

dams, with good bass fishing, and fantastic bird life. Scattered around the property are 9 well-constructed, luxury camps, primarily for hunting clients. One really gets that “bushveld” feeling here!

Today, the BRC has about 14,000 zebra, 12,000 wildebeest, countless thousand impala, several thousand each waterbuck, buffalo, giraffe, eland, and kudu, plus populations of elephant, nyala, sable, bushbuck, klipspringer, etc. It has a large predator population – lions (apparently more lions than Hwange National Park), leopard, wild dogs and both hyena species. It also has the largest black rhino population in Zimbabwe, increasing yearly, and a good population of white rhino.

The BRC has been managed from its inception by Blondie Leathem, an old Parks veteran, and it stands as a shining example of how to manage a large conservation area. Water is well spread over the conservancy, from rivers such as the Buby to large dams, and to a unique piped water system with evenly dispersed troughs which work on an innovative pressure gauge/ball valve system to keep the troughs full at all times. This wide spread of water also gives a wide spread of game.

Anti-poaching is a high priority and very well organized. Several rhino poaching gangs, including those sponsored by the notorious Roos from Messina have tried their luck, but they have generally left the BRC in body bags! When one considers the area to be protected, the boundaries to be patrolled and the limited staff, the success of the APU and the failure of the poachers are remarkable. No doubt more will try, but they are faced by a highly motivated anti-poaching unit, ably led by Norman English the ex-warden of Sinamatella (Source: Bhejane Trust 11/2014).

Hunting, Poaching and Rhino Horn

Trevor Lane

Without getting involved in any debate on hunting or otherwise, the fact is that the wildlife gem [called Buby River Conservancy] is funded entirely by hunting, and without any hunting revenue to cover costs, it is doubtful whether the investors would be willing to dig deep into their pockets to keep it going. The cost of protecting the rhino population alone is considerable, and this is all funded through hunting revenues. While I understand the sentiments of the anti-hunting groups, I do believe in Africa's harsh reality, hunting has its part to play. When I established and ran the Wildlife Unit of Forestry Commission we operated on the basis of "use it or lose it", and successfully built up some fantastic wildlife areas on funding from hunting.

I feel the Botswana hunting ban will be responsible for the elimination of more animals than it will ever save - what the anti-hunting lobby do not seem to understand is that there are large areas of Botswana such as Tamafupa or Bottle Pan which are totally unsuited to photographic operations as they are largely teak forest with odd pans - you do not have teeming herds and photo opportunities such as the Delta. These pans have been pumped for years by hunting operators, and this has allowed territorial species such as sable to establish populations. Suddenly removing the water by the operators' withdrawal will condemn these populations to a bleak future and no doubt they will die off in a very miserable fashion. The future of this land as wildlife land is in doubt as it is now worthless from a wildlife point of view. The land is currently abandoned (which the Zambian elephant poachers have discovered), and it might eventually be turned over to cattle ranching.

The arguments are also raging back and forth on the sale of rhino horn. There is some fine work been done to tackle the trade issues in Vietnam and China, but the reality is that the poaching pressure is relentless, the demand insatiable, and much funding is required to tackle the protection issues on the ground. The big question is where is the funding to come from? A carefully monitored program of sale of horn on a sustainable basis would provide sufficient funding to ensure the

For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources. African Indaba is the official CIC Newsletter on African affairs, with editorial independence. For more information about the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation CIC go to www.cic-wildlife.org

continued survival of the rhino. The argument that the legal sale of horn will increase demand holds no water – the demand already exceeds the horn that could be supplied by the existing rhino population! To me, the main worry would be the channeling of illegal horn into the system, but careful monitoring should keep this in check. The big proviso should be [that] all funds raised from sale of horn are directed into rhino conservation (though in reality this could be difficult to monitor).

If activists can come up with an alternative funding option to save the rhino, and produce the funding required, then all parties would be happy!! (Source: Bhejane Trust 11/2014 Newsletter).

The ZPWMA Save Conservancy Hunting Concession Auctions

Vernon Booth



On 19th December 2014 the Director General of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) instructed a local auctioneering house to conduct the sale of three hunting concessions that had been expropriated in the Save Valley Conservancy.

Details of the three concessions, Bedford, Mapari and Senuko 3, were advertised on the ZPWMA website. Potential buyers could receive a brochure after lodging a US\$10,000 deposit with the auctioneers.

The auction was scheduled for 10:30am, but was delayed until after 11:30am. Approximately 30 people attended (including a large contingent of buyers seeking 'kapenta' fishing license permits on Lake Kariba). Officials from ZPWMA as well as from the Parks Board were also in attendance.

Senuko 3 was the first concession to be offered. Instead of brisk bidding, the auctioneer was faced with a stony silence and stares from the audience. It was blatantly obvious that he was embarrassed and uncomfortable with the process. After a few minutes he implored the gathering to offer a bid, even stating that was the intention of the auction. Little did he appreciate that the vast majority of the audience were observers, and had no intention of participating in this process.

After several more pleas, a community leader offered US\$10,000 for Senuko 3. This was rejected by the auctioneer who informed the gathering that the reserve price was US\$60,000 for 5 years plus compulsory annual purchase of the fixed quota (which was not provided in the brochure, so it was difficult to calculate what this might be) and a concession fee calculated at 30% of the value of the fixed quota. Other charges included 15% VAT and a 1.5% commission for the auctioneers' services.

No further bids were received, leading the auctioneer to plead for a compromise that approached the reserve price. This was embarrassing to all who were present. Offers to negotiate continued, with the reserve price being reduced to US\$55,000. A stalemate ensued and the

