

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

President's Report

A troubled year was coming good and now Covid-19!

First of all, I hope you are all staying well and avoiding the dreaded Covid-19. What a terrible episode this is for us all, all nations included, and I'm not sure if Nature has taken some form of revenge on Man?

For our more recent members and readers it's worth mentioning that we are the **second oldest specialist rhino charity in the world**. Our core area is **Zimbabwe**, and as such, we have built up plenty of contacts over nearly 33 years. **Quite a few of them are featured in this edition of the newsletter and I do urge you to please find some time to read it through so that you can appreciate the extent of our involvement in Zimbabwe.**

This time last year when I started to write my annual report, I began on a positive note saying that rhino numbers were looking better than for a very long time. Sadly, the situation

changed very rapidly after that with some **50 rhinos in Zimbabwe being killed between March and July**.

Since then, poaching has been reduced, 12 poachers will never perform again and a few more are in custody. And births continue to happen so the overall numbers are stable.

South Africa had fewer reported deaths than any of the previous six years, a great result, though the official figures have been questioned by a few field operatives – we'll never know for sure!

What is known for sure is that the number of black rhinos Africa wide has increased from **4,845 in 2012 to 5,630 in 2018**, according to the **International Union for Conservation and Nature, IUCN**. And Zimbabwe is playing its part as their numbers have risen from 489 in 2017 to 533 now, despite losing a lot last year.

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In compiling this newsletter with all the different articles and thinking ahead to **Gemma** at **Picasso Print & Design** having to put them all together into a wonderful format, I realise that it is **15 years** since we first asked **Iain Grant** to kindly support our printing requirements. Without hesitation, he said yes and has **donated complimentary printing of all our needs ever since then!** Thank you so much **Iain, Cobey** and **Gemma** for your outstanding contributions over the years to our cause. The business has recently changed hands, keeping the existing staff, and we sincerely hope that the new owner **Bruce Drummond** will continue to sponsor such as good a programme as ours, please.

We had three very productive ranger trips to our main project, **Save Valley**, last year, resulting in lots of donations to help keep our **\$400,000+** annual support on firm ground. I can't recommend these highly enough to our members, **just \$7,000, all inclusive of air fares, transport, accommodation, meals, drinks and 5 days of action packed game viewing and ranger activities.** Lots of our guests stay on a bit longer and visit Hwange, Chobe and Victoria Falls.

Last year, for the first time, we were able to pay for the right to name a rhino calf, and even to visit it and watch it being ear notched. What an amazingly wonderful experience this was and what a skilful team of veterinarians and helpers.

Due to the current COVID - 19 situation, we've had to postpone this year's two May trips, plus our **fundraising dinner** with cricketering legend, **Allan Border**, and our September safari, and this will make a **huge dent into our budget**, an anticipated **\$200,000**. These are our main fundraising events of the year! Fortunately, we do have some cash reserves and these will see us through the next few months, though somehow, we do need to regain this lost ground. I can report that none of the projects featured in this newsletter will have their ongoing funding affected, due to **generous donations of more than \$645,000 during the last 12 months.** Thanks everyone!

We'd like to say a special thank you to all these supporters who made sizeable donations to SARF; the late Michele Cotton, Mike and Eva Palmer, Paul and Alex Kotsoglo, Travel Directors, Jim Litis, Martin Storey, The Donald Fraser Family Fund, Philip Wollen, Evan Litis, The Nola Criddle Foundation, Mrs Karin Keighley, Heather Atwell, Liz Stephenson, The Coalition (Solutions), Pat and Pauline Credlin and Nicholas Duncan.

We were invited to apply for a **Direct Aid Programme, DAP** grant, managed by the **Australian Embassy in Harare**, so we did! And we received the maximum amount, **USD40,000 (AUD57,000)**, so a very big thank you to **Ambassador Bronte Moules, Deputy Head of Mission, Kali Graham**, both of whom had visited Save

Valley Conservancy with our groups last year, **Nyarie Chingono and Trystan Peckover**. In our proposal we highlighted the need to improve the living facilities for the brave rangers and their management team. It was very timely because the rangers in the south of the conservancy lost the use of their base so we had to quickly adapt and find new quarters for them, which we did. Thank you to **Guy Whittall** for making the big white house and four little houses available on ARDA for the men. And what a transformation has been done by **Shannon Clemence** and his guys, congratulations to you all.



New Ranger's quarters



New Ranger's quarters

There's also been plenty of improvements made in the north, more solar power, motor bike garage, central kitchen/social area, operations room/storage area, more beds, trunks and other necessities.

So thank you very much to Bronte, Kali, Nyarie and Trystan for your massive support and I can't wait to accompany you there so you can see the tremendous difference that you and the Australian Government have made. Roll on the resumption of flights.

We'd like to congratulate **Amos Gwema, Principal Intelligence Officer for Zimbabwe National Parks**, based in Hwange town, for being the winner of the Game Rangers of Africa Special Award for Endangered Species Conservation, announced and presented in Johannesburg last July. Very well done, Amos, and just reward for 14 years of outstanding intelligence work within the communities, with more than 252 poachers convicted and

sentenced to more than nine years in prison over the last seven years. He was presented his award by the patron of Rhino Awards, **HRH Prince Albert of Monaco (R)**.



Award winner Amos Gwema at the Rhino Conservation Awards 2019

At the same ceremony, your president was the runner up for the **Award for Rhino Conservation Supporter**.

On a very sad note, in January, we lost one of our members, **Michele Cotton** from Sydney, to the horrible Motor Neuron Disease. During the past five years, Michele had been on a number of trips with us, her last one being the ranger trip last May, where despite the onset of her illness, her infectious enthusiasm for wildlife and nature was there for all to see. A retired vet, Michele lived life to the full, and we honoured her generosity by naming one of the rhinos after her in the ear notching operations last August.

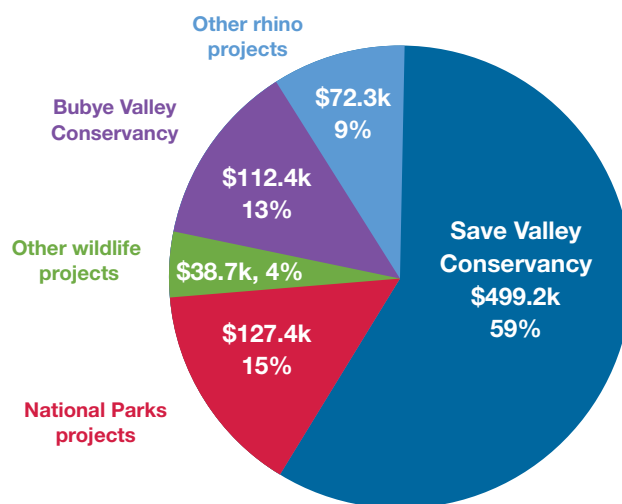
I was lucky enough to be able to spend some time with **Syd and Sue Chipchase**, as they enjoyed the **special rhino safari** that they'd previously purchased at the Dennis Lillee fundraising dinner/auction. We were royally entertained at **Bubye Valley Conservancy, Malilangwe/Singita Pamushana** and **Save Valley**, the three main rhino projects with more than **90% of Zimbabwe's rhinos**, and they also visited Hwange and Victoria Falls- quite a trip!

We congratulate **Shannon and Sonja Clemence** on the birth of their beautiful **Bella**. They are making themselves comfortable in their new home, **Chipungu**, near the banks of the Save River on Sango Ranch.

Over the past 12 months, we've been further fine tuning our expenditure to better reflect where the major concentrations of rhinos are to be found. Having had up to a 30 year relationship with some projects, it's pretty hard to cut back their support, but we have to make the decisions that are best for the future ongoing welfare of the main rhino populations. Hence, as below, **59% went to Save Valley Conservancy, 15% to National Parks projects, 13% to Bubye Valley Conservancy, 9% to other rhino projects in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa**, and the remaining **4% to other wildlife programmes**.

In total, this amounted to **\$850,000**, and even more importantly, more than **99.5%** of funds raised is spent in the field, as everyone is 100% voluntary and meets their own expenses. That's pretty damn good and I doubt it's matched anywhere in the whole world.

2019/2020 Expenditure



At last July's **AGM**, the same committee was elected, so thanks very much to **Nia Carras, Evan Litis, Heather Atwell, Mike Palmer, Steve Harrison, Evelyn Wong, Cameron Murray and Mark Beamish** for all that they do. Our average age is 55 so we hope that our fair amount of life and business experience will be sufficient to guide the ship through some rough waters ahead. Our backup crew, the sub committee, also remained the same, **Lynn Johnson, Helen Fairnie, Tim Scarrott, Oliver Basson, Luke Basson and Giles McCaw**, whilst **Rick Hurlbatt and Ravi Joshi**, have both now retired through being unable to attend meetings any more. Thanks very much, team, for all your efforts too.

When there is some clarity over public meeting procedures we'll be able to notify you of our next AGM.

Meanwhile, it's membership renewal time and we hope you'll all continue your support of the rhinos and please consider making a **generous donation along with your renewal**, as we have a big void approaching in our traditional revenue streams. Thank you.

Stay well everyone,

Nicholas Duncan
President



August 2019 Rhino Operations –

Ear notching rhino calves

As a lot of you know, I have been on quite a few of the **Ranger Support** trips with **Save African Rhino Foundation** and every trip has been fantastic, incredible, special, mind-blowing...I could go on - BUT I was not quite ready for the scale of logistics needed and emotional feelings being involved in the Rhino Operations on our trip in August last year.

From the 11 to 17 August – seven very excited travellers, **Jennifer, Jane, Daryl, Heather, Will, Nicholas and myself**, plus **Kali Graham, Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy** in Harare, were witness for the first time in 7 years to the Rhino Ear Notching Operations in **Save Valley Conservancy**.



The excited travellers

The purpose of these operations was to positively identify a young rhino, make ear notches to give it a national ID number, and also to name it. This is how rhinos are identified from the ear photos that the monitors and rangers take with all the cameras we have donated.

Our group stayed at **Gunundwe** where **Steve Vos** –Chief Operating Officer of the Conservancy, and **Gail**, were our hosts for the 6 days.



Gunundwe



The ground crew

An incredible team from **Sango, Dave Goosen, Bryce Clemence, rangers/trackers, pilots, vets, ground crew and helpers**, carried out the complete process of tracking and identifying a rhino calf that fitted the criteria, i.e. not already notched, over 12 months old - any younger could be too stressful for the rhino and calf.

Josie Hosker, the independent rhino auditor, recorded all the rhino data. Once found and the go ahead given, a helicopter, piloted by **Nick Le Grange** with **Josh**, a licensed heavy drugs operator, on board, took off and the ground crew/vehicles started to drive towards the area the rhinos have been sighted. The helicopter pilot tried to manoeuvre the rhinos close to a track or open clearing so the ground team could get in quickly.



Helicopter (Stock image)

From the helicopter, Josh darted the calf using an immobilizing drug gun - it would only take 4 mins for the drug to take effect and the calf to go down. Josh radioed once the dart was in and jumped from the chopper and followed the calf, everyone was running through the bush carrying all the necessary gear to get to where Josh was, as quickly as possible, to help make sure the calf went down without injuring itself.

It was then the ground crew sprang into action. The rhino was blindfolded, and ears plugged, as although immobilized the rhino could still see and hear.



Ear notching

An oxygen tube was inserted into a nostril – temperature and heart rate were monitored- water was sprayed on to keep cool – various measurements were taken- vets performed ear notching with a scalpel and a tiny bit of ear was taken as a DNA sample. A “V” shaped groove was made in the back hoof so rangers that were tracking could see this rhino had already been done. Once everything has been complete Josh tells everyone to get back into their vehicles ASAP as he is about to reverse the immobilizing drug - this drug takes only a few seconds to work before we have a very angry baby waking up and looking for Mum and anything or anyone in the way will be trampled!

From first darted to treated, and back up on its feet took 10 to 15 minutes Amazing work.



Ear notching (Stock Image)

Our rhino adventure started on 12 August, when 2 rhinos were found and ear notched, and given names too.



Ear notching (Stock image)

The first rhino for the day was a bit tricky and only essential personnel went in to perform the ear notching- as a very angry mother rhino was close by, Dave Goosen considered it to be too dangerous for us to go in. Luckily we could see most of what was being done from the vehicle.

With the second rhino, everyone managed to get up close and some of our group had jobs given to them such as temperature monitoring or the number of breaths per minute, or water spraying and painting a bright yellow number on the rump, so the rhino could be identified as having already been ear notched.



Ear notching

Over the next five days we averaged two per day, plus one badly injured one that needed further attention. It was a black adult with a terrible snare wound on his back leg. As the dart took effect he went down on his side in some bushes – so manpower was needed to get him up on his side.

Once stabilised, the extent of the injury could be seen. It was determined after a while by the vets that the wire was so deeply embedded that the equipment they had at their disposal was not adequate to find and remove the wire. It was agreed to give the rhino some antibiotics and reverse the immobiliser drug and come back in a fortnight with proper x-ray and other operating equipment. **(Note – a good news story!! The snare was successfully removed 2 weeks later).**

While waiting between rhinos our group was taken for a drive to see a pack of painted dogs that were nearby - the group was mainly pups waiting for the adults to come back from hunting. Very Cute!



Pack of Painted dogs



Painted dog pup

On another occasion, while waiting at Sango Guest house, Josh's wife Jackie, the lead vet, tended to two dogs then we got the call and drove off to notch another rhino. We had lunch at the Turgwe river, where William had broken a tooth and had a loose piece, so vet Jackie removed it for him.



Vet Jackie removes the broken tooth

On the fifth day, we delivered all the items we had brought over for the rangers, including sleeping bags, packs, boots, overalls, camelbacks and some GPS tracking watches.



The group with the items delivered for the rangers

Everyone in our group got a chance to fly back in the helicopter to the Guest House at the end of each day, and when it was Will's and my turn, I was a little nervous at first, it being my first time in a chopper. But the sights and scenery below, including some rhinos, were so beautiful and incredible, what an amazing bonus.



Aerial view of rhinos (Stock image)

The last day, after a rapid 70km drive, proved to be inaccessible to vehicles so a small group was flown in for the routine operation, though it wasn't so routine!. As this was the last day for our group, once back at the Guest House, everyone had celebratory drinks, speeches were made and goodbyes said. It was an emotional end to a life changing experience for us all.

Over the 6 days of our adventure **12 rhinos were successfully ear notched and named**, and 1 rhino with a snare injury was treated. 8 were named on the spot by members of the Save African Rhino Foundation, and four by non- participants One was named after Kali and another named after **Michele Cotton**, a lovely lady, who sadly passed away recently. She had been on many trips with SARF and was dedicated to all things nature.

So now there's Iris, Stuart, Gordon, Toto, Kali, Willyn, Heather, Evan, Theo, Patrick, Michele and Khongelani. And better still, there's another \$25,000 in the kitty for general rhino conservation in Save Valley. Thanks everyone.

Mention must also be made of our stay at Gunundwe
- Steve, Gail and the men in the kitchen were the most wonderful hosts, I have not been looked after with such wonderful personal touches as supplied by all. I loved their company.



Gunundwe Camp staff

I so admire Steve Vos for his passion for the Conservancy and especially the rhinos.

Seeing and touching these babies –the future of rhinos
- was immensely emotional for me and I had tears a few times – so did Steve.

I was totally blown away by the dedication, expertise, management and professionalism of absolutely everyone involved in each rhino operation over the 6 days that we were at Save Valley. The tracking skills of the rangers were unbelievable and our thanks goes to **Givemore** and his team for finding so many beautiful animals for us to see.

Also we thank Nicholas for giving us this opportunity and “Can’t wait to get the chance to go again!”

What a Fantastic Team effort.

Lynn Vale.

All of the above was only made possible by the generous sponsorship of Hemmersbach Rhino Force and Ralph Koczwaras. Thank you very much indeed from all of us and we look forward to another similar experience as soon as logistically possible.

It's possible that later in the year there might be another operation like this, possibly at quite short notice, so please put in your expression of interest to me. There are at least 26 sub adult rhino calves waiting to be given an official name and number, one could be yours.

Rock for the Rhino with *The Ramjets*

Last November, **Jim and Jacky Nissen** organised a night to **Rock for the Rhino** at the **Regal Theatre**, and rock we certainly did – thanks to the music of the **Ramjets**. Jim and Jacky made this all happen as a result of a plan they made last May when in the bush with the rangers on the **Ranger Support** trip.



The Ramjets at the Regal Theatre

And thanks also to the lovely duo of **Ashley and Alex** who set the scene early in the evening.

The **140 supporters** who attended were **most generous** throughout the evening, a very big thank you! The results were outstanding and after all the entrance ticket sales, raffle ticket sales, bar receipts, silent and main auctions, T shirt sales and memberships, it was a massive **\$10,800!**

What a great effort this was and it helped us to fund the **storeroom and operations HQ** for the improvements at Save Valley.

Again, a special thanks to Jim, Jacky and the band, plus all who made it happen on the night, bar helpers, raffle sellers and others, plus complimentary beers from Gage Roads and wine from Night Harvest.



Save Valley Conservancy 2019 Report

2019 was an eventful year. The rhino losses were a bit higher than the previous years, the conservancy successfully went through its first independent rhino operations and a wanted criminal was caught and locked in jail.

The **Black rhino** population at the beginning of 2019 was 136. On average, each rhino in the SVC population was verified twice in 2019 (maximum = 5, minimum = 2). Black rhinos previously reported as missing in 2018 were all verified by photo identification and put back into the populations. 18 rhino births were also recorded in the year bringing the total black rhino population at the end of the year to 153.



Black rhinos

The **White rhino** population at the beginning of 2019 was 44. 4 white rhinos reported to be missing in 2018 were all relocated. 3 white rhino births were recorded in the year bringing the total white rhino population at the end of the year to 50.

3 Black rhino were injured in the year and all the injuries came from attempted poaching. 2 Black rhino (Moga



White rhinos

and Nkazana) were shot in 2 different attempts. **Special Species Protection Unit** patrols monitored the injuries and they managed to recover without needing help from vets. Another rhino (Chimoko), was caught by a wire snare above the ankle and it cut deep into the skin. It was discovered by SSPU limping during the rhino operations and an operation was done a week later after the acquisition of a mobile potable x-ray machine. Chimoko recovered well and still occupies his territory.

The 2019 SVC notching operation was a collaborative effort between the African Wildlife Management and the Conservation team and SSPU.

The 2019 operations were completed in two phases due to the availability of the fixed wing aircraft. Phase one was completed between 9 - 13 June when 7 rhinos were notched. A further 16 rhinos were notched in phase two which took place between 12 - 21 August. Phase one marked an SVC first and the experience offered valuable lessons that influenced phase two of the operations. Improved coordination and communication made for excellent teamwork between all those involved such that phase two ran smoothly. **Save African Rhino Foundation** participated in the operations naming the sub adult rhinos and raising funds for rhino conservation in the process.

15 rhino poaching related incidents were recorded in the year. 4 poaching incidents resulted in the loss of 10 rhinos, 9 black and 1 white and 11 attempts did not result in losses. 6 poaching attempts were intercepted underway. Most of the incidents, which resulted in rhino losses,



Ear notching

were recorded in the south of Save Valley with 2 incidents resulting in 3 rhino losses on both occasions. 13 arrests were made in the year, 3 rifles were recovered and also 3kgs of cyanide was recovered during the year.

Of the 13 arrests made, 2 people found in possession of cyanide inside the conservancy were given 4 months imprisonment or an alternative fine. 5 were acquitted of all charges and 5 were given bail and 1 is still in custody on remand awaiting trial when he recovers from injuries sustained when rangers immobilized him.

On 20 October, during a routine dog detection along the boundaries of Savuli, an SSPU patrol bumped into four rhino poachers tracking rhino in the area. The poachers noticed that they had been seen and they started to escape using anti tracking techniques. The dog (**Justice**) caught scent of the spoor and started to track them. The dog Handler (**Ackmos**) called for backup, which was nearby, but upon realizing that the poachers were escaping he decided to follow them alone with his dog and his assistant who was following from a distance because he was not armed. Ackmos closed in on the poachers and released the dog. Justice separated the poachers into two groups of 2. The gunner turned his gun towards the approaching dog handler forcing him into defense, which led to the dog handler firing shots towards the poacher, hitting him on the left ankle before Justice grabbed him, and pulled him for 15 metres, separating the poacher with his rifle. Ackmos rushed to secure the poacher who was trying to hit the dog with a rock. Noticing that the poacher would try to fight back, Ackmos immobilized him by shooting his legs. Backup came and a search parameter was set up to try and contain the other 3 who had taken the chance to escape but no success came from that.



Poacher captured by SSPU patrol

A total of 42 scouts have been working in the field since the 1 January 2109. An average of 30 men, both north and south, were on duty every day and 10 out on time off.

Ackmos Bishau, a dog handler, was one of the outstanding rangers of the year. He showed a lot of courage when he managed to stop a rhino-poaching attempt and in so doing arrested a poacher who had managed to evade the law for 4 years. The Rhino monitoring team's effort, under the leadership of **Givemore Bako**, cannot go unnoticed after their outstanding

participation in the 2019 rhino operations. They have also managed to get photos of all the rhinos in the population, helping the conservancy to account for all the individuals in the population.

The female dog (**Shatani**), gave birth to 7 healthy puppies. **Mubari Muchaingana**, one of the 2018 recruits monitored as Shatani gave birth and since then he has taken care of the puppies and has done an amazing job helping in their training.



Dog handler Ackmos Bishau

All the 5 vehicles are running and adhering to their service plans. The unit received **6 new motorbikes** in 2019 for rhino monitoring from Save African Rhino Foundation, made possible by a generous donation from **Paul and Alex Kotsoglo**, who had visited the project in 2018. The new bikes helped in making sure there wasn't a patrol down due to breakdowns and the monitoring results in the year are there as proof.



New motorbikes for rhino monitoring

SARF also donated patrol gear for the unit. These included uniforms, patrol bags, boots, cameras, gps, radios, base set radios, batteries etc.

Rangers come into the main base after every 10 days of patrolling. SARF made it a priority to make sure that the

men have a good resting place where they can recover and communicate with family and also catch up with fellow workmates.

New batteries were put on to the existing solar system, helped by a donation from **Nelly Newall** on last May's ranger trip, and the power situation has improved. The scouts have charging ports, lighting, entertainment and refrigeration all powered by solar. Thanks very much, Nelly!

We thank the **Australian Embassy** in Harare for their very kind grant of **USD\$40,000** for improvements to the living quarters of the rangers and their management team. A cooking area to protect the fire during the rainy season was constructed. This idea came from **Mr Clemence (SSPU Manager)** who took the idea of a **Zimbabwean rural kitchen**. The traditional kitchen in Zimbabwe is a place where people can sit around a fire and relax during winter, catching up with their family. This cooking area will be a place where rangers and donors will be able to sit and relax, sharing meals and catching up on conservation work. A parking shade for motorbikes was also constructed to protect the bikes from direct heat and water. Each scout was given a new mattress and more beds were made for the new scouts. **These improvements have been welcomed by the scouts who now have wardrobes to put their kit, trunks for their rations, entertainment and a soft bed to rest on.**



Zimbabwean rural kitchen

Many other improvements were made in the north and the south and we are all very grateful to the Australians for providing all of this.

Just recently, **Charles Maunze**, our training officer, has recruited some local villagers to be assessed for future ranger intake. Several weeks of intensive physical and

attitudinal testing has resulted in nine new scouts being presented with their official overalls and boots for further preparation for active duty.

Lastly, it's a big thank you to SARF for the prompt purchase of a **replacement Land Cruiser** for the SSPU unit. SVC and the SSPU and rhino are ever grateful for the ongoing support in 2020 from SARF, our single biggest donor, **many, many thanks to all SARF members and Mr. Duncan**. Now that Covid 19 has arrived in the world, all planned fund raising internally has ended abruptly and we are now making budgetary adjustments to a reduced income situation. **Without SARF support we would be in dire straits.**



Recruits from the local villages



The new scouts



Replacement Land Cruiser

Moses Mutemeri, admin assistant to Bryce

The Importance of an Intelligence Network

Amos Gwema is Zimbabwe's Principal Intelligence Officer in the National Parks Authority. He is based in Hwange town and most of his work is in the world famous **Hwange National Park**, home to at least 35,000 elephants, so illegal ivory possession is top of his crime list. His traditional zone of influence stretches to the **Zambezi NP** and the **Binga** area to the north, and to **Matobo NP** in the south. Now that he is the senior national Intelligence Officer we can expect him to be reeling in poachers from all corners of Zimbabwe.

The main duties are

- Investigating wildlife crime outside and inside the protected areas.
- Influencing the strategic deployment of rangers in protected areas through the provision of intelligence on poacher movements.
- Collecting, collating and analysing intelligence on poacher incursion, wildlife trafficking within and across the international boundaries and advising Management for policy and operational direction.
- Investigating and prosecuting wildlife crimes.
- Coordinating intelligence ferret teams (from different intelligence units) operating under cover to fight wildlife crime.
- Attending wildlife crime scenes to gather evidence necessary for successful prosecution of offenders and to use for further investigations.

He has 5 active informants who have helped him reach this position and to be Zimbabwe's most effective anti wildlife crime operative. Jointly, we keep them well rewarded and motivated.

These five are the ones whom he uses most. For example, he can get information about a person selling ivory and he will then assign any one of them to communicate with the poacher until they make an arrangement and then Amos' team will take over and make the arrest.



Amos is hoping for three more mobile phones for three of his informants who don't have them so if any reader has an old one then we'd love to pass it on to these vital assistants for wildlife. That will also go a long way to motivating them.

Amos further advises that sometimes the guys use their own money to buy talk time for communication and some walk long distances. This shows that they are supportive of wildlife issues.

Over the past 12 months, Amos and his team have made 47 arrests of poachers for major wildlife crime, 29 have been convicted to 9 years imprisonment or more, 3 firearms have been recovered with 48 rounds of ammunition, 32 elephants have been poached and 45 tusks recovered, and 2 live pangolins have been seized and released back into the wild, and 5kgs of cyanide for wildlife poisoning has been confiscated.

This is an amazing record and the main reason that Amos was so highly recognised at last year's Game Rangers Association of Africa annual awards ceremony.



We are really proud of our association with Amos and his team and we're always there for him with vehicle repairs, fuel costs and informer rewards, as we have been since 2008.

Annual Committee Trip

Mid May and it was time for a committee trip to Zimbabwe before participating in one of the ever popular **Rhino Ranger** visits to **Save Valley Conservancy (SVC)**.

The committee was represented by **Nicholas Duncan, Heather Atwell, Evan Litis and Cameron Murray** with the latter three joining Nicholas in Harare as he finished the first of the Rhino Ranger outings.

Flight times in to Harare have traditionally allowed for meetings at the Bronte prior to departure to the Lowveld and this trip was no exception. The afternoon saw a number of visitors which included the ever reliable Harare based mechanic **Spike Malleus**. Spike presented his latest resurrection effort which was an ex Singapore army Land Rover which SARF purchased in 2013 and had previously been used in SVC. Spike had it looking almost new and not long after our visit it was driven down to its new home at **Bubye Valley Conservancy**. At dinner we enjoyed the company of new Chief Operating Officer of SVC, **Steve Vos**.



Next day it was the long trip south. One coffee stop in Kwe Kwe and on to lunch in Bulawayo after tracking down fuel being sold in US currency. Throughout the trip careful planning was needed to ensure the next fuel stop. Fuel available in US dollars had to be found as otherwise there were long queues for fuel if buying in local currency. The sad economic slide of Zimbabwe sees the country heading in to another phase of inflation and hardship for of the locals, made worse by a poor harvest in many parts.

Lunch was with **Verity Bowman** and the **Dambari crew** and we were joined by **Daniel Sithole** who had driven 300 kms from Main Camp in Hwange to collect some clothing and boots SARF had donated. As usual Verity was generous in her hospitality and we left well fed and well informed on Dambari news, before setting off for the 3 hours drive south to Bubye Valley Conservancy (BVC).



BVC at the time was just transitioning ownership and settling in a new anti-poaching management team. We enjoyed superb hospitality for the 3 days we were there while staying at the **Ripple Creek Lodge**. During our days we met and spent time with **Brian Gurney** who now heads the anti-poaching organisation. Of even more credit to him, considering the number of hours he spent in showing us around and explaining the ins and outs of the historically **largest rhino conservation** area in Zimbabwe, was the fact that he and his wife had only just had their first child a month earlier.



While at BVC we also met with **Blondie, Adam, Dirk and Michiel** who complete the anti poaching set up and toured their operations area, scout bases and also followed up a meat poaching incident on the boundary. One highlight was meeting the trainee scouts at the main base. This was a wonderful opportunity for Nicholas to deliver one of his **rousing speeches with regard to the important work they perform and the value of this work to not just BVC but to the country and the world**. In return we were treated to about 40 male African voices pumping out a song in a small low ceilinged meeting room. Inspiring!



Unfortunately, Nicholas had to leave us early from Bubye to head back to Harare for Glenn Tatham's funeral but three days in Bubye was enough to see that the place had a **feeling of renewed enthusiasm** despite many challenges. We look forward to watching their progress in the time ahead as BVC is a truly wonderful piece of wilderness with a vital role to play in rhino conservation in Zimbabwe.

It was an early start for the three remaining travellers to nurse the trusty Delica south east across BVC and out the Safari gate on the Beitbridge to Ngundu road. It was a long drive with fuel and provision stops in Chiredzi before making it to **Malilangwe**. We stayed only one night here but as always it was a worthwhile catch up with **Executive Director Mark Saunders and Head of Anti poaching Mike Ball**. On the first night their expertise, helped a little by Evan's sharp vision, resulted in a wonderful leopard sighting and then next day we saw through Malilangwe's new anti-poaching head quarters as well as the renovations happening in the luxury accommodation. **Malilangwe remains a beacon for what can be achieved in a well funded, well managed conservation area.**



A late change in plans then saw us head out the south side of Malilangwe and into **Gonarezhou National Park**. This was an unexpected chance to catch up with **Park Manager Hugo Van der Westhuizen** who took us for an afternoon tour to see the site of a new causeway construction across the Runde river (now completed) to improve access between the north and south when the river is running. It will also mean that the future **Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ)** for rhinos can be spread either side of the river and access maintained. In addition we saw the new local African style tourist accommodation being offered in the park which, while basic, offers a truly unique and up close African experience. The aim is to increase tourist numbers while also increasing work opportunities and employment for communities around the park.



We stayed at a tented camp on the banks of the Runde and after a night enjoying the sounds of passing elephants and hippos we spent the next day enjoying the famous Chilojo Cliffs and associated animal viewing on the way. A magical part of the world for sure.



The committee trip wound up the next day with a morning briefing at the parks headquarters from **Callum** on the anti-poaching efforts and challenges in the park before heading north out through Malilangwe then up the east side of Save Valley Conservancy to meet the Rhino Ranger visitors at the north gate of SVC.

There is no doubt that meeting the people on the ground and hearing first hand from them gives a markedly better impression on where each rhino conservation project is up to with regard man power, challenges they face and where they are winning and losing. This trip was no exception and our thanks to those that went out of their way to host us at our stops and spend their valuable time keeping us informed. The main message to take from the trip was the fact that virtually all conservation projects in Zimbabwe are perpetually under funded and yet they all dig deep to maintain the struggle to save a species. **You can rest assured that every dollar donated makes an enormous difference and is very much appreciated on the ground. Let's remember this when we consider our next donation and maybe we can help them a little more?**

Cameron Murray, Committee



A Very Special Rhino Safari

This is a short story of our trip to **Zimbabwe** that **Sue and I purchased at the annual fund raiser night last year.**

Firstly a great thank you to Nicholas for all the effort for putting together such an itinerary. **A trip everyone should endeavour to do.**

We went at the start of the rainy season and were so lucky that the rain had just started and the grasses were starting to grow. Not too much rain that we couldn't travel around. After a couple of quiet days at **Victoria Falls** we started our journey. Firstly to **Ivory Lodge** where they had missed the rain and not a lot of wildlife moving around, Then to **The Hide**, a place not to be missed. **Great viewing and hospitality.**



From The Hide it was a road trip to the **Matobo** granites and **Amalinda Camp**, for some more relaxation, then a road trip to **Bubye Conservancy**. It was on the way there that we were fortunate enough to have **Nicholas** join us for the last 10 days. **This part of our journey is when we get to understand the effort that goes into the fund raising and how and where the money goes.** We were on the road to Bubye HQ and meet up with **Brian, Adam and the crew**, and we transfer to a lovely small camp on the top of a hill, **Fimbiri**. Bubye is a stunning place and it was a treat for Adam, our host for the three days, to arrange for his trackers to locate a Black Rhino and calf for us to track, our first sighting ever in 4 trips to Africa.



The hospitality and comradeship shown by not only the leaders, but also the rangers, was outstanding. These guys and girls never have a smile off their faces. It is in these discussions that you realise how much they all **appreciate the funding from SARF**.

From Buby we took a short flight to **Malilangwe** and the magnificent **Singita Pamushana lodge**. This is a **6 star resort**, with our own chef, cellar, 3 bedroom suite and, of course, 2 private guides. Mind you, in saying that, everywhere Sue and I went we had the privilege of having a 4x4 to ourselves. By the way, Nicholas had to rough it in the workers quarters but we allowed him to game drive with us! Ha Ha.



After two fabulous nights here it was time to travel to **Sango, in Save Valley Conservancy**, to be hosted by **Dave Goosen**. This is the top pick of the trip in terms of SARF's involvement in rhino conservation. The highlight is to see how well **Bryce and team** have done in introducing dogs to the fight against poachers. They gave us a private viewing of how it all works. An amazing insight as to what these poachers can expect if they are caught and we believe that the word is getting around after the apprehension of one of the poaching team leaders.

The people involved at this conservancy are like everybody else we had met that had received funding from SARF. **They all never stop talking about how much it helps and if it was not for organizations like Nicholas's the animals would have little or no chance.**



To see it as Sue and I did from behind the scene was as **memorable an experience that we will never forget.**

To everyone that we had the privilege of meeting on our trip we thank you very much and of course hope we meet again.

Sue and Syd Chipchase

***PS** There was a down side. 10 days after returning home I was found to have African Tick disease. I can tell you I had one foot in the box, but I have bounced back.*



Thank you to all our sponsors for this excellent safari, Farai at The Victoria Falls Hotel, Sharon at Ivory Lodge and Amalinda Camp, Blondie at Buby Valley, Mark at Singita Pamushana Lodge and Dave at Sango Lodge. We look forward to your ongoing support.

2019 Rhino Ranger Support

The information we gain from reading emails, newsletters and from functions is very important, but the best way of learning about something is to actually be there. To be in **Save Valley**, seeing what the men at the coal face are doing every day to save the black and white rhino is a truly unforgettable experience.



RRSS group

During the time the second **Rhino Ranger Support Scheme (RRSS) group** were in Save Valley, **Bryce, Shannon** and the **rangers** were on high alert, as they had intel suggesting they would be hit by poachers. Even the RRSS group were feeling the tension. For Bryce and his team, this is their reality every day.

The group gladly gave up some time spent with the anti-poaching team, for quality time spent with **Dave** seeing the beautiful animals and sights of **Sango**. We did manage to get some one on one time with Bryce and Shannon in the evenings during dinner, hearing all about their stories from the bush.



Time with Bryce and Shannon

There were many memorable experiences, one being when the Sango scouts took us into the bush to track a white rhino cow. The group took it in turns to view the rhino through thick brush. From out of nowhere and without noise, a large elephant appeared and caught our scent, raising its trunk and beginning to move towards us. We backtracked and zig zagged with our hearts racing, calmly led by Bryce, Dave, Shannon and the scouts.



Large elephant spotted by the group

Another highlight was seeing a pack of wild dogs sleeping on the road in the shade in the middle of the day. One dog was walking on only three legs. Its front leg appeared to be broken from a recent hunt.

Other highlights include walking up the kopje to see the sunrise, the delicious food at Sango, seeing the remains of a lion kill, sitting in the dark listening to lions on the move, and of course, Nicholas forcing us to sing the famous 'Beautiful Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)' song.



Watching the sunrise

The RRSS is such a unique experience and the best way to see the hard work being done on the front lines.

Oliver Basson, Sub Committee

This year's trips have been postponed till next May and there are still four available places for this informative and exciting adventure, around \$7,000, all inclusive of fares and accommodation. Book now!

Bubye Valley Conservancy (BVC) Security 2019

As we progress into 2020 our poaching levels have dropped but we are continually working to maintain our momentum and ensure that poaching continues to decrease for the rest of the year. BVC has been humbled by the support given from Save African Rhino Foundation over the past number of years where **equipment and funds donated by SARF have helped BVC improve its Anti-Poaching unit through improved scout morale, night time operational capacity and improved evidence gathering.**

Bubye Valley Conservancy Anti-Poaching unit has over the last couple of years increased its unit with 3 extra managers and approximately 100 new scouts who were recruited and trained over the past 18 months. From having lost more than 40 rhinos in the first half of 2019 we have managed to reduce the poaching down to where we have **only lost one rhino in the past six months.** The introduction of **new management and operational tools, such as Integrity testing, helicopter reactions, increased numbers of vehicles to increase ground mobility and various useful pieces of equipment donated by various organisations and shareholders, has all contributed to the successful reduction in rhino poaching.**



In recent times SARF has donated funds and equipment to our unit which has played an important role in our efforts to improve. Below is a list of what SARF has donated to BVC and how each item has helped in the respective fields of Anti-Poaching.



The support from SARF is greatly appreciated and we look forward to future co-operation in the protection of Africa's rhino. Thank You.

Brian Gurney, Anti-poaching Manager

Equipment	Outcome Achieved
Land Rover	The land rover helped to ensure Ripple Creek scouts could continue to protect their area of predominantly orphaned rhino.
2 x Motorcycles	These have been used to augment localised operations and for external intelligence gathering.
Thermal aides	These have aided our scouts in their confidence and capabilities during night time operations.
Cameras	Scouts have used the cameras for evidence capture which has improved the prosecution of poachers, such as in a poisoning case from this year where photographic evidence proved vital.
Sleeping mats	These sleeping mats greatly improved the morale and the effective capacity of our scouts out in the field.
Tents	Tents have augmented existing bases and helped to project scouts into new areas for protracted amounts of time which has given us more effective ground coverage.
First Aid	This donated equipment was incorporated into the scouts' existing first aid kits which is a very important aspect of field work support.
Drill uniform	These uniforms were used for our gate guards to help differentiate their different taskings
GPS Watches	Although not fully rolled out, the watches are proving effective for the patrol leaders of different sections to read off quick coordinates whilst patrolling.

Embassy Support for Rhino Conservation

How lucky are we! Late last year we again applied for the **Australian Direct Aid Program (DAP)** funding in Zimbabwe. DAP is, “a flexible small grants program funded by the Australian Government and managed through the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) overseas posts. The program aims to support projects with a strong development focus that complement Australia’s broader aid program which contributes to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.”

The program requires the submission of a detailed budgeted submission to the Australian Embassy in Harare. SARF has been fortunate to have previously benefited from the generosity of this program with funding made available toward the **ranger base** in the north of **Save Valley Conservancy (SVC)** – a hugely valuable facility in the fight for the rhino is this Lowveld stronghold and an important project for engaging local people and offering employment in the area of conservation.



Ranger base

The application was for works to establish a scaled-up ranger base in the south of SVC and enhance the one in the north and it presented a real challenge on the budgeting aspect as supply costs were difficult to ascertain in the deteriorating Zimbabwe economy. However, the application was done, redone and refined to a point of submission and it is with great gratitude to the Embassy that we were selected to receive financial assistance.

In all the DAP contributed **\$56,000AUD** and SARF made up the short fall to the tune of approximately **\$25,000AUD**. With a large amount of work in chasing quotes and looking at different options it is **truly amazing what was achievable with this investment in the future security of Zimbabwean wildlife**. Thank you to **Julie, Kerry and Lara** for following through on all this. Here is all that has been procured, and nearly all installed, with these funds

1. 2 x installation of lockable storage facilities for diesel, petrol, motorbikes, vehicle spares, etc.

2. 2 x creation of covered cooking and eating facilities for the rangers (protection from the rain for cooking and creation of a social area and visitor hub, eg donors
3. 1 solar geyser for hot water showers in the south
4. Repair of bathrooms
5. Interior and exterior painting of ranger base buildings in the south
6. Interior refurbishment of ranger base: cupboards, doors and shelves
7. Solar system for the Ranger house
8. Workshop for motor bike maintenance and other repairs
9. 2 x offices for the administrative assistants in the south and north
10. 20 bed frames (for new scouts)
11. 18 trunks and mattresses
12. 3 x covered parking for vehicles
13. Insulation for the roof in both ranger and manager houses to combat the heat.
14. Upgraded solar systems so the manager and family can have a freezer, fridge and fans in 45 degree heat.
15. Kitchen for APU sergeant
16. 1 x storeroom for the north for their excess kit - uniforms, boots, packs, water carriers, radios, batteries and so on
17. 1 x solar borehole for the new south base
18. 1 x covered pumphouse for generator and fuel in the north
19. 4 x mobile 5mx5m tents for north and south
20. 2 x landcruiser seating rigs for vehicles
21. 12 x electric fans for north and south
22. 4 x gas stoves for north and south.

The supply and installation of all these items will substantially enhance the living standards of the rangers working hard to protect the rhino in SVC. It will boost morale and give more reward for the dangerous work they undertake.

We would once again like to acknowledge the Australian Government and local **Australian Embassy in Harare (Bronte, Kali, Nyarie and Tristan)** for the invaluable support for this project and we have full confidence the success of the ongoing project in SVC will be enhanced by this contribution. **It's been a mighty effort getting all of the above done for around \$85,000, slightly over budget.**

Cameron Murray, Committee



Storage unit in the south



Renovations in the south



Renovated unit in the south



New kitchen area in the north



Tiled floors in the white house, south



Motorbikes maintenance unit in the north



White house in the south



Renovations in the south



Completed office in the south



Removing old tiles in the south



New mattresses, north and south



New storage units, north and south

Sinamatella News

We have lived and worked at Sinamatella since **2009**, first as **D.A.R.T.**, then as **Bhejane Trust**. Whatever name we have worked under, **SARF** has been there alongside us. So who are 'we'? Those of us living at **Sinamatella** are **Stephen and Sue Long**, our colleague **Abednico Tshuma** and our son **Nicholas** and his team of **three rhino monitors**. Keeping the Trust running from Victoria Falls is **Trevor Lane**.



The Sinamatella team

*Back row: Abednico Tshuma, Tichaona Chisato, Artwell Nyoni, Sue Long
Front row: Nicholas Long, Knowledge Kashiri, Stephen Long*

Initially, our main aim was to assist in a census of the Black Rhino. It's hard to overstate the importance of rhino to Sinamatella in those days. The rangers were a close-knit group who had been through the 'rhino wars' together and they and their families truly cared. The first time in 2009 that a rhino was killed by poachers I was amazed by the feeling of gloom that fell on the entire camp and, when rangers had a successful shoot-out with poachers and we returned to camp after 11.00 at night I was equally amazed to find wives and families from the staff village waiting in the dark by the operations room to cheer the rangers home.



Two Land Rovers donated to us by SAVE, rhino monitoring vehicle on the left, utility vehicle on the right

Rhino and rhino protection are still a vital part of Bhejane Trust (Bhejane is the Ndebele word for Black Rhino) and now we have a dedicated Rhino Monitoring and Protection Unit run by Nicholas Long, working alongside the National Parks rangers. The team had a successful 2019. They

recorded 317 waypoints for rhino sign, thereby helping to map the animals' home ranges and make them easier to protect, they had 17 visuals of rhino, plus numerous sightings by camera trap and they removed 315 snares and arrested 12 poachers.

Rhino numbers are low but they are still there, still breeding and they still matter.



A recent birth as recorded on a camera trap.

Our other long-standing project has been environmental monitoring. Many people dismiss animal counts and the like as a waste of time but I believe that you can't protect something if you don't know what it is that you are protecting and you don't understand how it works. This is a time of tremendous change within Hwange, principally because of ever increasing elephant numbers and changing climate. It's vital to know what is happening and we help the Parks ecologists collect data on anything from giraffe numbers, to Baobab tree distribution, to butterfly diversity, vulture nesting and elephant population. Most of this is done with our very successful **volunteer project** but Sue has done the majority of the work on butterfly diversity and is our expert on recognising individual giraffe.



Part of Hwange's elephant population, which reached over forty thousand in 2019

Hwange Park relies on pumped water to support its animals in the dry season. When we came to Sinamatella, 'game water' supply was by diesel pumps and the number of pumped water points was steadily falling. At first we helped a little with repairs to the pumps but it was a losing battle until one of our first volunteers got funding for a solar pump which became the first of many at Sinamatella and in Hwange National Park as a whole.



The solar installation at Inyantue Dam.

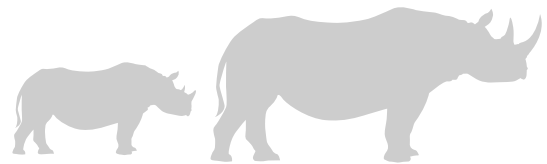
From occasional help in 2009, our involvement with game water has developed to where we are today, entirely responsible for game water and with **eighteen pumps supplying around 350,000 litres to at least 7000 animals** on a daily basis in the dry season. This is the most game water points Sinamatella has ever had and we continue to set up new ones with the aim of spreading out the animals, particularly elephants, to avoid environmental damage late in the dry season.



Installing a wind pump at Sinamatella pan.

The **National Parks Authority** often lacks the resources it needs so we are involved in Sinamatella in many other ways too. We transport rangers out to patrol, and give them basic rations, we help at the workshop, with the notoriously unreliable domestic water supply, with road repairs with repairs to tourism infrastructure, with... well simply, if it needs doing and we can help, we help! **For Sue and I, it has been twelve wonderful years doing a job that most people can only dream about and we are very grateful to SARF for making that possible.**

Stephen Long



Editor's note; *Sinamatella was designated as an **Intensive Protection Zone, IPZ**, back in **1993**, when there were an estimated **45 rhinos** in the area. Numbers rose to some **95** by **2003**, before the poaching onslaught started and reduced them to as few as **6** in **2012**. They are slowly creeping back up again.*

*We've been funding Sinamatella since 1992 and it's one of the few projects that we are still supporting as fully as ever, due to our huge respect for Stephen, Sue and Nicholas and their steadfast dedication and hard work in the most challenging of circumstances. **Wildlife and Nature owes them a great debt of gratitude, thanks so much guys.***

ND.

It's Time for Transparency



2020 will become a historic year. My hope is that it isn't only remembered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the year the world decided to deal with the mess that is the 'legal' trade in wildlife.

Epidemiologists and immunologists have known for decades that humans are vulnerable to zoonotic diseases, because the line between us and exotic animals has long been breached. Even so, the **legal** trade in exotic species has been supported to grow.

The current focus is China; before COVID-19 few people would have known of China's 22,000 **legal** captive breeding facilities. **But China is just as microcosm of a global problem.**

In 2019, **South Africa reclassified 33 wild species (including rhinos) as farm animals**, to make commercial breeding easier. And, it is ironic that the most talked about Netflix series during the lockdown is Tiger King. While the series focuses on the eccentric characters involved in the legal captive breeding of big cats in the USA, it highlights another example that **the global 'legal' trade in wildlife is not only below the radar, there is no radar.**

Despite outcries about the illegal trade, the **legal trade goes unquestioned**. Without any real checks, a trillion-dollar legal trade in animals and plants has been encouraged to flourish. This lack of regulation can be traced directly to today's lost lives and wrecked economies. **Will COVID-19 be the catalyst for a greater scrutiny of this 'legal' trade and the agencies that have clinically sidestepped this aspect of trade for decades?**



Wildlife Trade Sustainable? Prove It!

Nature Needs More has been assured by world-leading experts in trade analytics that the CITES trade database is the worst designed and most impenetrable data source they have ever come across. they also agreed that as a first step to fixing the issues, an electronic permit system would need to be adopted by all CITES signatory parties.

In recent weeks some conservation scientists have called for a permanent trade ban, whilst others said it won't help. Such disagreements have been happening for decades preserving the status quo, namely maintaining as much 'legal' trade as possible. This in turn requires more captive breeding and **the opportunity to lobby for more trade.**

Pro-trade groups around the world are looking for ways to grow the **legal** trade in endangered species. One of the reasons for South Africa's move to reclassify 33 wild species as farm animals is probably to test **CITES Article 7.4**, which exempts captive bred specimens from trade bans that are in place (such as for rhinos). CITES officials have tried to reassure that gaining an exemption under Article 7.4 isn't as easy as it seems, but there may well be a push from pro-trade groups at the next Conference of the Parties (CoP19).

Back to COVID-19, wet markets are currently the focus of the global outcry to close the trade, but it is captive breeding facilities that supply these markets. Once we are out of the global health crisis, businesses around the world will lobby their governments to re-open the trade and, in all likelihood, governments will comply with their wishes, on the basis that they need to quickly rebuild the economy.

In 2018, after years of researching and working on the demand for illegal wildlife 'products', and specifically rhino horn, I came to the conclusion that the illegal trade cannot be tackled until the loopholes in the legal trade in endangered species are closed. From that point on **Nature Needs More's** primary focus has been the modernisation of CITES, to create a well-resourced, modern, transparent legal trade system that is fully based on the Precautionary Principle; this would take just **3 Steps: Electronic Permits, Reverse Listing and Industry Contributions.**

Nature Needs More together with **For the Love of Wildlife** are actively lobbying to modernise the legal trade system. In the first instance, the main focus is for all 183 CITES signatory parties to move an electronic permit system by CITES CoP19 in 2022.

Other than a handful of signatory countries, **CITES still uses a paper permit system that hasn't been updated since the 1970s and doesn't integrate with customs across the globe.** CITES collects data only once a year, but this is of such poor quality that, in effect, there has been no legal trade analytics for 45 years.

A global rollout of an electronic permit system would cost **less than US\$30 million** and it is technically possible to implement it worldwide by 2022. Compared to the global financial damage of COVID-19 (setting aside the tragic loss of life), a first step of spending US\$30million on an electronic permit system is mere pocket change.

In a world where big data rules, no major steps have been taken to digitise the legal trade in endangered species. If we want to protect ourselves from future pandemic risks, as well as tackle the extinction crisis, CITES needs to be modernised and fast.

The only way to justify maintaining legal trade into the future is if CITES is modernised to become a well-resourced 'industry regulator' which insists on accurate, real-time data and transparency. And the businesses that make huge profits from this trade need to contribute to the costs of this monitoring; no more 'free rides'.



Lynn Johnson
Sub Committee
CEO -
Nature Needs More

2019 Wildlife Rescues - Hwange National Park

D.A.R.T. (Dete Animal Rescue Trust)

As the National economy continued to deteriorate, the desperation of rural villagers was evident from the **high levels of wildlife poaching and snaring seen throughout the country**. During 2019, the D.A.R.T. team was called to rescue many snared and injured wild animals in and around Hwange National Park. Some of these rescues are included below.

Zebras made up a large percentage of snared animals rescued by D.A.R.T. in 2019. The first was darted on the distant southern Park boundary. Response time is critical in a wild animal rescue because the injured animal can easily move off and vanish into thick vegetation if we take too long to arrive. Fortunately the Imvelo Safari guides kept this zebra under close watch for the 3hrs it took to drive down to their area and together we were easily able to find, dart and remove the terrible neck snare from the zebra.



A few weeks later D.A.R.T. received a report about another snared zebra closer to home near Dete town. While scanning the group of five zebras to identify the individual with the snare we were surprised to see that there were in fact “two snared zebras” in that small herd... Two animals out of five indicated a high level of poaching in this area!

In October D.A.R.T. was called to the same poaching hot-spot where a second “two-zebras-in-a-small-herd” situation was reported. Finding and darting four snared zebras out of fourteen shows how serious the poaching is in this area.



D.A.R.T. was then called to an unusual situation where an adult elephant bull had got a large plastic PVC connector pipe stuck around its front leg. The elephant was successfully darted, the PVC connector pipe was removed and this grateful elephant made a full recovery.

Giraffe are perhaps the most challenging wild animals to immobilise. In addition to their unique anatomy and enormous size, giraffe have a resistance to the immobilising drugs so it generally requires the assistance of an experienced capture team to pursue the fleeing animal and physically rope it to the ground. To complicate things further, giraffe quickly run out of fresh oxygen and die easily while under anaesthesia. To mitigate this the antidote must



be administered to reverse the immobilising drug as soon as the giraffe is pulled to the ground so it will start to breathe normally again. This means the fully awake giraffe needs to be pinned to the ground by the body weight of three men sitting on its neck while the snare is removed and wound treated. Immobilising a giraffe is not an easy task yet this one was successfully darted and the high-tensile wire snare was soon removed. After the wound was treated and the men alighted from her neck, the giraffe spent a moment regaining her composure before elegantly standing up and trotting off to join her herd.

From the tallest to one of the smallest... A snared vervet monkey was seen in a panic trying to escape a snare around its neck. With every attempt the snare got tighter and the animal was rapidly strangling itself. There was no time to dart so a blanket was thrown over the vervet to prevent it from biting anyone and the wire snare was quickly cut off.

After the blanket was removed, we discovered the vervet had stopped breathing and was clinically dead! Against all odds, but thanks to Tim Scarrott's CPR lectures, chest compressions were initiated. Unbelievably after only 1 minute the vervet started breathing and made a full recovery.

In 2020 poachers remain active and already this year a young male lion that had a terrible wire snare around its neck has been rescued and saved from a painful and protracted death.

D.A.R.T. will continue to rescue the snared and injured wild animals of Hwange but these exercises are costly in terms of wildlife drugs, diesel fuel and vehicle repairs. Unlike domestic animals whose loving owners willingly spend a fortune on the care and welfare of their pet, these wild animals are owned by nobody and rely entirely on the kindness and generous support of the wildlife-loving donor community for their rescue and care.

Every donation helps and will be gratefully appreciated.

Any assistance can be directed through Nicholas.

Paul de Montille.



Recovering vervet monkey

We have been funding D.A.R.T for the past 20 years. A few of our readers are visiting Paul next May to experience first hand the sorts of challenges that he and Hwange's wildlife have on a nearly daily basis. If you think you'd also like to travel along then please let me know, thanks.

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



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