

Patrons: David Gower OBE, Nick Price, David Pocock, Kim Hughes.

President's Report

Best rhino numbers for years.



Hello everyone and welcome to our 32nd year of publishing our Newsletter, highlighting the main rhino happenings of the previous 12 months. It's been a pretty good year for the rhinos, with **Zimbabwe's population increasing from roughly 880 to 930 in 2018**, and that despite 28 losses to poaching and an absolutely futile donation by the Zimbabwean Government of 10 white rhinos (8 females) to The Democratic Republic of Congo, with 3

deaths already and probably none left within a further year. All were mysteriously plucked from excellent breeding programmes in Matobo, Kyle and Chivero National Parks. We congratulate **Mailangwe** on their continued outstanding rhino population growth, as well as **Save Valley Conservancy** with 26 calves for the year. We will be selling some naming rights so please contact me if you'd like more details.

Continued over the page

There was also a positive trend in **South Africa**, where after 4 years with more than 1,000 poaching deaths, the **2018 figure dropped to 770**. However, there are now some questions being asked on the accuracy of these figures plus doubts being expressed about the overall numbers being publicised for both black and white rhinos still remaining in the country.

Neighbouring **Namibia** is definitely showing good progress with its rhino numbers, with our nominal support of **Save the Rhino Trust** in Damaraland being rewarded with **zero poaching for 2018** and a few births, whilst the major rhino population in **Etosha NP** is rumoured to be as high as ever before.

One of the unheralded wildlife warriors of Zimbabwe is **Amos Gwema**, senior Investigations and Security Officer for Wildlife Investigations for Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, based in Hwange town. Amos has had a phenomenal year, with **67 arrests, and 51 being convicted and sentenced to 9 years of hard labour in prison, for crimes of ivory and pangolin trading**. Read more about this in Amos' own report later in this Newsletter, including the major gangs that he busted. What an amazing year for you, Amos, and thanks from all of us for your outstanding effort and commitment to combat wildlife crime.

Last August he was rewarded by being runner up in the **Rhino Conservation Awards 2018** in the category of **Special Award for Endangered Species Conservation for 2018**, a mighty effort and very well deserved.



Rhino Conservation Awards 2018

We had two minor, but most important, fundraisers towards the end of last year, with the **City to Surf Fun Run** in August bringing in **\$6,000** for our projects, and then **Giving Tuesday** in late November resulting in a further **\$5,000** – for a new **solar power** supply for the Save Valley ranger base.



2018 City to Surf participants

Our **Rhino Ranger Support Scheme (RRSS)** is proving to be very popular, spending 5 days in Save Valley Conservancy with **Bryce and his team of excellent rangers**, and observing lots of their drills, rhino tracking and game viewing. Ten of our members participated last May and a further 24 are going there between 12-31 May this year. Thanks to the generous luggage allowance of 46kg per passenger that is offered by **South African Airways**, we will be taking over **100 two way radio batteries, 100 shirts, 100 trousers, 150 socks, 65 overalls, 50 jerseys, 15 pairs of boots, 20 backpacks, 20 camelbak water carriers, 15 camera traps, 28 iphones, 6 cameras, 7 GPS watches, 250 AA batteries and, 8 battery chargers – quite a haul!**

It was this mix of learning and adventure that attracted **Ben O'Shea** from **Seven Media** to visit the project last October. With the assistance of camera woman, **Micaela Hamilton**, and the **Today Tonight** production team, he was able to air a fantastic six minute story on WA television in early March. And Ben further followed up our cause in the print media with five consecutive days of interesting stories about SARF activities in **Inside Cover**. Thanks, again, Ben, and we look forward to the next segment.



President Nicholas Duncan with Ben O'Shea

You may like to **express your interest now for May 2020**. And you can also register now for our September **2020 safari to Botswana and Zimbabwe**. You probably will find this hard to believe, but last year's group saw **56 different lions, 19 rhinos, 7 leopards, 14 wild dogs** and hundreds of everything else. An absolute smorgasbord, so why not come along next time?



During the last SARF financial year, **43% of our funding, \$316,000**, was spent on our main project, **Save Valley Conservancy**. And what a good decision that was, as this conservancy is really making its mark in Zimbabwe rhino conservation. They had 26 new calves for the year and a further 5 this year so far. Would anyone like to **name a calf for a fee, probably tax deductible**, please? We are helping Bryce build his team from 35 to 50, as well as funding some veterinary back up expenses. Our biggest ever single purchase was buying a very good second hand land cruiser for **\$50,000 for use by Shannon** in the south, where most of the poaching is currently occurring,

Bryce won first prize at the **Rhino Conservation Awards 2018 for Game Rangers Association of Africa**, in front of an invited audience of 150 guests at Monte Casino Johannesburg - **Conservation Practitioner of the Year - ATS and SSPU, Save Valley Conservancy, Bryce and Charles**.



Rhino Conservation Awards 2018

Sadly, an experienced poaching gang has hit them in recent times, resulting in **6 rhino deaths**. The chief suspect has been arrested a few times in the last 20 years, usually absconding on bail. He has now been in custody for two months and there's ballistic evidence to link him to certain shootings. Just recently there was a car chase as poachers made their getaway, resulting in a crash and two

arrests. Two more escaped on foot with a weapon and it was too dark and risky to give chase so the dog squad was called in and tracked them till a buried rifle was found. Ballistics have now linked it to five carcasses.

But wait – members of this gang have twice, in the last 18 months, been convicted and sentenced to 10 years each, only to be released after 3 months on bail, to re-offend again, and again. I wonder what will happen this time? Maybe they know someone!? Such are the challenges for Bryce, lawyers and the rangers.



We lost a longstanding, loyal and generous member, **Monika Dunnet**, last September, after a very short illness. It was a terrible shock to those of us who knew her and she'll be sorely missed in the years to come. To her partner, **Alan**, her son and grandchildren, we send our sincere condolences.

Another terrible loss came last December, and this was **Ravi Joshi's father, Ashok**, who, within a few hours of arriving in Bali for a family holiday, was sadly lost in a drowning accident. What a ghastly tragedy for the Joshi family, and to Ravi, his mother, sister, wife and other family members, we really feel your loss and wish you strength

Last November I received a Whatsapp call from **Jennifer Chester**, unknown to me, asking about volunteering in Zimbabwe. Long story short, she ended up there between 15 February and 13 March, as you'll read later.

Paul and Stephanie de Montille enthralled 110 members and friends at our recent Perth Zoo gathering, resulting in **\$12,000** being raised from the auction and donations, with further funding to follow from the proceeds of paying guests staying with Paul and doing fieldwork on wounded wildlife –see separate articles later on.



Our annual **fundraising dinner/auction** was held in early April at the **Perth Hyatt Regency**, attended by 380 of our followers, with special VIP guest, the great **Dennis Lillee**. And what a fantastic night it was, perhaps the 'smoothest' one we've done. Either side of the fascinating Q&A with Dennis and **Glenn Mitchell**, we raised **\$103,000** through celebrity auctioneer **Tiny Holly's** amazing energy and wit and our guests' generosity. With all sorts of other fundraising initiatives we ended up with a whopping **\$140,000**, our best in recent years. Thanks everyone!



2019 Gala Dinner and Auction

Our wandering paramedic, **Tim Scarrott**, has just returned from 7 weeks in Zimbabwe, having just completed his sixth mission to offer free certificated, first aid training to rangers and their families and to school children. He drove far and wide to **Kariba, Harare, Chivero, Kyle, Save Valley, Gonarezhou, Matopos, Main Camp and Victoria Falls**, and back again, more than **5,000kms** in our minibus, to train more than **500** lucky souls.

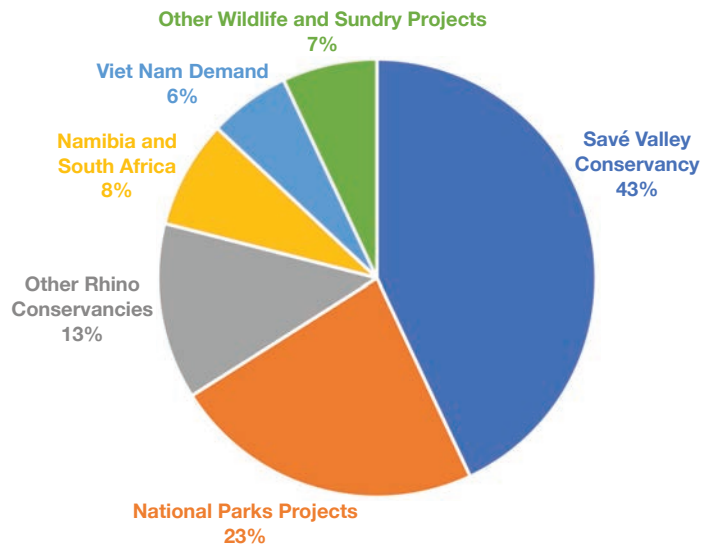
Having arrived on the day after **Cyclone Itai** devastated the beautiful **Chimanimani** area of the **Eastern Highlands**, Tim immediately volunteered his skills and expertise to go to the disaster zone, where he spent two periods of 7 days assisting with recovery and treatment. Thanks Tim for your major contribution to humanity and to **Fleur Smith** and **Time Critical** who facilitated the training

courses and their certification, and to **St Johns** for their excess first aid materials and to **Jim Kidd Sports** for soccer balls for the children.



Breaking the Brand, Melbourne – based Lynn Johnson's demand reduction campaign in **Viet Nam**, had a quieter year than normal and there's \$40,000 still allocated to this project for when she thinks the time is right. Elsewhere you'll read about the tremendous efforts being made by Lynn and her husband, **Peter**, under the **Nature Needs More** banner, in collaboration with **Donalee Patman** and **For The Love of Wildlife**, as they attempt to update some of the basic and fundamental principles of **CITES**. Please read their story later on in this publication.

Our funded projects are far and wide, though principally rhino related in Zimbabwe. With **90%** of Zimbabwe's rhinos being found in **privately managed wildlife conservancies**, we've spent **56%** of our funding in **these areas** and **23%** in different **National Parks**, all through locally based NGOs.



You have all been served by a **very fine committee**, as elected last June – **Nia Carras, Evan Litis, Heather Atwell, Mike Palmer, Cameron Murray, Evelyn Wong, Steve Harrison and Mark Beamish**. And they have been nobly backed up by the sub committee of **Lynn Johnson, Helen Fairnie, Tim Scarrott, Oliver Basson, Luke Basson, Giles McCaw, Ravi Joshi and Rick Hurlbatt**. Thank you to you all for your outstanding voluntary service for the rhinos and other wildlife.

Our **next AGM** is provisionally scheduled for **Wednesday 3 July** and confirmation of this date will be made by email nearer the time.

Please find the time to read your newsletter as it gives you a pretty good idea of all that you support through SARF and we hope you'll renew your membership, as enclosed with this newsletter. And it would be terrific if you could kindly try to recruit more new members for us please.

Thank you everyone.

Nicholas Duncan
President



44 Years of Trading Wildlife to Extinction

In 2014 I realised that while everyone wanted to stop rhino poaching, not everyone wanted to collapse the demand for rhino horn; these are two very different things. In South Africa for instance, the government brought together a committee to examine if a trade in rhino horn could help stop poaching but didn't invite anyone from demand side countries (or industries that know the [SE] Asian consumer groups) to participate. Everything was done based on supply-side thinking.

So, it is no surprise the report they produced says that a legal international trade in rhino horn and demand reduction campaigns are not mutually exclusive, which is frankly rubbish. **Why haven't the flawed process and conclusions been challenged?** Maybe the best way to understand why people have been so conditioned to not question the over-generalised sustainable use model is to look at what happens in the LEGAL trade in species.

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) came into force in 1975 based on the view that the regulated trade in species will help the survival of the wild cohort – the 'if it pays it stays' model. In the 44 years that CITES has been in place the legal trade has grown to be worth some **US\$320 billion annually**. A 2016 European parliament report stated "The wildlife trade is one of the most lucrative trades in the world. The legal trade into the EU alone is worth EUR 100 billion (US\$112 billion) annually".

But what has all this got to do with the illegal trade? The LEGAL trade is regulated by CITES using a **1970s paper-based system**, that is so **unfit for purpose** that it provides ample opportunities to launder illegal product into the legal marketplace. The loopholes in the legal trade enable the **unprecedented scale of the illegal trade**

in wildlife, which was estimated, in 2017, by the World Customs Organisation to be as much as US\$258 billion a year and, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), growing at 2-3 times the pace of the global economy.

Since this all started with rhinos, let's look at a couple of examples of the trade in rhino horn:

1. In October 2018, **Save The Rhino International** published their **Sounding the Horn Report**, summarising their survey of rhino horn antiques sold in 2017 at auction in the UK. Of the 300 items of rhino horn surveyed, including many libation cups, Save The Rhino stated "there is no guarantee all items offered for sale were pre-1947; to our knowledge no radiocarbon-14 dating (the only method to accurately detect horn age) was carried out."
2. The lack of regulation of the antique trade provides an opportunity to launder rhino horn obtained via poaching. In an August 2014 article by Julian Rademeyer details the case of Li Zhifei, who was arrested in Florida in 2013 and pleaded guilty to 11 counts of smuggling. Li stated he was more than happy to dupe his wealthy clients and the article explains that Li took nearly 25 horns from poached rhinos to secret workshops to be fashioned into copies of exquisitely carved antiques.

These examples highlight how the legal trade is unregulated and doesn't need to prove the authenticity of the item they are selling; easy to launder illegal products into the legal marketplace. Only the 183 signatories can propose the necessary changes to fix the flaws in the current legal system and



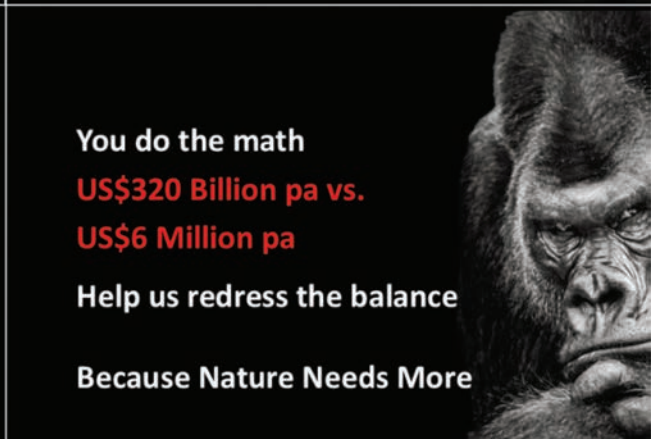
The CITES regulated legal trade in flora and fauna has an estimated worth of **US\$320 Billion pa**



CITES core budget to administer the legal trade in flora and fauna is **US\$6 Million pa**



The illegal trade is estimated to be worth **US\$91– US\$258 Billion pa** and exploits the loopholes in the legal trade system



You do the math **US\$320 Billion pa vs. US\$6 Million pa**
Help us redress the balance
Because Nature Needs More

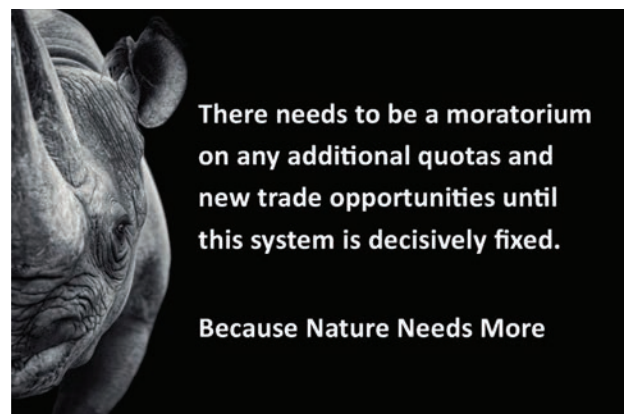
strike decisively against the illegal trade. But the CITES legal trade system has had only one review and that was in 1994. How many organisations would survive if they hadn't had review of their effectiveness for 25 years? Why have 183 signatories and the conservation sector been complicit in this? Similarly, they have also not invested into a solution and there are solutions.

Just one is an electronic permit system that has been discussed for nearly a decade. This e-permits system could fully integrate with customs systems ensuring trackability and transparency from source to destination. We were also told that it would cost less than US\$30 million to implement it throughout the 183 countries; a tiny fraction of the US\$320 billion the legal trade makes annually. We believe a small levy on trade could pay for a secure and traceable system of permits and monitoring.

The second solution was first proposed by the Australian Fraser Government in 1981 (at CoP3, when only 700 species were listed for trade restrictions), a reverse listing approach. The 1981 submission correctly predicted the increasing enforcement problems once the number of species listed for trade restrictions increased. To address the problem, they recommended that the system (the one that is still being used today) be replaced by a **reverse-listing approach**. Such an approach would mean that the default position is no trade rather than trade. We believe

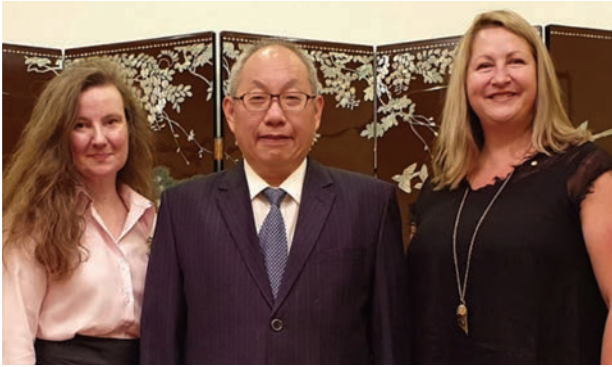
the onus should be on the company/ industry who will benefit financially from a legal trade to prove sustainability of such trade based on both supply and demand considerations.

In 1981 this approach wasn't adopted because, at 700, there were considered too few species listed; it is now 36,000. So, the CITES system was left to expand and to grow unrestrained, to the point where there are too many species, not enough control and too few resources. **Everything the 1981 Australian submission warned would happen has happened and signatories, corporate conservation and the CITES Secretariat have stood by watching but didn't act.**



There needs to be a moratorium on any additional quotas and new trade opportunities until this system is decisively fixed.

Because Nature Needs More



This is why **Donalea Patman (R)**, of **For the Love of Wildlife** and I joined forces and visited 16 Embassies of CITES signatory countries in Canberra to discuss our concerns and the reverse-listing/levy solution. In the accompanying image we are pictured with **Mr Rengang Huang, the Minister Counsellor for Economic and Commercial Affairs of the Chinese Embassy** in Australia.

As a result of these meetings we are now in Europe visiting a number of signatory countries. We would love for Australia to take a lead again but couldn't wait for the Australian Government which is too distracted from a decade of cycling through Prime Ministers.



And that is why I am writing this article from Switzerland, having just met with officials in Bern. Tomorrow, we are off to Brussels, and then UK, The Hague and Sweden.

We know that it is a big ask to make changes to a system conditioned into its current way of thinking over the last 44 years. But we decided we had to give it a go.

We will keep you posted!

Lynn Johnson

Lynn does all this amazing work at her own expense.

Wildlife Warrior from Hwange

Dedication in the face of adversity could be the summary of the work being done by **Paul de Montille** and his wife **Stephanie** in Zimbabwe. Based in **Hwange National Park**, the country's largest and most famous park, they have filled a void in the role of animal rescue within the park. A job with plenty of good stories attached it seems!



In mid February a packed house at the Perth Zoo Lecture theatre was privileged to hear all about their efforts. Paul, a professional wildlife guide, has been based in and around Hwange for more than 30 years. In 1999 he established **DART (Dete Animal Rescue Trust)** with the aim of assisting in the battle against snaring in the park. As the economic situation in Zimbabwe declined the incidence of poaching within the park with the use of snares has risen dramatically as local people struggle to support themselves. Snaring is an indiscriminate means of hunting though, and the welfare implication of the animals snared can be confronting. The result can be severe wounds and harrowing deaths for those animals unlucky enough to stumble into one.





In recent years DART has established an agreement with Parks and Wildlife to act at the frontline of injured animal recovery. This has seen them involved in tracking and locating wildlife in all areas of the park including elephants, lions, cheetah, hyena, buffalo, painted dogs, zebra and more that needed snares removed and first aid administered to the often-gruesome wounds that the deeply embedded wire traps cause. This at times can be highly dangerous work in the face of wild and stressed animals. On top of this it comes at a cost on a personal basis in that Paul and Stephanie can be called out on any day at any time which often results in giving up personal plans to attend the injured animals.

In addition to this vital work Paul and Stephanie can be found relocating problem animals. Human/ wildlife conflict is a growing problem and this can mean that the best solution is to trap and relocate the offending animal. Recent times have seen this happen with a crocodile and lion and in addition Paul has fitted a tracking collar to a roaming elephant to try and identify behaviour that brings it out of the park and in to neighbouring rural properties.

Finally, those gathered also heard of Paul's work with the **Hwange Leopard Project**. Started in 2013 it has seen Paul trap and collar leopards in Hwange such that their movements can then be traced. With this knowledge, locations of feeding can be plotted and follow up scouting and detective work done to see what the leopards have been feeding on in addition to where they spend their time. All of this is vital information on building greater understanding of a big cat species that faces sharp declines in their population in recent decades – an all too familiar story for so many species worldwide.



To summarise we have included an extract from communications from Paul which we felt highlights the passion that drives he and Stephanie that was so evident in February for those lucky enough to hear him speak.

"We often question the value or the significance of the work we do on such a troubled continent for such an ungrateful country. It would certainly be much easier for us to give up what we do and pursue a more comfortable life in a sensible part of the world yet with only 150 cheetah remaining in the wild in Zimbabwe, when I hear that the young female cheetah that I recently darted and saved has just given birth to a new generation of 4x cubs, our tiny contribution and our ability to make a difference not only to the life of that individual animal but to the local population of an entire species takes on a compelling significance. This is the feeling we get with every wild animal we rescue but nowhere is our input more important than for the endangered species like the Painted Dogs and the Cheetah etc.

We will never be a Michelangelo whose spectacular works, like his David, will forever be seen, respected and admired by countless generations. Instead we're more like the humble stone mason in medieval England chipping away at granite every day. Despite toiling just as hard, nobody will ever know or appreciate the value of his individual work, yet it will take millions of small, anonymous contributions by stone masons like him to produce a single breathtaking cathedral or a magnificent castle that will serve and be admired by humanity for centuries after they've gone."



Cameron Murray

An Evening with Dennis Lillee

For many years the chants of **Liilleeee, Liilleeee, Liilleeee** were heard from the stands of the WACA, the MCG and every major cricketing venue around the world. While the chant may not have risen at the Hyatt in early April, the sentiment was clearly there as guests at our **annual Gala Dinner** welcomed **Australian cricketing great, Dennis Lillee**, as our special guest.



As always this was a very popular event. Nearly 400 guests mingled in the reception area enjoying a pre dinner drink and chat before finding their tables as formalities kicked off. A video presentation featuring the documentary piece created by **Ben O'Shea** from **West Media** of our core project in Save Valley which he had visited in September last year and had been featured on **Today Tonight** earlier this year was shown. This gave a real insight in to the underbelly of the antipoaching battle to save the rhino, one which you are always welcome to enjoy first hand on our Rhino Ranger trips which take you to front line also. Please contact us if you want to know more about these.

SARF President, Nicholas, presented a summary of what has been happening in the 12 months since our last dinner and warmed up the crowd by showing the moving song, "**Till You're Free Again.**" This was a superb introduction to the main auction and if you would like to view it also you can use the following link to find it <https://www.goodthingsguy.com/lifestyle/sa-award-songwriter-rhino-poaching/>



Our thanks must go to auctioneer **Tiny Holly** who was on top of his game for a very successful auction. His sense of humour and his ability to keep the audience engaged meant a very successful auction of a range of **memora, memboril, mebormili – signed stuff** – which made for a fantastic fund raising event. Our thanks go to all those who bid and bought in aid of the rhino, especially **Ann, Chris, Clive, Graeme, Jim, Marc, Nola, Shaun and Syd.**



Other than for the importance of raising funds for the rhino, the evening was also a chance to share some time with one of Australia's sporting icons, Dennis Lillee. Once again **Glenn Mitchell** kindly stepped up to the plate to interview our guest and what a professional job he did. Dennis shared with Glenn and the audience stories and experiences from his days as a teenage club cricketer, through his meteoric rise to the test ranks, the challenges of his back injuries and on to the days of World Series Cricket. Feedback in the days after the dinner highlighted how warmly his stories had been received and we cannot thank Dennis enough for giving us his time as he did. It must be noted that he was also one of the last to leave which reinforced the level of his generosity.





It would be remiss not to thank our sponsors of the night including **Nia** and **Travel Directors**, who provide a full retail travel service for business and general, and are able to book absolutely anything you wish for, and also offer a very comprehensive range of small group tours to exciting locations all around the world.

To make the evening flow we were very lucky to have the most generous support of **Andy, Sam and Night Harvest Wines** with their delicious range of reds and whites. Thanks again and much appreciated.

Gage Roads beers were also very supportive and supplied **Single Fin and Alby beers plus Hello Sunshine apple cider**, from their boutique range - thanks guys.

As always, **Picasso Print & Design** produced our colour catalogue for all guests, as well as our other printing work through the year, so thanks **Gemma, Cobey and Iain** for your ongoing kindness to us.

Doris Brinkhaus donated some lovely gold and diamond earrings which now have a nice new home to go to, thanks Doris, and **Primewest** donated some holiday packages in the south west, thanks **Jim**.



In the end we are proud to announce that we raised **\$140,000** from the evening which will be a highly valuable contribution to the projects that we support and we can not thank enough all those listed above who helped us get to this figure, plus our great back up team led by **Evelyn and Nia**, and supported by **Cameron, Emma, Evan, Giles, Julie, Kate, Lorraine, Luke, Maree, Mark, Martin, Mike, Nelly, Oliver, Sacha, Sophie and Steve**. Thanks everyone, so much!



We hope we will see all this year's guests back at our next function and that the positive experience will mean you gather all your friends as well!

Cameron Murray

travel
directors

Travel Directors have been in operation for over 25 years.

NOT ONLY DO WE OFFER 40 WORLDWIDE “ADVENTURES OF A LIFETIME” FULLY ESCORTED TOURS BUT WE ARE ALSO ABLE TO OFFER ALL ASPECTS OF RETAIL AND CORPORATE TRAVEL. RANGING FROM ALL AIR FARES, PACKAGE TOURS, CRUISING AND RAIL.

CALL US ON 08 9242 4200

TO DISCUSS YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS OR COME IN AND SEE US AT
137 CAMBRIDGE STREET, WEST LEEDERVILLE

www.traveldirectors.com.au | info@traveldirectors.com.au



Very Sad Loss of a Rhino Wars Legend, Glenn Tatham



He fought a good fight throughout the rhino wars and was always hampered by a lack of resources and necessary support. His faith saw him through many dark days.

I'll always remember our plane trips to the different stations and witnessing the deep respect that the rangers had for their Chief Warden.

I don't doubt that Glenn's contribution to Zimbabwe rhino conservation has been taken for granted by many and now is the time, way too late, to recognise and honour all that he gave for his country, people and wildlife.

This week, 13 May, Zimbabwe lost a very special man, **Glenn Tatham, former Chief Warden for Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority from 1985 to 2000**. Glenn oversaw the terrible rhino wars around Zimbabwe, that resulted in black rhino numbers being decimated from 2,500 to as few as 300, between 1985 and 1993. At that stage a regrouping and re-strategising programme came into effect and the numbers are now back to above 500.

I spent many happy days in the bush with Glenn and he is the reason I am still involved in rhino conservation. Zimbabwe has lost a true champion and here is my tribute to Glenn.

In honoured memory of Glenn Tatham, my inspiration and mentor for so many years. He taught me to look after, and respect, the men at the coalface, and he led by example.



Rest In Peace Glenn.

Nicholas Duncan, committee and members of Save African Rhino Foundation, Perth.

Brave Ranger Injured by Charging Rhino

Ranger Charles Chinobva was recently charged by a black rhino bull whilst creeping up on him to get a better photo of his distinguishing ear notches. In retreat, he tripped and lay still whilst the rhino ran over him and clipped by with his foot. This resulted in some **broken ribs and a collapsed lung**. The first thing we did on arrival in Harare last Sunday was to visit Charles in hospital and smother him with gifts, cash and nibbles. He is making a speedy recovery and has just been released from care. Go well Charles.



My 6 weeks of wildlife adventure in Zimbabwe

My name is **Jen Chester** and I have just returned from 6 weeks in Zimbabwe. I was privileged to have the opportunity of volunteering my time and limited skills with **ATS (Aggressive Tracking Specialists)**, an anti-poaching organisation that **Save African Rhino Foundation** supports in **Save Valley Conservancy**.



I met, worked with and learnt from a dedicated couple **Lara and Bryce Clemence and brother Shannon**. Lara grew up north of Harare on her parents farm, travelling 40km to school every day, that was until; the Zimbabwe Government took the farm from her hardworking parents in the year 2000.

Bryce and Shannon Clemence grew up in Kariba, their father **Peter**, who can be described as a true wilderness man, fought in the Rhodesian war and passed on his invaluable tracking skills to Bryce and Shannon. They have now taken up the selfless role at the coal face of the rhino protection movement. The ATS team are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated, whose lives are nonstop and at times pressurised, I witnessed this first hand when in the space of a week we lost another 2 rhino. These events did not occur because of a lack of attention, or knowledge, these events did not occur because of complacency or inefficiency but simply because the ATS resources are stretched to the maximum and these poachers are so very well funded and career criminals.

During my time at SVC I participated in the deployment of the rangers, the dedicated highly trained motivated group of men who give their lives to saving a keystone species – the rhino. These brave men deploy out into the bush for 10 days at a time, equipped only with a tent, a mattress and a 200ltr water drum and a food ration and a gun – in the hot

humid trying conditions that are akin to our Pilbara region here in WA. They face danger every day from animals, including the ones they are trying to protect, and poachers. These are the **real heroes** of a story I will narrate in time – but not today.



Save is over 2000km² of wilderness divided into privately owned hunting concessions of which **Sango** is the largest, where the ATS team are based. From here they protect and patrol the entire conservancy population of rhino (190+), a selfless and truly admirable undertaking. There is no profit margin in this career, no holiday pay, no entitlements and definitely no knock off time. It is all consuming and life changing and only the dedicated and the passionate need apply. Save Valley is beautiful and vast and contrasting where the landscape changes from savannah to dense undergrowth within meters, its borders are surrounded by communities, the fences provide little protection for either side and with the cover of night, all these provide the perfect conditions for poachers.



I spent a **month experiencing SVC harsh beauty**, a truly breathtaking place, where the wilderness lives by the survival rules, afternoon drives were filled with animals that live just outside my door, impala, wild dogs, elephants, a honey badger, just the one, leopard, rhino and of course the lions. Interactions daily with the people that live and breathe this space gave me confidence and hope that there is a way forward, it's tireless and exhausting but worth every drop of blood, sweat and tears..... WE MUST PROTECT WHAT WE HAVE LEFT. I was very lucky to be able to teach them some better ways to use their computer resources.

I have a great boss and because I may not have given him much choice, I extended my stay in Zimbabwe for 2 more weeks, which allowed me to volunteer with a small but effective organisation **D.A.R.T** based in **Hwange National Park**. **Paul and Stephanie de Montille** are another dedicated couple who in the face of all opposing odds survive on a shoestring and make a huge impact to the animals of Hwange National Park. They live in small town on the edge of the park called Dete. On my visit to Dete I had a fantastic visit to a resident who invited me into her home and shared some stories of life in Zimbabwe, then I was treated to a tasty lunch Dete style!! Nothing like fried chicken cooked in a street kitchen YUM!!

Paul has a long history with the area, Dete was one of the first ventures into business for him, in a time that the area was thriving and the rail line brought prosperity. He began his time in the wilderness in Hwange and here he is today making a difference with the knowledge and support of Stephanie, a volunteer who came to help and never left, such is the magnetism of this part of Zimbabwe, oh and I presume Paul!!



Meat poachers are part of life in Zimbabwe, the promise of money and meat for the family is a lure and a tradition that has no simple solution. The snares that are set with the intent to catch an unsuspecting animal for food do not discriminate, they are simple, rough and can have devastating effects when they go wrong, and right, depending how you look at it. It is a **terrible death for those caught in the trap**, and for animals lucky to get away, the snare causes horrific injuries which inflict suffering and ultimately death. Paul and Stephanie are on call 24/7, passionate and dedicated to saving animals from snares with their programme. They dart and treat injured animals to free them from the snare, returning them to the bush with a bit of a sore but a much more optimistic prognosis. This work deserves accolades as well as much more media attention and funds, to free a wild animal this way, is in my book, heroic.

The de Montilles do not rest on these laurels alone though, for many years now they have contributed to our understanding of the elusive **leopards** that reside in the Hwange NP, collecting research and collating knowledge to better improve the understanding of such a magnificent creature. The collars on these cats are not only for research and conservation but help track the felines, alerting Paul and Stephanie when they roam from the protection of the park. A GPS tracking collar retails around AUD3,200, again a very small sacrifice in today's society but what I was also witness to, while assisting in the leopard programme, was the importance not only to provide funds for collars but the daily activities that require support to enable this work to continue. Paul and Stephanie take nothing for themselves, every last cent is poured back into fuel, vehicle maintenance, drugs for the darting and revival, park fees and all the other operating costs that contribute and support the programmes. The activities all come at a cost both, personal and monetary. I spent days attempting to get an aerial signal on the tracking system but alas it was the camera traps that had all the fun. I had never seen, let alone set a camera trap, only to have Ivy walk straight past my hut unbeknownst to me.



Paul and Stephanie are offering a **Participating Donor Experience** to enable a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in a REAL programme where you can be involved and make a difference. An adventure to Zimbabwe leaves an impression in your soul, you come to a country that has so much to offer and asks so little in return, viewing wild animals in their natural habitat is something not all of us will encounter in our lives. This alone should not be taken lightly, but, to participate and

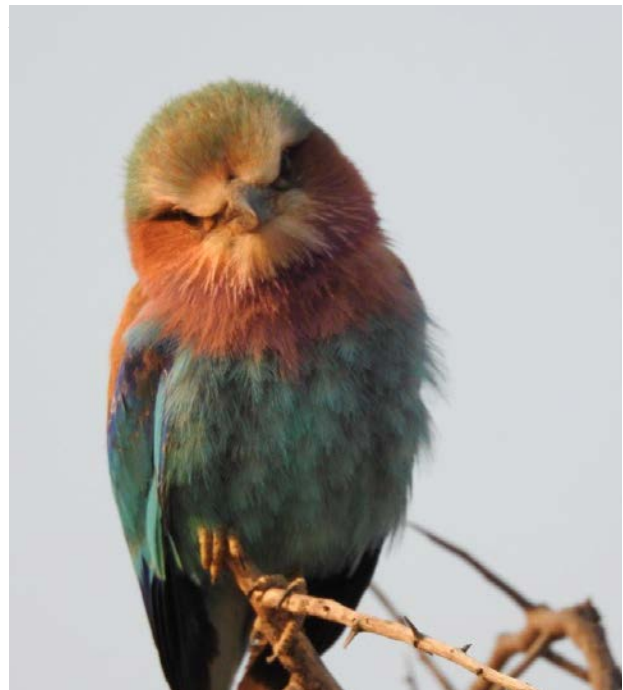
contribute to such a wonderful cause while being fed and accommodated, well, you just will not see that in a travel agent brochure.

Jennifer Chester

PS – if you'd like to know more about how you can experience something similar to this, then please contact me, thanks. ND.

2018 Safari Reflections

As a lover of Africa and all forms of wildlife, I hoped the experience would be memorable. **It proved to be so much more!** We had three days in each of **Hwange, Victoria Falls, Chobe, Okavango and Etosha.**



Close encounters with warthogs at breakfast, watching a serval during a night drive. Standing in the water hole hide in the **Okavango** at ankle height just 5m from the biggest elephants you have ever seen and listening to their deep rumbles and grumbles and the sound of water landing from their trunks in their stomachs! A herd of elephants of all ages getting increasingly excited as they approach a water hole to wash, drink and play. A honey badger going about his business. A leopard hunting and catching his prey above us in a tree, even the guide was amazed! Under a full moon, suddenly realising from the comfort of your bed in the luxury tented camp that a curious bull elephant was exploring just outside. The sounds of the night bush - hyenas, hippos, elephants and a lion kill. Herds of elephants crossing the **Chobe river**. A black rhino mum and a new born calf responding to the calls of a ranger - what an incredible sight!



Etosha water hole rush hour, where patience brings its reward in the form of a bountiful and varied wildlife encounter. Countless species of buck and antelope to accompany the experiences of lion, leopard, giraffe, elephants, hippos and of course rhino. The Big Five and the Ugly Five! Over 120 bird species spotted in the 3 week trip. The **Okavango Delta** was my bucket list trip. It was so amazing, I've added it back on to the list again!



Plus...a great bunch of interesting and like minded travellers sharing photos, stories and experiences nightly over a glass of wine, beer or Amarula!

Phil Loader

My Recent Achievements by Amos Gwema

I am the one who is in charge of Intelligence, Investigation and Security for the **Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority**. I am responsible for the prime wildlife area of Zimbabwe.

I am responsible for intelligence gathering, investigation, arrests, docket compilation and lead evidence in court. Matebeleland North, and Hwange in particular, has the **highest number of conviction rate in Zimbabwe** and probably the **best detection and conviction rate in SADC or one of the best in Africa**.

Due to the increased demand of wildlife products on the world market the poaching of elephants, rhino, pangolins, lion is on the increase and this requires dedicated intelligence officers.

It is unfortunate that donors in wildlife concentrate on funding rangers and scouts who will be doing patrols inside the protected areas forgetting that the poachers came from outside. This has resulted in the neglect of the Intelligence section which however plays a pivotal role in wildlife conservation.

The Intelligence section normally works with meagre resources. Like at Hwange Investigation the station works with only one vehicle which is not an all-terrain vehicle, hence hindering area accessibility in other areas which require 4WD vehicles. Because of the perception that it is not a vital section there is no-one who will come to rescue the Intelligence section save for very few organisations e.g. **Save African Rhino Foundation**. The organisation has helped the Intelligence section quite a lot by availing resources like fuel and informer incentives.

Overt/Covert Operations

That is one of my responsibilities and this has resulted in the arrest of **local and foreign poachers**. **Firearms, ammunitions, ivory, live pangolins and pangolin scales** were recovered through these operations.

However this requires dedication to duty and a heart for conservation. At times I use my own personal vehicle for the government work just to fulfil my conservation goals. The personal vehicle will not be serviced by the Government but the service costs is borne by self and at times will be assisted by Save African Rhino Foundation.

Elephant Poisoning

There was serious elephant poisoning in 2013 in the Hwange National Park and this had a global attention. Over **200 elephants were poisoned** and through my Office a

total of **15 accused persons were arrested and each person was sentenced to a minimum of 12 years imprisonment with labour**.

Currently it is very quiet following the arrest of syndicate leaders. The world has forgotten and the achievements of the Intelligence section also was not recognised. At one time a total of 14 ministers visited Hwange National Park. Mbada Diamonds donated Landrover vehicles to help ease transport shortage in Hwange National Park but there was no specific vehicle for intelligence section.

The non-recognition of the Intelligence section is a cause of concern however I will remain resolute in the protection of Wildlife.

Below is a picture of an elephant poisoning crime scene.



The photo shows the luggage recovered from poachers with food and other items for use while in the bush. This was from Zambian poachers. The contact took place following information supplied by the Intelligence unit.



The above pictures shows recovered loot from the poachers. The poachers were disturbed before they kill any animal and their mission ended prematurely because they had to go back and replan after leaving all food stuffs and rifle.

The information had come from Intelligence section.

The picture below shows a poacher who was captured after being injured in a shoot-out with patrolling rangers. The contact took place following information supplied by Intelligence unit.



The poachers usually target big elephants with large tusks. There is need for concerted effort from all stakeholders to protect Wildlife heritage. The above poacher was later sentenced to 15 years imprisonment with labour and he is currently serving a jail term.

He is scheduled to finish his prison term in 2029.

Court Appearance

Apart from arresting and supplying intelligence the station also assists in docket compilation and evidence presentation in court. Because it is not proper to arrest someone who will then be found not guilty and acquitted we have to have good paperwork. However the station has achieved quite considerable convictions which is second to none.

For the past five years a total of 127 people were convicted for prison terms of nine years and above. This gave a total imprisonment of 1,780 years because the sentence was varying which shows good Intelligence skills because of proper investigation and evidence gathering.

Summary of Achievement In Brief

1. Reduced elephant poisoning to less than 2 cases per year for the past five years.
2. High conviction rate with 96 % conviction rate.
3. Reduced elephant poaching by 50% for the past five years.
4. No rhino poached in my area of operation for the past seven years.

Challenges

- a. Insufficient resources e.g. four by four vehicle, inadequate informer reward, inadequate fuel allocations.
- b. If any incident took place in areas which needed a 4 x 4 it could not be attended by the office because of transport challenges.



Amos Gwema

Congratulations, Amos, on the outstanding results achieved by you and your team and we're honoured and proud to be your biggest financial supporter.

Save Valley Conservancy Update

2018 was one of our best years on record. We had 21 black rhino births and 5 white rhino births and only one recorded loss.



However, with the powerful demand for rhino horn, there are always new criminal cells being formed and past offenders looking to re-form new poaching gangs. In 2019 we have seen an upsurge in poaching and recorded 5 losses to date, 4 in the south of the conservancy and 1 in the north. These gangs are extremely efficient and can do a lot of damage in a short space of time if they are not halted.



Incursion Statistics in the past 12 months

Rhino poaching attempts	11
Rhino poaching attempts intercepted underway	4
Rhino poachers arrested	13
Number of rhino poachers awarded bail	5
Rhino poachers killed	0
Number of firearms recovered	3
Number of rhino horns recovered from carcasses	0
Number of rhinos wounded by bullets but not killed	2

With a lot of dedication and discipline from the men in the field, sacrificing time at home with their families to protect our valuable rhino and a lot of time spent working intelligence sources, we have managed to get the situation under control. On the 27 February we arrested our prime suspect and repeat offender, **Charles Nduna**. He is currently in custody being kept in remand prison. Charles is key amongst the syndicate that have been doing the damage in the south. With his local knowledge of the area and tracking ability, he poses a real problem.



On the 14 April we were able to intercept the remaining members of the Nduna gang while they were on their way back into the conservancy for another poaching mission. We were delighted to recover the automatic SKS rifle that has been responsible for all the damage in the south, as well as the vehicle they have been using to deploy.

Unfortunately two of the members of this group (Zambians) managed to escape after a failed roadblock attempt turned into a high speed chase at night which resulted in the poachers having an accident with their vehicle. However, the fact that we were able to recover the vehicle, firearm and arrest two more members of the group is substantial progress for us.

Our excellent dog team tracked the escaped poachers at first light the next morning and eventually found where their weapon was buried – tremendous effort, well done. The dogs are funded by **Joy Smith** and the **North Star Foundation**.



Good news is that the firearm was sent to ballistics for matching and the report came back positive for five poached rhino in the south and one wounding of a rhino in the south. This now gives the case substantial weight in court. We are hoping that Charles Nduna will also be implicated and convicted on the grounds of the recovery of the firearm since cartridge cases found in his home matched three of these cases.

We now have 40 field rangers thanks to the addition of another six rangers through funding from SARF. This is an enormous help given that the rhino monitoring role is now assumed within the SSPU function. Our armed monitors, led by one of our most accomplished rangers, **Givemore Bako**, is doing fabulous work in keeping check on our large rhino population. Given the size of the area and number of rhino to keep an eye on, it is no easy task. Givemore and his team love their work and are always achieving amazing results.

Our K9 unit is doing marvelous work detecting poachers spoor and making key recoveries. This unit is funded by Joy Smith, founder of the North Star foundation. We intend to continue expanding the capacity of this unit thanks to Joy's support and commitment. Through recent incidents, it is becoming very apparent, just how important a role the dogs play and how much of a needed asset they are into the future.

We are extremely grateful to SARF for their continued and unwavering support! Our main needs are manpower and logistics, and these are both areas that SARF have recently assisted us in building capacity. The addition of another six fully funded and supported rangers as well as a near brand new land cruiser are a massive relief to us on the ground. These key contributions came at a critical time of need and we can't over state how grateful we are to the SARF team for all their efforts in making this possible!



The Save Valley rhino population is at a very exciting stage, where if we can continue the momentum and support, the population is starting to grow exponentially. However, every rhino still counts and it is now more important than EVER to continue the momentum.

We are also hugely grateful to Steve Vos (SVC COO) and the administration, Kerry and Julie for their effort and support to the team on the ground, this has all been key to success!

Our aim is to continue to build capacity in core areas of need and to keep the momentum rolling.



Bryce Clemence

RRSS Update

We've just finished the first Ranger visit, including the **Australian High Commissioner, Bronte Moules** (white T shirt), and gave out all these goods to the team, in a wonderful 5 days of adventure and excitement.



We would like to thank the following suppliers and sponsors for their ongoing assistance – much appreciated.



Printing kindly donated by



PICASSO
PRINT & DESIGN

Business Stationery
Digital Printing
Graphic Design

.....

78 Howe Street
Osborne Park WA 6017
Tel. 9443 9911
www.picassoprint.com.au

