

As for rhino sightings, we were introduced to them at **Imire Game Park** outside Harare. It was there also, that we learnt of the poachers' raid which saw 3 rhinos killed in one night, some five years previously. However, we enjoyed a very special, close-up and personal encounter, with rhinos on a private reserve outside **Victoria Falls**. Whilst not the most pretty animal, the rhino endears itself almost because of its unusual looks, and, more importantly, just because it is the rhino, it deserves to be saved.



Our stay in Victoria Falls at one of the world's most famous colonial hotels, **The Victoria Falls Hotel**, was as magnificent and memorable as seeing the falls themselves. What a setting. What views: how fabulous to be able to see the mist from the Falls across manicured green lawns, with warthogs grazing peacefully in front of you. And, almost as if to impress upon us that the natural order of things in Africa was constant, we watched a crocodile take a young antelope on the riverbank during our sunset cruise. Indeed, this was Africa.



African people, we learned, are incredibly entrepreneurial, have a great sense of humour, and are gracious hosts. As for their role as park guides, they seemed to have an encyclopaedic knowledge (OK, my knowledge was scant by comparison) of every bird and every animal and fielded the most inane question with the patience of a teacher.



But back to the subject of my travelling companions. It can be a bit of a lottery as to whether you're going to like them, much less enjoy their company for two whole weeks. What can I say but they were a bunch of the most exceptionally talented and interesting people, endowed with the best sense of humour I think I have ever encountered. Most importantly, it was a sense of sharing an experience that was so special it was to be treated with care, sometimes a rare attribute in group dynamics. Are they normal? I'm not sure! Would we do it all over again? Absolutely!



Lastly, Nicholas Duncan deserves to be acknowledged and thanked for his passionate commitment to saving the rhino. He is as unique, and as special, as the rhino itself.

Jeannie Lloyd - Apjohn



ART SAFARI WITH PAULA WIEGMINK

If you think you'd like to do a bit of sketching and painting whilst on safari, then consider going to all the good spots with your own specialist art teacher, **Paula** – www.paulawiegmink.com.au Her next trip is 23 August till 5 September. For more details please contact Paula on 0410 423433.

SAVE THE RHINO ANNUAL SAFARI HOLIDAY

Our first trip for next year sold out in four days so we're now launching our second one, 24 September till 10 October. You'll be visiting all of our five great, favourite spots, **Musango, The Hide, Victoria Falls Hotel, Ngoma Safari Lodge** and **Xakanaxa Camp**. Please call Nicholas on 0417 937655 to chat about this lovely holiday.

We wish all our members and supporters a very happy Christmas and healthy new year

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Patrons: The Lord McAlpine of West Green, David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay (deceased 2012), Nick Price, David Pocock, Kim Hughes.

President's Report

Rhino poaching reaching new heights and our Big Five coming up

2013 has been the **worst year for rhino poaching** for about 20 years. As we go to press, the reported deaths are at least **900 in South Africa**, 40 in Kenya, 20 in Zimbabwe and 10 in Namibia, and it's likely that the **1,000** mark will soon be passed. And that's on top of 30,000 elephant deaths last year and pretty high numbers this year.

All this is a result of massively increasing human numbers in Africa, declining wildlife areas, extensive poverty, high level corruption, well funded, wildlife-crime syndicates and desperate poachers. **Vietnam** is stepping up to be the capital of rhino horn trade and you can read elsewhere of the big efforts being made by one of our members, **Lynn Johnson**.

We welcome quite a few new members this year, about 40, so here's a bit of background history for you and others. We started in **mid 1987** and have been extensively involved in **Zimbabwe** since that time and particularly in the last 15 years, so much so that we are one of the **biggest donors to rhino conservation** there, being involved to some extent in all of their rhino projects. We have raised over **\$4,900,000** in that time so the **Big Five** is nearly upon us! More importantly, just about all these funds get spent (**99.5%**) as we hardly have any admin or running costs with virtually all labour and expenses being donated! **Thank you everyone for being such a wonderful back up team.** I'm quite sure that there isn't another organisation that is as **efficient and finely tuned as ours!**

Our funds are raised through our celebrity cricket dinner/auctions (**David Gower on 12 December**), annual safaris (always tremendous), private donations, membership fees and merchandise sales.

Our **NSW branch** held a very successful fundraiser in August, based around the official launch of "**Planet Elephant**" by author and conservationist, **Tammie Matson**. 100 guests were entertained by Tammie and the auction, resulting in **\$20,000** being raised for **Save Valley Conservancy** and **\$5,000** for **Big Life Foundation, Kenya**. Thanks to **Shaun, Cuan, Courtenay** and team for organising this.

We were also involved in **four safaris** this year, one with **Travel Directors**, an **Art Class** safari with celebrated local artist, **Paula Wiegink**, and two of our traditional ones. These really are **amazing holidays** and I urge you all to consider treating yourself one day. They are a good fundraiser for us, too, amounting to in excess of **\$80,000** this year.

And now for some rhino background information. Back in **1987** there were approximately **3,600 black rhinos** and **5,000 white rhinos** around the continent. Poaching of the blacks dropped their numbers to **2,300 by 1994**, but the **whites increased to 7,000**. This was mainly due to the development of private ownership schemes in South Africa. Now these total numbers are **5,100 and 19,000** respectively!

Continued over page

And that's in spite of a massive recent increase in rhino poaching. Right now, breeding rates are just staying ahead of slaughter rates, but breeding is a constant figure and poaching is a rapidly increasing one. So where to from here? Not sure! Either we reduce the demand and the market or we increase the effective protection, or both. Many are suggesting the introduction of controlled horn sales from 'farmed' animals, but few believe such a profitable industry (one rhino's horns are worth \$250,000) could be properly controlled given the number of wildlife opportunists that exist.

Recently, we were devastated to read of the **mass elephant slaughter of more than a 100** in the remote SE corner of **Hwange National Park**, using **cyanide in the salt licks**. Many culprits have been arrested and sentenced to 16 years and we commend **Amos Gwema**, Chief Investigating Officer for Matabeleland, and the **officers and rangers of National Parks**, and other helpers, for getting such a good result. They now need to track down the masterminds and break their syndicate.

As indicated in previous editions and at our last two AGMs, we are focussing our funding support into the main rhino areas, with **65%** now going to the **conservancies** who protect **86%** of Zimbabwe's rhinos, and the remaining **35%** into **National Parks** to assist with their infrastructure requirements.

Your new committee was elected in July, and we farewelled and acknowledged **Evelyn Wong** for all her help for 9 years on the committee, during which time she served as Treasurer and Special Projects. **Helen Fairnie** also retired after 2 years as our Veterinary representative, thanks Helen, as did **Candice Lynn** from general duties, thanks Candice, and we are delighted that both Evelyn and Helen are now on our sub committee. At the same time we welcome **Kelly Scott, Nina Hobson, Evan Litis and Cameron Murray** to the full committee.

Our congratulations go to **Clive Stockil**, founder of the **Save Valley Conservancy**, who is the humbled and proud winner of the **Prince William Award for a Lifetime dedication to Conservation**. Well done Clive, we salute you.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and thank you for your past support as we reach our Big Five, and hope that **we've earned your ongoing and increasing support in the future** as we fight this ghastly battle against Man's greed and ineptitude. Thank you.

Nicholas Duncan

Businessmen in Viet Nam Fuel Rhino Poaching

With the combined efforts of governments, NGOs and conservancies to protect the rhino and raise awareness of the escalating poaching crisis, why haven't we made any inroads into slowing down the slaughter?



We need to talk about the demand side of the illicit rhino horn trade and the users of genuine rhino horn who are fuelling this upsurge in poaching. Research by TRAFFIC shows that this recent crisis is linked primarily to **demand from Viet Nam**. The nature of this demand is new: it is not based on use in traditional medicine or myths such as the aphrodisiac properties of the horn.

Instead, the demand is driven by a relatively small number of **newly wealthy and highly status conscious businessmen and government officials** who use **powdered rhino horn** mixed with water as a supposed **detox drink** during drinking sessions with colleagues and clients. The people engaged in this practice are not concerned about the potion's efficacy. They are motivated by the perceived **status they gain** from being part of a very small and exclusive circle who can afford to consume genuine rhino horn.

With cost and perceived status so intricately linked, the escalating price of rhino horn does not dampen demand but increases it. Looking at the behavioural economics associated with the purchasers of genuine rhino horn in Viet Nam, it is safe to say that raising awareness of the slaughter of rhinos, the inefficacy of the detox drink or the reality that 90% rhino sold in Viet Nam is fake, will do nothing to curb demand.

In recent months I have spoken with several users of rhino horn in Viet Nam, all of them wealthy businessmen who confirmed that their daily use of rhino horn gave them status and prestige with their peers and those they sought to influence. They also revealed that only two factors would motivate them to stop rhino horn:

1. **A potential negative impact on their personal health/wellbeing**
2. **A perceived negative impact on their personal status**

Clearly, we urgently need campaigns that specifically focus on users of genuine rhino horn in Viet Nam if we are to curb the demand. Using insights from branding and behavioural economics, we can directly target these end users who are

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so clearly identifiable: we know who they are, where they are and what will motivate them to stop.

Breaking the Brand has created an innovative pilot campaign which targets these end users. We are a dedicated team of **volunteers from Melbourne**, with good links into the local Vietnamese expat community. In conjunction with the global advertising agency **Grey Group** our initial campaign will make rhino horn users question the safety of the product they are consuming. More and more game parks, conservancies and even government parks (like in Kwa-Zulu Natal) are **poisoning their rhinos' horns** with toxins to deter poaching. We will use this to make users question if rhino horn is still safe to consume.

More information: www.breakingthebrand.org

Lynn Johnson

Zimbabwe Update

It was shaping up as being quite a reasonable year in terms of rhino losses, until we heard of four recent different poaching incidents. The year started badly with **four killed on New Year's Day**, and for the next few months casualties were fairly minor. In August we heard of the loss of a **cow and calf in Matusadona**, followed by **three more** in one of the **lowveld conservancies**, a **father and son white rhino in Matobo** and then another **black cow** in the conservancy, so it looks like being up around the **20** mark for the year, less than previous years.

Around the country we have 15 4wds in various states of mobility and we have spent quite a bit trying to keep them on the road.



We have just purchased **five more ex Singapore army Landrover 110** defenders which should arrive by the end of the year and our February trip will then decide on their distribution.

The most ghastly series of **elephant poisonings** occurred from June to September in the south east part of Hwange National Park. Neighbouring poor villagers were enticed to put cyanide into water troughs and salt licks, resulting in at least **120** eles suffering a painful death, followed by the removal of their ivory. Many of these culprits have been caught and heavily sentenced and we hope that the ring leaders, masterminds and traders will soon be brought to justice.

Funds spent during 12 months from December 2012 to November 2013

Project or item description	Funds spent (AUD '000s)
Lowveld rhino conservancies	211
National Parks projects	153
Other rhino projects	40
Veterinary support	23
Other wildlife projects	29
Total	\$456,000



Such was the enormity and outrage of these barbaric acts that at least seven different Ministers visited the area and called for immediate increased anti poaching efforts, resulting in a donation of six new Landrovers from one of the diamond mining companies, plus the redistribution of ranger outposts.

We have had one of our **biggest ever** years of spending in Zimbabwe, with the majority of funds going to the **lowveld rhino areas** for kit, wages, incentives, intelligence and field support. In addition, we invested **\$20,000** into the rhino operations in **Matobo** and continue to honour our commitments to **Sinamatella, Matebeland Investigations Unit, Matusadona, Chipinge** and the **Tikki Hywood Trust**. **Save the Rhino Trust** in Damaraland, Namibia, also receives our biennial support for their wonderful work with the desert rhinos.

During the last five weeks we have spent **\$127,000**, mainly in the **conservancies**, our biggest month ever.



Save the Rhino Tour which departed Perth 22 September 2013

Well, there we were, meeting one another at the bottom of the escalators at Perth Airport for the first time. They all look normal, I thought, but I suppose I shall just have to wait and see.

Our African adventure started in Harare and from there it took us to **Zimbabwe's Matusadona** and **Hwange National Parks** followed by **Chobe** and the **Okavanga Delta** in **Botswana**. Imagine the excitement of four light aircraft flights, with pilots who are a helluva lot younger than you, and dusty airstrips that remind you of Australian outback towns.

Going on safari is not a holiday, it's an experience. It's educative (*especially* if Nicholas Duncan is your guide), with the odd juxtaposition of luxurious lodges in the wild, and an introduction to some of the earth's most iconic and unique animals. Seeing elephants, giraffe, zebra, kudu, wildebeest, antelope, hippopotamus and crocodiles together in the one habitat is almost surreal in its richness of images.

We enjoyed four fantastic lodges, **Musango** on the shores of **Lake Kariba**, **The Hide** amongst the thousands of elephants of **Hwange**, **Ngoma** overlooking the **Chobe**

River, and **Xakanaxa** amongst the serenity of the **Okavango**. All had their own unique way of African hospitality and bush luxury.

Although sightings of lions and leopards were much less frequent than other game, they were all the more savoured because of their rarity. How lucky we were to watch two lions mating (even though we felt a little like peeping toms) and to have them stroll past our vehicles almost within arm's reach. And the big cat, the leopard, which was so elegantly draped over a branch of a very large tree. I know there were some amongst us who became very emotional at the sight of its magnificence.



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