



IAN POLLARD

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“ Please can you introduce yourself to our readers? ”

My name is Ian Pollard. I am a Section Ranger in iMfolozi Game Reserve where I am responsible for the Conservation Management and Law Enforcement Integrity of Makhamsa Section. I started my conservation career in 2002 as student volunteer, and slowly but surely moved my way up through the ranks. I have been based here for 2½ years.

“ Can you tell us about your Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) that Save the Rhino has contributed to? ”

The training is pretty tough. I am still at the early stages, having only flown for six hours so far, but must admit it is a lot more difficult than I expected. I have to complete a minimum of 45 hours of flying and write eight exams. Generally one takes about 48-50 hours to complete the training. The flying is the easier part as the exams are quite difficult and are focused on the theoretical side of flying. I am a hands-on bush guy, so I prefer the flying!

The goal is to finish my PPL by the end of October to mid-November, after which I will need to undertake conversion training to fly our soon-to-be acquired Savannah, which is a Light Sport Aircraft (LSA). This should only take a day or two.

“ How does it feel to fly a plane? ”

I am still in the early stages, so it is quite a challenge wrapping your head around all the different procedures, radio techniques and actual flying controls. But the feeling is like nothing you can describe. It is amazing, every time I finish a training flight, I sit quietly in the plane for a little while just taking it all in.

“ The ZuluLand Anti-Poaching (ZAP) Wing provides fantastic support to the region, what additional support can the microlight give? ”

ZAP Wing has been instrumental in our fight against rhino poaching. Personally, and maybe I am biased, but I think an air-wing is a must when trying to combat poaching in large areas such as HIP.

The LSA plays an integral role in law enforcement and conservation management. Its ability to fly slow and low, gives us an eagle's eye view over our Reserve. We use the LSA for a number of different law enforcement and management tasks. These include general integrity surveillance, the identification and location of known suspect's homesteads and carcass recovery. Carcass recovery, sadly so, has become extremely important. The faster we get to scenes, the more forensic evidence can be gathered, which gives us a better chance of making an arrest and improving the chances of conviction.

In addition, information from sources has identified the LSA as a real visual threat to poachers. They are very aware and even scared of its presence. I believe that if we were ever to lose the plane for any reason, we would see a significant increase in day time poaching.

It is also used extensively in the monitoring of our rhino populations and other rare species such as wild dog. In general, it is a phenomenal conservation tool.

Top: Ian Pollard surveys the wilderness area of iMfolozi Reserve

Main:

The Bat Hawk microlight has provided aerial surveillance in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi for many years

“ Are there advantages of the microlight compared to helicopters?

The most obvious is the cost. It is much cheaper to keep a LSA in the air, which means we can fly for longer and have an obvious presence for longer periods of time. The maintenance costs are lower and the training required is cheaper.

“ How does your family feel about you learning to fly?

My wife is very supportive of my job, lifestyle and my goal of getting my PPL. I think she knew what she was getting into when she married me! She is obviously a little nervous about my PPL. I start practising stalling the plane next week, and when I told her this I think she got a bit anxious. The term 'life insurance' was mentioned. But she is well aware what my job entails. It isn't a run-of-the-mill, office-type job. We are constantly in situations that a normal man on the street would consider unsafe, but we are trained to do what we do, so flying I suppose is just another one of these things.

“ What do you most enjoy about being a ranger?

So many things; it is difficult to pinpoint one specific thing. I think foremost is being able to live where I live. It is a true privilege to live in a conservation area. The peace, quiet and big open spaces are something you cannot buy.

Secondly, to protect something that is more important than me, and which will hopefully be here long after I am gone. That applies to every area I have worked in, but I think iMfolozi Game Reserve is especially exceptional. It is arguably the oldest game reserve in Africa and is the conservation home of white and black rhino. It is an honour and privilege to work here and a responsibility I take very seriously.

“ What is the toughest aspect of working in rhino conservation?

Right now without a doubt, the rhino poaching epidemic we are currently living through in South Africa. Rhino poaching has taken over our lives as rangers. We live and breathe it. We have to be on high alert all day and all night, every day, every month, all-year round. It is difficult to sustain that level all the time. It takes a toll on you, on your family and on your friendships.

And then when you sacrifice so much, there is nothing more infuriatingly frustrating than when we lose a rhino. It is soul destroying. Even more heart-breaking, is that it is just a complete and utter waste.

There is no value to rhino horn. Full stop.



Collaborating for conservation

We would like to thank all our corporate partners and donors who help us provide essential support to our African and Asian field programmes, making a valued difference to our work in rhino conservation.

Josephine Gibson | Corporate Relations Manager

Linking your company with Save the Rhino can have a positive impact on your business's brand strategy. We can provide unique communication materials and our iconic logo can demonstrate your company's commitment to conservation. Here are some examples of how others have helped – why not join them?



The Bead Coalition has kindly supported our work by donating 20% of the RRP from Rhino Force bracelets sold in Europe and on their website. www.beadcoalition.com

Instead of handing out Christmas gifts to their clients, the folks at creative agency **Valencia Kommunikation** donated 10,000 Swiss Francs in their name. www.valencia.ch



Animal Friends Pet Insurance generously donated £5,000 following their charity competition in aid of World Wildlife Day. Thank you to everyone who voted for us on Facebook to win second place.

www.animalfriends.org.uk

23red, the integrated creative communications agency, provided pro bono support for our 'Help a Ranger, Save a Rhino' campaign and the team also fundraised in their office. www.23red.com



rhino's energy GmbH kindly donated €1,500 each quarter and fundraised as a team to support our 'Help a Ranger, Save a Rhino'

appeal to buy ranger equipment in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park in South Africa, and Education for Nature Vietnam.

www.rhinos-energy.com

Victor Stationery continues to provide vital support to our work protecting rhinos with their co-branded Rhino



Stationery range. Victor Stationery has donated an incredible £66,500 for Save the Rhino since 2006. www.rhinostationery.com

There are lots of great ways to help protect rhinos at work, such as choosing to donate through Payroll Giving. This is a tax-efficient way of giving, as you'll receive tax relief on the donations at the top rate of tax, meaning that your donation will cost you less.

Contact Josephine@savetherhino.org to find out more about getting your company involved in supporting rhino conservation.