

FEBRUARY 2008



WILDERNESS SAFARIS WILDLIFE TRUST



CONTENTS

About the Trust	1
From the Trustees	2
Main features:	
Hwange White Rhino Reintroduction	3
Education Bursary 2008 – Enos Mngomezulu	4
New:	
Ecology of Black and White Rhino in the Okavango Delta	5
Busanga Plains Aerial Census 2007	6
Ecology of Buffalo in the Okavango Delta	7
Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area Wild Dog Project	8
Human-Elephant Conflict in northern Botswana	9
Liwonde National Park Annual Census – 2007	10
Makuleke Small Business Support Project	11
Okavango Delta Large Herbivore Ecology Project	12
Okavango Nest Box Project	13
Ongoing	
Botswana Rhino Relocation and Reintroduction Project	14
Namib Brown Hyena Project	15
Children in the Wilderness	16
Kunene Community Perceptions Project	20
Hwange Game Water Supply	21
Hwange Anti-Poaching Project	22
Kunene Lion Project	23
Maputaland Sea Turtle Project	24
Namibian Elephant and Giraffe Project	25
North Island Rehabilitation Project	26
Shadow Hunter Black Mongoose Project	27
Simonga Village Projects	28
Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit	29
Past Projects	
Small Carnivore Project	30
Cape Griffon Vulture Project	30
Chitabe Fire Ecology Research	30
Communal Conservancy Black Rhino Relocation	30
Education Bursary 2006 – Gayle Pederson	30
Linyanti Elephant Impact Study	30
Liwonde National Park Aerial Census – 2006	30
Makuleke Large Mammal Reintroduction Project	30
Mana Pools Tree Conservation Project	31
Mkambati School Programmes	31
Monitoring of Bird Populations at Lake Ngami	31
Namibian Black Rhino Habitat Assessment	31
Nyae Nyae Human-Elephant Conflict Research	31
Savé Conservancy Bush-Meat Survey	31
Skeleton Coast Lichen Project	31
TFCA Elephant Populations in the Okavango	31
Donations – How to make a difference to Africa	34
Donors	36



ABOUT THE TRUST

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

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

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

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

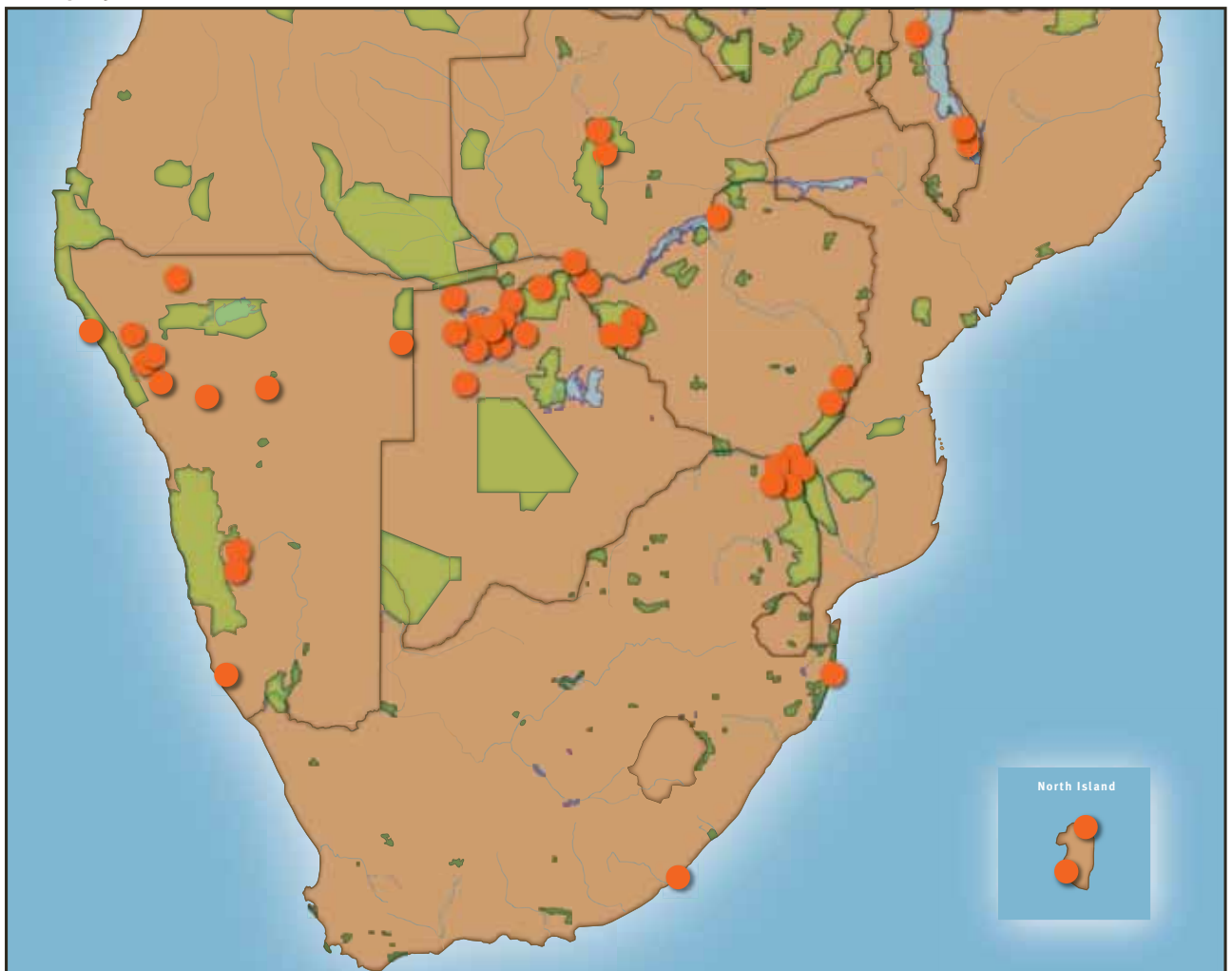
government, resulting in its being declared a "no-hunting area."

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

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

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

Trust projects across Southern Africa 2007



FROM THE TRUSTEES

The Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust enjoyed another effective and rewarding year during the course of 2007, further extending our scope in seven southern African countries and endeavouring to make a difference wherever possible.

Aside from the ongoing projects to which we continued to provide financial support, a number of new and exciting investigations and developments secured grants from the Trust during 2007. This year many of these were located in Botswana and had at their heart an improved understanding and thus protection of the Okavango Delta ecosystem and surrounding area in the northern reaches of the country. Pearl Galebotswe's MSc level study on white and black rhino movements is a good example of this, as is Zenzele Mpofu's MSc focusing on the ecology of hole nesting species. Hattie Bartlam's and Emily Bennitt's PhD investigations into large herbivores and buffalo respectively are other examples.

Additional projects have looked at conservation management issues. The Botswana Rhino Project for example received funding for a second vehicle to aid more comprehensive monitoring and protection for Botswana's growing rhino population, while Anna Songhurst's PhD seeks to address issues around Human-Elephant conflict in northern Botswana – a vitally important issue in the modern scenario of expanding human populations.

In Zambia and Malawi important aerial censuses of large mammal populations were carried out in Kafue and Liwonde National Parks respectively, providing important baseline data for management of these protected areas. In the case of Kafue, it was ascertained that the Busanga Plains area represents one of Africa's most important sites for Wattled Crane conservation.

In South Africa economic development and conservation capacity building were the focus of two grants to the Makuleke Community – funding being provided for the development of tourism-related small businesses on the one hand, and on the other for a bursary for Enos Mngomezulu for further studies into protected area management and conservation.

As has been the case for the past few years, the need for conservation funding in Zimbabwe has been pressing. As a consequence we have continued and expanded our commitment in the country and are confident that the Hwange anti-poaching programme and the wild dog survey in the Zimbabwean part of the extended Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area will yield fruitful results for both conservation and the economies associated with it.

Finally we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the donors that have helped with funding these past twelve months. Without your help we would achieve only a fraction of what we have been able to and we cannot overstate the importance of this contribution.

Thanks too to those engaged in demanding and often thankless tasks in the field: your legacy of conservation is a powerful one.

Lastly thanks to all those who have helped in their various capacities to make the Trust run over the last year: Don Bailey, Margot Bell, Chris Mostert, Ulrike van der Hoven, Ilana Stein and Grant Wolpert. We are also grateful to Colorpress for printing this report, to Horwath, Leveton Boner for preparing the financials, to Bell Dewar Hall for legal advice and to Amos Eno and Laura Mass at the Resources First Foundation for helping make a difference.

The Trustees

Russel Friedman
Andrew Leontsinis
Chris Roche

Special thanks to Chris Roche for all his hard work and time spent as a Trustee in 2006 & 2007. His dedication and commitment to the Trust is appreciated and the Trustees look forward to continuing to work with him as an advisor.

HWANGE WHITE RHINO

REINTRODUCTION

In June 2007, after many months of planning, a supplementary population of white rhino was finally translocated from Matobo National Park to Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. These animals have joined the small existing population and settled down well and it is hoped that more animals will be moved over the course of 2008.

Background

The white rhino population of Hwange National Park was almost wiped out in the early 1990s from poaching. The small surviving population was augmented in 1999 and 2004 by translocations of animals from Matobo. This national park has an over-abundance of white rhino in a relatively small area, which has in turn led to deaths from fighting and rhino moving out of the protected area. As a result it was the perfect source for the additional animals needed in Hwange to ensure the viability of this population and provide an additional reservoir of the species in Zimbabwe.

The translocation of white rhino from Matobo to Hwange fell within the rhino management plan for 2006, drawn up between Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) of Zimbabwe and the other "rhino stakeholders". The rhino management programme under the PWMA has been running since the onslaught of poaching in Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s. Since 2000, the work has concentrated on management of black and white rhino in Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) within the Parks and Wildlife Estate i.e. Matobo, Sinamatela and Main Camp (Hwange National Park) and Matusadona, as well as the wildlife conservancies. Activities include ear-notching and micro-chipping for individual identification of rhino, radio horn-implants, de-horning and snare removals.

Project Details

During 2007, five white rhino were moved from Matobo to Hwange; the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust funded the bomas or pens built to house the white rhino when they arrived.

The release pens were built near Ngweshla Pan, which is close to Wilderness Safaris camp facilities. Together with the PWMA, Wilderness Safaris is involved in the pen management and in long-term monitoring of the white rhino population in the area.



The rhino were immobilised in Matobo by darting from a helicopter. After immobilisation the rhino were ear-notched using standard patterns of the Programme in Zimbabwe. The animals with adequate horn-size had radio-transmitters implanted in the horns. Thereafter the rhino were crated and transported to the pens at Hwange.

The animals were held in pens for a few weeks, during which time they were carefully monitored to ensure that they remained healthy and were eating. After the pen adaptation period they were released.

The rhino are currently being radio-tracked using standard radio-telemetry techniques, either from the air, using a Microflight aircraft already in the area, on foot or by vehicle. This is particularly important during the immediate post-release period, but will continue on a long-term basis.

