conservation, Dr Ram Lakan Singh, India Forest Service (retired), Dudhwa NP's first director. He personally initiated the dialogue with these people and finally they agreed not to use the guest house in future.

In the past Indian one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) used to roam around in the flood plains of Rivers Ganga and Yamuna, but due to over-hunting and loss of habitat most of them were wiped out and are now restricted to small pockets of territory. After reintroducing rhinos in 1984–85 from Assam and Nepal, Salukapur became the rhino monitoring centre in Dudhwa NP. Re-introduced rhinos are kept in an area of 27 km² that is enclosed by an electric fence.

My association with the rhino monitoring programme began in 1987 and during this period a number of memorable incidences took place while working in this area, although I cannot possibly narrate all the memorable events. Salukapur is a remote peaceful place. During the dry season one can easily drive and reach within half an hour from Dudhwa FRH to Rhino Monitoring Centre at Salukapur but during monsoon you have to walk down or travel on elephant back.

On 2 March 1989, our early morning monitoring work on elephant back started as usual. As we covered few hundred meters from the main entrance of fence area the female rhino named Himrani was in front of us. Suddenly I noticed a small creature moving behind her too close. Usually in March most of the grassland areas are burned in Dudhwa NP in order to increase visibility. I told the mahout to go close to the rhino and it was a memorable moment for all of us. A small calf—still in pinkish coat—was standing nearby her mother and started milking. This was the first alive rhino calf of the reintroduced rhino population.

Immediately the news was flashed on a wireless set and concerned officers started coming to witness the rhino calf. Salukapur become an attraction for people from different areas. Although common visitor or tourists were not allowed inside the rhino area, only forest officials and staff visited this area. Mr R.P. Singh was the Director of Dudhwa NP at this time and he was very happy and always took care of this programme and used to visit regularly for hours on elephant back to monitor rhinos. We all were worried about the challenge of saving this calf from tigers. Suddenly it struck my mind to restrict this female with her calf in a small area. We created a mini nursery area of 3 km² surrounded by an electric fence. The enclosed area had all the requirements: a body of water, grassland and woodland. On both sides of the nursery, two groups of people placed their camps and elephants were kept to chase any tigers that came close to the fence or were sighted inside the fenced area.

During their stay inside the nursery, one day I found that young calf had a problem in its right ear; the auricle was badly injured and bleeding. I immediately informed the Director of Dudhwa NP. I decided to make a mix of savlon antiseptic solution, turmeric powder, a small amount of phenyl and turpentine oil. With the help of improvised pump, the mixture was sprayed on the calf and her mother. In the beginning the animals were little reluctant but later on when they started feeling that it gave them relief and kept insects away from wound site. Both of them stood still in the same place and we sprayed nicely and the calf recovered. This worked out satisfactorily and finally the female with her calf were released into the main fence.

Then and now

Markus Borner

Director, Africa Program, Frankfurt Zoological Society

Fifty years ago, doing my PhD on Sumatran Rhino in Sumatra. No Sumatran Rhino in captivity at that time. I had only one (!) direct observation in three years, but managed to write a 180-page thesis. It was an incredible time in the wilderness, visiting all uncharted forests in Sumatra. Tragically 85% of the forests that were in Sumatra have vanished during my lifetime.

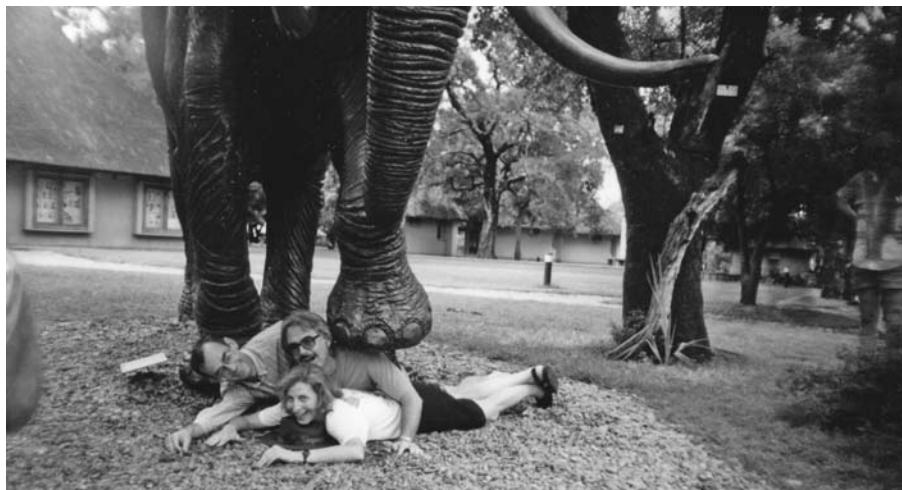


© Markus Borner



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Holly, boys and friend



© Holly Dublin

Left to right: Richard Barnes, Tom Milliken and Holly Dublin.

Virunga elephant population grappling with poaching

Leonard Mubalama Kakira

In the latter part of 1991, a marked increase in elephant poaching had been seen within the Lulimbi sector of the eastern part of the Virunga National Park. The latter sector is contiguous with the Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) in Uganda, which partly encircles Lake Edward. In a span of four months, nine elephants had been poached in the Kinyonzo sector. Two elephants succumbed to gunshot wounds while three died from poisoned arrows. Tusks from three of those five elephants were missing by the time the carcasses were discovered by the park's law enforcement unit (Fig. 1). Bakiga poachers from Uganda had developed a strategy aimed to confuse the guards by putting on their shoes back-to-front so that their footprints give the false impression of crossing the Ishasha River, which marks the border between Virunga National Park in DRC and QENP in Uganda).

This increase in poaching indicated that the criminals were actually residing in the bush in large numbers and that they were poaching on a commercial scale. After receiving some trustworthy intelligence from one of my sources, I quickly assembled an anti-poaching team and set out to the area where I had been told that some fresh human tracks had been found.

In November 1991, in my capacity as the Chief Warden I put into action a co-ordinated effort to find, arrest and remove these poachers. Along with a squad of guards, I made my way towards the Kinyonzo area where elephants were under intense poaching pressure at this time in point. Suddenly, we saw a group of over 120 elephants at the height of the wet season when patrols are often hampered by rainfall, flooded rivers and tall grass, which also made capturing illegal hunters more difficult. Although they were undisturbed and were moving slowly, they were bunched very tightly together, forming a huge gray wall of elephant hide. Poaching was reported to be rampant in that area, and I had no doubt that this large aggregation had formed in response to predation in an area replete with sweet grass forage.

Unfortunately, while the patrolling team was on duty, we realized that the elephant group seemed oblivious of the dangers as they started moving deeper into the thorn scrub, out of view while woodpeckers became very vocal, indicating that the possibility of human movement. I decided to walk towards the group for a closer look, ensuring that we stayed downwind of the elephant herd as I manoeuvred into position to get some shots. There was a tremendous commotion and most of the guards were concerned. I then went back to the front with two guards for protection, looked with my binoculars, and there was a poacher with his head raised in the bush waiting to shoot. I indicated to my Second-in-Command that we would break up in to two groups—one slowly walking along the Ishasha River course, while the other moved to high cliff area—so we could rapidly scan the area ahead yet seek cover in the event that a poacher appeared.

Three people were initially caught red-handed during the operations, while five were arrested and taken to Lulimbi and 10 kg of bushmeat seized. Several weapons, including two Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles, one 458-caliber rifle, three 375-caliber rifles and a cartridge containing 26 Kalashnikov bullets, were confiscated during the operation. I was disappointed that concomitant sanctions were not meted out when the poachers appeared in court. Some 17 wire snares were systematically dismantled and several rolls of wire cables seized. Three poisoned spears were also taken out from villages around the Ishasha patrol post, while about seven poacher camps were destroyed, two tusks and 200 kg of hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) were confiscated as other members of the poaching team abandoned the elephant carcass and lurched into the bush following a fierce exchange of fire.

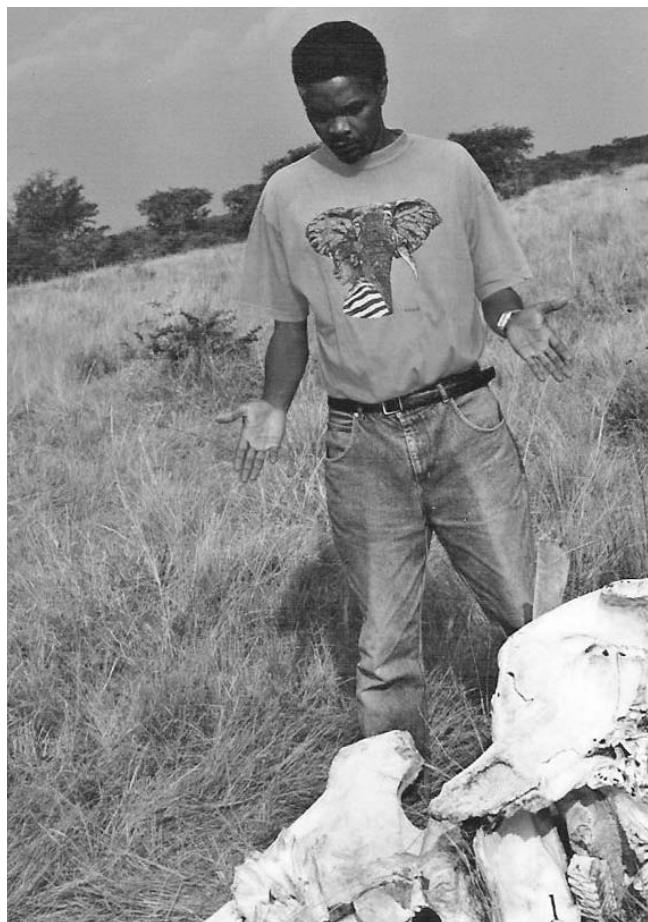


Figure 1. Lulimbi Chief Warden and an elephant skull in Kinyonzo Valley.

Comment je suis devenu fan des rhinocéros

Henri Carpentier, Paris, France

Mon métier d'Ingénieur des Mines m'a donné l'occasion de voyager dans de nombreux pays, mais je n'ai jamais rencontré de rhinocéros dans la brousse. Cependant je me suis toujours intéressé à la nature, et notamment à la protection de la grande faune, partout menacée. C'est pourquoi, ayant pris ma retraite et ayant aussi entre-temps découvert la puissance de l'outil informatique, j'ai recherché à propos de quelles espèces il pourrait être utile de faire des recherches utiles et originales, sans prétendre être zoologiste. J'ai ainsi été rapidement conduit à découvrir le triste sort de quelques espèces de rhinocéros d'Afrique et d'Asie. D'où une recherche sur "l'évolution des populations de rhinocéros" qui s'est intégrée ensuite tout naturellement avec le "Rhinos Resource Center" lancé par Nico van Strien et Kees Rookmaaker.

Photos from the collection of Esmond Martin



© Chryssee Martin

Esmond Martin weighing a 10-kg white rhino horn, the heaviest he has ever seen, in Pilanesburg Game Reserve, South Africa, in 1981.

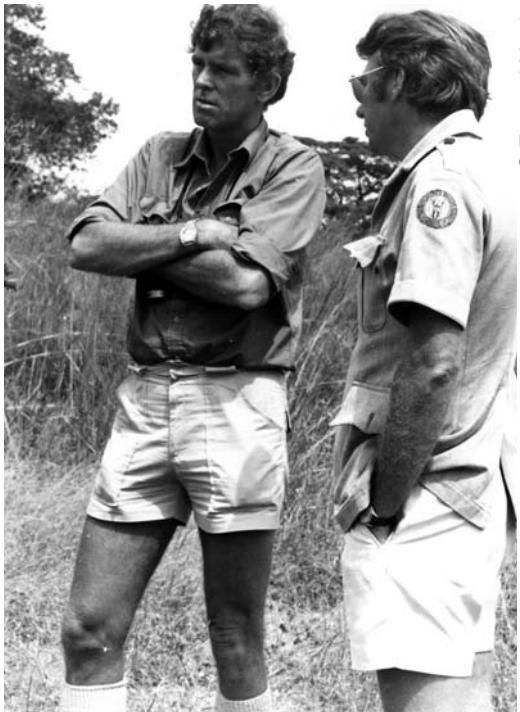


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Kes Hillman and Esmond Martin measuring and weighing large white rhino horns in 1981 in Pilanesburg Game Reserve, South Africa.



© Esmond Martin



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Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan, at the Park Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur examining rhino parts in the 1980s.

Phil Berry of Zambia's Save the Rhino Trust in South Luangwa National Park in May 1983 (and Member then of the AERSG) with Mike Faddy, the Head of the Trust.



© AFRSG

The second African Rhino Specialist Group meeting in Mombasa in May 1994. Seated in the very front are Raoul du Toit, Rob Brett, Martin Brooks (Chair), Peter Hitchins and Malan Lindeque.

Tribute to farmers

Julien Marchais

NGO Coordinator—Des Éléphants & des Hommes

Des Éléphants & des Hommes has worked since 2003 towards a better human–elephant coexistence. Our programme 'My Elephant Neighbour' promotes environmental education, elephant conservation and sustainable development.

'I have nothing against elephants, but we should all sit down and talk to find solutions to this problem'. I collected those words from a farmer called Kehatetswe in 2004. I was investigating human-elephant conflicts (HEC) in the southern part of the Okavango Delta, Botswana. This farmer, like many others, has lived a difficult coexistence with elephants that entered his field from time to time and destroyed part of his crops. Those words reflect a true will to live with elephants among the less privileged farmers whom I have met in Botswana and Burkina-Faso. I have always been impressed by this motivation. To me, those farmers are true heroes of elephant conservation. They suffer the negative aspects of human-elephant coexistence, they often would need support to find solutions, and they remain positive towards their elephant neighbours, which they appreciate despite difficulties. I would like to seize this opportunity offered by the journal *Pachyderm* to pay a tribute to all these women and men I have met, and especially to Kehaletswe, who passed away from illness only a couple of weeks after we met.

Des Éléphants & des Hommes œuvre depuis 2003 à une meilleure coexistence humain-éléphant. Nous développons le programme "Mon Voisin Éléphant" incluant action éducative, appui à la conservation des éléphants et de leurs habitats et développement d'activités valorisant les éléphants aux bénéfices des communautés riveraines.

"Je n'ai rien contre les éléphants, mais nous devrions tous nous asseoir et discuter pour trouver des solutions au problème". J'ai recueilli ces propos en 2004, au Botswana, auprès d'un agriculteur prénommé Kehaletswe. Je menais alors une enquête sur les conflits humains-éléphants (CHE) dans le sud de l'Okavango. Cet agriculteur, comme beaucoup d'autres, vivait une cohabitation parfois difficile avec les éléphants, qui entraient de temps en temps dans ses récoltes, et en détruisaient une partie. Comme le soulignent ces propos, j'ai rencontré chez les agriculteurs parmi les plus défavorisés, au Botswana comme au Burkina-Faso, une véritable volonté de vivre avec les éléphants. Cette volonté m'a toujours impressionné. A mes yeux, ces agricultrices et ces agriculteurs sont de véritables héros de la conservation des éléphants. Ils subissent les aspects négatifs de la cohabitation humain-éléphant, ils ont souvent besoin de soutien pour trouver des solutions, et ils restent positifs vis-à-vis de leurs voisins éléphants, qu'ils apprécient malgré les difficultés. J'aimerais saisir cette initiative du journal *Pachyderm* pour rendre hommage à toutes ces femmes et à tous ces hommes que j'ai rencontrés, et en particulier à Kehaletswe, emporté par la maladie quelques semaines après notre rencontre.

Ivory eco-warrior

Cartoon by Jared Crawford



The *Pachyderm* path: Bridget McGraw asks Iain Douglas-Hamilton how he sees the journal

Q: How do you see *Pachyderm*'s role in the conservation of elephants and rhinos?

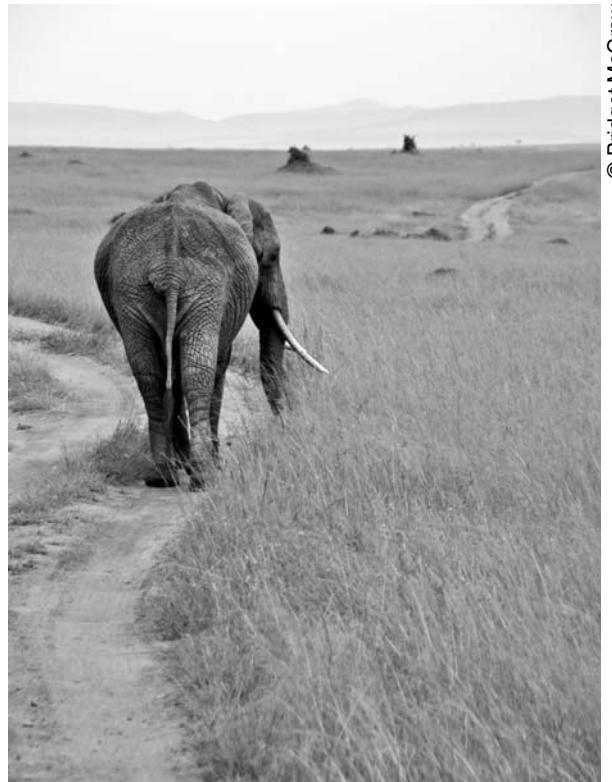
A: I remember *Pachyderm* affectionately from its first incarnation. It became a wonderful outlet for new ideas and in-house elephant and rhino papers in the early 1980s. It was a port-of-call that one could use quickly to announce important results, or to discuss ideas, sometimes controversial, without wading through excessive peer reviews.

It was in *Pachyderm* in the early 1980s I voiced my concerns that elephants were undergoing severe negative trends in most elephant populations across Africa, a view that did not at first get universal acceptance. I wrote a paper entitled "African elephants hit by arms race – factors affecting elephant populations" showing that the increase in the imports of arms and armed forces had outstripped human population growth as a threat to elephants. There was another article entitled 'Back from the Brink', a case study on what had happened to elephants in the Uganda National Parks in the immediate post Idi Amin era, a sort of worst case scenario—armies had massacred the elephants. The elephants of the Murchison Falls National Park were reduced to 2,000 from 15,000 animals. South of the Nile a well-known population of 8,000 elephants had fallen to 160 elephants. Then there was the rise in the price of ivory that had shot up at the end of the 1960s and caused mayhem in the next two decades.

Later in 1987 I published all these ideas in a single paper, after a stiff peer review, in *Oryx*, entitled 'African Elephant Population trends and their causes', but it was *Pachyderm* that first allowed me to air my data and views and get invaluable feedback. Re-reading these articles the other day, and comparing them to the stories and data now coming out about the current surge in ivory poaching in 2011, I got a sudden sense of *déjà vu*, and I can only hope that we are not entering another slaughter of elephants similar to what we experienced then.

Eventually *Pachyderm* became more peer-reviewed, and has become one of the most respected forums for elephant conservation. I think the only time that *Pachyderm* really missed out was before the last Doha conference where, because of late submission and time constraints, a seminal paper was turned down that later was published in *Science*. I believe that *Pachyderm* should remain completely open to contributions whether or not they happen to agree with IUCN policy. *Pachyderm*'s power is in the independence of the scientists and conservationists who write for it.

Pachyderm has definitely established a high standard and historically the articles have made a tremendous contribution. It is quite hard to get purely elephant or rhino articles published in the more exalted scientific journals as the editors often say 'Oh this is not of general interest.' I have had several papers turned down on those grounds. But elephants and rhinos are very important subjects; and *Pachyderm* publishes them. It has a great reputation and is a credit to the African Elephant Specialist Group and those who have slaved on the editorial board for so many years.



© Bridget McGraw