

President's Report

World media attention has increased its focus on the rhino atrocities in South Africa for the past 3 years. **333 poaching deaths in 2010, 448 in 2011, 668 in 2012 and more than 300 in the first 20 weeks of this year!!** And more than **75%** of these mortalities are occurring in **Kruger National Park**, a world famous, and much visited, game park of international renown – the **rhino killing fields**. One has to question the level of commitment from the relevant wildlife authorities. There's no doubt that the vast majority of the brave game rangers are 100% intent on preserving their wildlife and it only takes a few traitors in their midst to be in collusion with the wildlife mafia –style poaching syndicates to turn the whole protection process on its ear.

The recent **African Rhino Specialist Group** meeting in **Nairobi**, attended by vice president **Mike Palmer**, released figures to show that Africa's rhino population had slightly grown in the past two years, there being an estimated **5,050 black rhinos and 20,405 whites** throughout the continent – more details available in a separate article later on. Of these, about **430 and 275** respectively, are in **Zimbabwe**, as released at their **National Rhino** meeting in mid April.



We are very sad to report the recent passing away of four of our members and a rhino icon, being **Iain MacGregor, Terry Duveen, Dennis Bolger, Karl Wigh** and **Anna Merz**. **Iain** was CEO of **Mrs Mac's Pies**, long time sponsors of our foundation and regular suppliers of food at our AGMs. He also offered wise counsel to me from time to time. To his wife **Penny, and son and daughter**, we extend our thanks for his generosity and our sympathy on his passing. **Terry** was treasurer of our **NSW branch** for several years and a keen supporter of all things rhino. We offer our condolences to **Sue** in her sad loss. **Dennis** was husband to **Di**, one of our keen members, and our thoughts go to her in these difficult times. **Karl** was a long standing member with his wife **Jackie** and took great interest in all that we did, and our best wishes go to Jackie as she recovers from her loss. All four had bravely fought their illness for a good long time and we will miss them all and we thank them for their contributions to rhino conservation.

Many of you will remember coming to the **Perth Zoo in May 2007** to be totally enthralled by the presentation given by **Anna Merz**, outlining her efforts to start a rhino conservation project in Kenya in the 80s. Such was its success that today the numbers have surpassed 130. Anna died in March and will be sorely missed by all in the rhino world and especially those at **Lewa Downs**.



We've recently had two very well attended presentations at **Perth Zoo**, both from fellows actively involved in anti poaching work in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Just before Christmas it was the turn of **Damien Mander, CEO of the International Anti Poaching Foundation**, based in Victoria Falls and Hoedspruit. And then in late January our guest was **Bryce Clemence**, in charge of security in Save Valley Conservancy. Both talks were absolutely fascinating

Continued over page

and very well received by the 100 or so members and friends who attended.

We offer our thanks to **Dawn Newman** who has designed and typeset our newsletter for the past 12 years, doing an amazing job over all those years – thanks so much Dawn. She has now handed the reins over to the younger brigade, **Annie Bramley** and **Kelly Scott**, who have rejigged things a bit, to great public acclaim for our last edition, their first. Thank you all.

I hope you'll be able to renew your membership subscription in the near future, if you haven't already done so, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our next AGM on Monday, 1 July 2013 at 7pm.

Nicholas Duncan

Annual General Meeting

FILM NIGHT / SOCIAL NIGHT

Notice is hereby given that the Twenty Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Save African Rhino Foundation (Inc) will be held on Thursday, 4 July at 7pm, in the Education Centre at the Perth Zoo, Labouchere Road, South Perth.

AGENDA:

1. Acceptance of the minutes from the twenty fifth Annual General Meeting held on 12 June 2012.
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Executive Committee
5. Any other business

Nomination forms for positions on the Executive, (there are at least two vacancies), together with proxy forms, are available by phoning 9279 8911 (ask for Kim) and nominations should be lodged at 229 Oxford Street, Leederville by 7.00 pm on 29 June 2013.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served during the evening.

Please feel free to bring your family, friends, and acquaintances along to this social event. Would you please ring us on 9279 8911 (Kim) as an indication in numbers will assist with catering.

Nicholas Duncan
President

Loss of visionary rhino conservationist

It was with great sadness that we announced the death of **Anna Merz** on the 4th April. Anna, one of **Lewa's founding patrons and a visionary rhino conservationist**, remained hugely engaged with Lewa's work even after her move to South Africa in the mid 90's. She was a regular attendee at the Conservancy's biannual Board meetings, in her role as Patron and actively hosted all 'Bowling for Rhinos' annual visits to Lewa.

Anna's passion for all things rhino was legendary internationally and this coupled with her love for north Kenya and Lewa in particular, made a powerful ally for Lewa since its inception, in which she was instrumental. Many will be aware of how Lewa and Anna's histories are inextricably intertwined spanning a period of over 30 years, a period in which Lewa has evolved way beyond what could originally have been envisaged.



Lewa exists now as an internationally renowned conservation organisation, underpinning landscape level conservation across a huge area of northern Kenya and providing a model for protected area management which many look to emulate. We, on Lewa, will never forget that this success is founded on rhino and the Ngare Seroi Rhino Sanctuary, which Anna so passionately engaged with and dedicated her life to building.

In recent years Anna had become increasingly concerned for the survivability of rhino as a species, experiencing first hand in South Africa the devastation wreaked on rhino populations in her adopted country of residence. Sadly we in Kenya have not been immune to the insatiable appetite for rhino horn in the Far East and Anna's beloved rhino here on Lewa have come under sustained pressure from criminal gangs intent on profiting at the cost of this iconic animal.

As we look to protect every one of the 126 rhino currently on Lewa, including the calf born on the day of her passing and as we continue to secure a flourishing population, **it will be with Anna looking over us and in our hearts that we remain committed to perpetuating the success of her vision.**

Mike Watson, CEO, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

African Rhino Specialist Group meeting

In **February 2013**, rhino experts from across the globe gathered for the **African Rhino Specialist Group** meeting, in Kenya. The meeting provides an opportunity to collate latest rhino numbers, discuss the poaching crisis and mitigation strategies.

Rhino poaching has reached record levels in Africa and the latest figures show incredibly low population growth rates, with huge concern that overall population numbers could start to decline within two years. You can read the full press release from the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group below.

African rhinos won't hold out for much longer, IUCN experts warn.

26 February 2013 | International news release

Gland, Switzerland, 26 February 2013 – Nearly **2,400 rhinos** have been poached across Africa since 2006, slowing the population growth of both African rhino species to some of the lowest levels since 1995, according to the latest facts revealed by IUCN experts.

Rhino poaching increased by 43% between 2011 and 2012, representing a loss of almost 3% of the population in 2012, according to IUCN's Species Survival Commission's (SSC) African Rhino Specialist Group. Experts predict that if poaching continues to increase at this rate, rhino populations could start to decline in less than two years' time.

"Well-organized and well-funded crime syndicates are continuing to feed the growing black market with rhino horn," says **Mike Knight**, Chairman of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, a group of rhino experts within IUCN's Species Survival Commission. "Over the past few years, consumer use of rhino horn has shifted from traditional Asian medicine practices to new uses, such as to convey status. High levels of consumption – especially the escalating demand in Vietnam – threaten to soon reverse the considerable conservation gains achieved over the last two decades."

There are currently **5,055 Black Rhinoceros** and **20,405 White Rhinoceros** in Africa. Although these numbers have increased slightly over the last two years, there is no room for complacency. In **2012**, at least **745** rhinos were poached throughout Africa – the highest number in two decades – with a record 668 rhinos killed in South Africa

alone. In 2013, one rhino has been lost to poaching every 11 hours since the beginning of the year – a rate that is higher than the average for 2012.

Illegal trade in rhino horn is coordinated by well-organised criminal syndicates which transport the horns primarily to **Vietnam** and **China**. **Mozambique** has also been identified as a key driver of poaching activities, with poachers making cross-border raids into the South African Kruger National Park, home to the world's largest rhino population. Mozambique is also a major transit point for illegal horn to Asia.

IUCN experts call upon the international community – especially the key consumer and transit states such as Vietnam, China and Mozambique – to urgently address the crisis by strengthening and enforcing regional and international trade laws, particularly in relation to rhino horn.

"The rhino community is encouraged by the signing of a recent Memorandum of Understanding between South Africa and Vietnam to address the rhino poaching epidemic as well as other conservation issues," says **Simon Stuart**, Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission. "However, it needs to be reinforced with tangible government action on both sides. International and regional collaboration needs to be strengthened, as does sharing of information, intelligence and expertise to address wildlife crime issues."

Updated facts on the rhino crisis come on the eve of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that will take place from 3 to 14 March in Bangkok, Thailand. Illegal rhino horn trade will be one of the many issues discussed at the meeting.

CITES delegates were indeed urged to tackle rhino poaching with a more determined and committed attitude and many sub committees were established for this purpose.

Funds spent during 12 months from April 2012 to March 2013

Project or item description	Funds spent (AUD '000s)
Rhino Conservancy projects	168
National Parks projects – <i>vehicles, game water supply, infrastructure support, communication equipment, field kit - Hwange, Sinamatells, Matusadona, Chipinge and Matobo</i>	113
Other rhino projects	71
Veterinary support	29
Other wildlife projects	23
Total	\$404,000

Zimbabwe update

It seems that about **30 rhinos were poached** last year in Zimbabwe, and another four on New Year's Day this year. In line with our revised philosophy of transferring the majority of our funding to where the rhinos are, we are now much more involved with the **lowveld rhino** conservancies.



At the recently convened **National Rhino** meeting in **Harare**, it seems that there are an estimated **98 rhinos in seven national parks and some 607 in eight private areas**, so the figures are pretty good evidence for where the funding should be going. The three main conservancies have **83%** of the rhinos and that's obviously where the future lies. **Bubye River had 27 rhino births last year!** Our biennial committee trips visit these areas in February and May, an experience not to be missed! So, from the **annual expenditure** table elsewhere in this newsletter, it can be seen that **\$168,000** has been spent in the **conservancies**, **\$113,000** in **National Parks**, **\$71,000** in other rhino projects (**\$44,000** in **South Africa** from a private donor, **\$18,000** in **Namibia**, **\$6,000** in **Kenya** (from our NSW branch) and **\$3,000** in **Malawi**, and **\$23,000** on other **wildlife projects**.

We are keen to also become involved in the proposed new **Intensive Protection Zone** in **Gonarezhou NP**, under the management of **Frankfurt Zoological Society**. More manpower and expert training is vital for this area, and when this is in place, then a founder population of 20 will





be translocated there, hopefully by mid 2014. We are on standby to assist with housing, fencing and relocation.

We have recently donated **\$20,000** into a fund set up by **Mother Africa Trust** of Bulawayo, for re fencing much of the **Matobo NP** perimeter. This is the other IPZ that still



has some future potential, and we fund all the camera trap surveillance programmes with a total of 29 camera traps.

Chipinge rhino numbers are remaining steady, whilst **Sinamatella** and **Main Camp** have sadly declined to unsustainable levels and the wisest solution would be to remove the stragglers to a safer, fenced, well managed area. We will be funding some rhino management procedures in **Kyle** and **Chivero** in July.

Congratulations to **Amos Gwema** for a number of arrests this year of ivory poachers, and also to **Pete Clemence and his rangers** in Save Valley for the recent arrest of four potential rhino poachers. Pete is covering for his son, **Bryce**, who is on a three week sponsored trip to USA.

STOP PRESS

As I write this, I've just heard of a poached rhino in Save Valley, 12 years old.



Trip to Zimbabwe

In January I went to **Zimbabwe for two months** to do some volunteer work and to join Nicholas and his group for the February committee trip. The last time I visited Zimbabwe was in 2008, when the country was going through a period of hyper-inflation. However this time the country was in a much better state, and even though prices were high it was nice to see stores stocked up again. For my first couple of weeks I was staying with **Paul Trethowan**, a wildlife ecologist doing a doctorate on lions in the **Bubye River Conservancy**, a 380,000ha hunting concession close to the South African border.

Though it is a hunting concession, Bubye has an **astounding amount of wildlife including the big 5** with a very large population of lion, which I found out first hand on my first day checking lion kill sites on foot with Paul's research assistant, Roy.

As we were checking the GPS co-ordinate of the second kill site, we decided to split up to cover more ground in trying to find the carcass, but agreed to keep each other within sight. At this time of year, the bush is very dense and within minutes I couldn't see him anymore and got slightly disorientated. Having nothing except my bush knife to defend myself I began to feel very uneasy and it seemed like forever until we finally found each other. Just as we were agreeing that we couldn't find anything we started hearing a large female lion roaring from 100m in the direction I was just in, proving my suspicion that I should've been worried.

Bubye is also home to the orphan rhino rehabilitation project, managed by Katrina Leatham. I was lucky enough to get close up and personal to the two sub adults, both of which have now been successfully released back into the wild.





A fuller report on the committee trip, written by Chris, follows this article.

When everyone from the committee trip went home to Australia, I stayed back to work at Savé Valley Conservancy. Though only 420km from Bulawayo, this was a long and very cramped public transport or 'chicken bus' (I'll leave it to your imagination why it's called that) ride. While in Savé, I helped **Dusty Joubert**, a wildlife ecologist, with the tail end of a leopard project he'd been working on and wanted me to help try and remove the collars on the remaining leopard. The difficult thing about leopards is that they are particularly elusive and the only way to remove the collars is to set up a bait and hope the one you're looking for happens to show his face. After a couple of days we identified a male and decided to camp out to try and dart him. Just before dark, Dusty, his assistant and myself crammed ourselves into a tiny 3 man tent and prepared for a long night waiting. Unfortunately the leopard never showed up, either he wasn't hungry or could hear my snoring from across the bush.

On the day of my flight I wished that I could've stayed a bit longer, but little did I know that my wish was about to come

true when, when at passport control in Harare, I realized that my passport had gone missing. Even though I rushed back to the hotel I was staying at, it was nowhere to be found and I had to get an emergency replacement from the Australian consulate. Unfortunately, because of the long weekend in Australia, I was unable to get a flight for 4 days, so upon recommendation from **Pete Musto**, who graciously helped me sort out my passport and gave me a bed for my nights in Harare, I rented a car and drove up to **Umfurudzi Safari Area**. Though it was great see more of the country, I was a bit glad to step through the gate and know I'm definitely on my way home.

I'd like to say a big thanks to the **Trethowans, Leathems, Verity Bowman** and the **Dambari Wildlife Trust, Clemences, Jouberts**, the wonderful staff at **Mazunga** and **Sango** and **Pete Musto** for all their hospitality and kindness, **Nicholas Duncan** for helping me organize such a fantastic trip, and **everyone on the committee trip** who made it such a **fantastic adventure**.

Patrick Williamson



February Trip

After arriving at Perth airport with some of the members heading to Zimbabwe for SARF's annual February trip we were assisted through checkin by a very helpful **SAA supervisor**. We had quite a few bags as we each had an extra bag full of equipment that will be distributed to various conservation groups in Zim. With the supervisor's help we all had plenty of seats to spread out and sleep.

At Johannesburg airport we had a quick stop over and two more members joined the group. We were now **Nia, Evan, Nicholas, Jennifer, Tim and myself**, with **Patrick and Verity** joining us in Harare. **Pete Musto** met us at Harare and transferred us to **The Bronte Hotel** which is set in the most amazing garden setting. Our few days in Harare

included visit to **Bally Vaughan Sanctuary** who are in the process of moving to a new location, **Tiki Hywood Trust, Australia High Commissioner's** residence for a function involving other embassies and conservation people from around Zim. Some of us spent some time walking around the city and we also did an afternoon trip to **Lake Chivero** and were lucky enough to see seven white rhinos. At The Bronte we had numerous visits from both National Parks staff and other conservation people talking to us about the works they do and what's ahead in the future.





I have to mention this piece as people who have travelled to Africa before will know “nothing goes to plan in Africa” and our plans were interrupted on a few occasions early on in Harare by vehicle problems which Africa travellers will also know “need to make a plan” and “you’re on Africa time now”. I have to say both Nicholas and Verity made so many phone calls and did a great job at sorting the issues out to the point that we got a second vehicle and trailer to join us on the trip which made it a lot more comfortable- especially the second vehicle that had air conditioning. Our grateful thanks go to **Rob Anderson** from **Anderson Motors** who came to our rescue.

Then came an early start for a 6 hour drive down to the **Save Valley** which also included a stop for some of Zimbabwe’s stone, timber or metal mementoes. The last 40+ kms into the Save Valley shook up the trip literally and we arrived at **Chisakwe** to have a well-earned cuppa or cool drink with **Bryce** and **Lara** from the anti-poaching unit who gave us an insight into what they do. **Rosemary Groom**, from the **African Wildlife Conservation Fund**, arrived and informed us that one of her scouts had come across a pack of wild dogs close by. We didn’t need to be asked twice if we want to check it out. We got so close but not quite close enough to see. I could say it was a disappointment but knew there is always something else just around the corner and over the next few days had a couple of amazing wild dog viewing opportunities along with a male lion only metres from the vehicle, rhino tracking with Bryce, leopard glimpse and fantastic games species. A night drive also gave a few of us a very close encounter with a not so shy genet.



Continued over page



Dave Goosen and his family and staff made us very welcome at **Sango** with talks from **Dusty**, Sango's leopard expert and Rosemary Groom and the wild dogs all the time we were escorted and assisted by Bryce and Lara.

The next part of the trip was a couple of hours drive down to **Malilangwe** for lunch and a game drive then onto **Gonarezhou National Park** for a couple of nights. We met up with **Hugo van der Westhuizen** from **Frankfurt Zoological Society** for sun downers on his veranda overlooking the river. The next day he and Norman English, from **Bubye Conservancy**, who was an ex-ranger from here, took us on a very special game drive with a very close encounter with a slightly upset bull elephant and to see the **Chilojo cliffs**.

We then visited the anti-poaching training area and new fence line erected to hopefully keep poachers out of an area that rhino may be introduced into. Hugo then took us on a flight over the park and one could say this was some very low level exhilarating excitement but that would be an understatement as flying a few metres above the river was pretty special.

The next morning **Mike Ball**, head of Malilangwe Security, invited us out for some rhino tracking. On the drive into Malilangwe there was a pride of lions sitting right on the side of the road. We thought we may get a bit of a glimpse of a rhino but when the call came in from one of the scouts indicating they were close on the spoor of some black rhino our adrenalin started again. Into the back of the vehicle and we headed straight for the scouts, even another bull

elephant in our way had to move. We tracked and had extra special views of 5 black rhinos, tensions were high by everyone including anti-poaching staff as this was very rare and potentially dangerous if the rhino's got our scent.



Then it was another long drive to Bulawayo and **Camp Amalinda** with a quick stop and lunch at **Dambari** where Verity is the director. Amalinda is a very unique set of chalets built into the local rock formations, each one very individual. Dinner was once again a chance meet some of the local conservationists interested and actively involved in rhino work. We also assisted in some camera trap checks in the national park while others met with National Parks officials.

The last two days were spent up in **Hwange National Park** catching up with conservationists. One of these, **Brent** from the **lion research**, let us watch him try and find a male lion that needed collaring. We didn't find him but had a visit from 3 females. The next morning he took some of us out to try and find an elephant that needed darting to remove a snare which we were unable to find. We also visited **The Painted Dog Project** and saw their work and a couple of wild dogs. Nicholas, Nia and Verity visited National Park officials again to follow up their progress as to whether there are any rhinos left in Hwange.

Then it was a quick drive back to Bulawayo and a flight out for most of us back to Australia. This leads me to **thank all those associated with this trip and my travelling companions**. The work they do and equipment they supply is second to none. I encourage anyone reading this to get involved in some small way to help these amazing creatures and give children of the future a chance to see them as they are meant to be. **In the wild.**

Chris Wade



Evenings with Damien Mander and Bryce Clemence

We were very fortunate to have two special guests to entertain and inform our members and friends, either side of Christmas, both events being at the Perth Zoo theatre. **Damien Mander**, head of **IAPF**, is an



ex Australian military guy, now committed to protecting Africa's wildlife. A packed auditorium heard his story. His first base was at a private reserve in **Victoria Falls**, where a small breeding herd of rhinos are located. From here he has spread to **Chizarira**, then **Mozambique** and now to **South Africa**. He is a great believer in full and adequate training to be given to all field rangers and has accordingly set up two training facilities for this. Damien, with the help of a sub committee of Australian experts, is now developing a drone prototype for aerial surveillance.

There was great audience participation with the questions, quite a few assorted items were auctioned, some kind donations given, and a total of **\$10,000** was raised, equally divided between IAPF and SARF – a fantastic night!

Our second special event was to hear from **Bryce and Lara Clemence** on all that they are doing as the independent contractors for security in **Save Valley**. They inherited a



disjointed operation and are making inroads into anti poaching improvements. He highlighted the challenges presented in securing an area measuring **120km by 32km**, with much of the western boundary being open to adjacent villagers, now that the fencing has been stolen. Bryce described his recent encounter with five poachers, during which bullets were flying by close to his head. His team managed to arrest three of them, who are currently recovering from wounds prior to their trial. He is slowly building up a team of trained rangers to act as a rapid reaction force, in addition to the vital reconnaissance required from the ranch scouts.

Again, the audience was totally intrigued by his story and responded with lots of questions, before participating in another auction to raise **\$4,000** for Zimbabwe's rhinos.

To these **two WILDLIFE WARRIORS**, thanks so much for sharing your work with us and we wish you every success with your future endeavours.



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