



Vol 35, No. 2

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SAVE AFRICAN RHINO FOUNDATION (inc)

MAY 2022

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

RHINO NUMBERS NOW OVER 1,000

Hello everyone, I'm still in London looking after my 98 year old mother, 22 months now. Fortunately, the vast majority of my SARF routine duties can be done on my laptop and by WhatsApp calls. Annoyingly, white ants have welcomed my unattended office and I have just been advised that beams, doors, ceilings and picture frames have made tasty meals for them. Any roof carpenters out there please?

On a more positive note, the **Zimbabwe National Rhino Meeting** in January, confirmed that the country's total of black and white rhinos had cracked the **1,000** barrier for the first time in 30 years, up from 967 in 2020. **85%** of these are found in the three lowveld conservancies, **Malilangwe, Bubye and Save Valley**. Malilangwe and Bubye are fortunate to be financed by American billionaires, which is why we fund Save Valley. They've struggled for funds for the past year as their traditional backers froze their donations on the back of purported financial mismanagement by their former chairperson. A number of stipulations have now been achieved and we hope to see more cash flowing their way in the near future. It's hardly the rhinos' fault yet they are expected to suffer!

As we approach our landmark **35th anniversary** in mid June, this newsletter is in electronic form and shorter than normal, to be followed in June by a bumper pictorial edition with photos from yesteryear to the present day, to be printed and posted out. Congratulations and thanks to our founding members who were at the travel talk on that June evening in 1987 and who are still members – **Dee Musson, Julie Bain, Maree Wrack, Maureen de la Harpe, Tim Norman, Tim Scarrott** and yours truly.

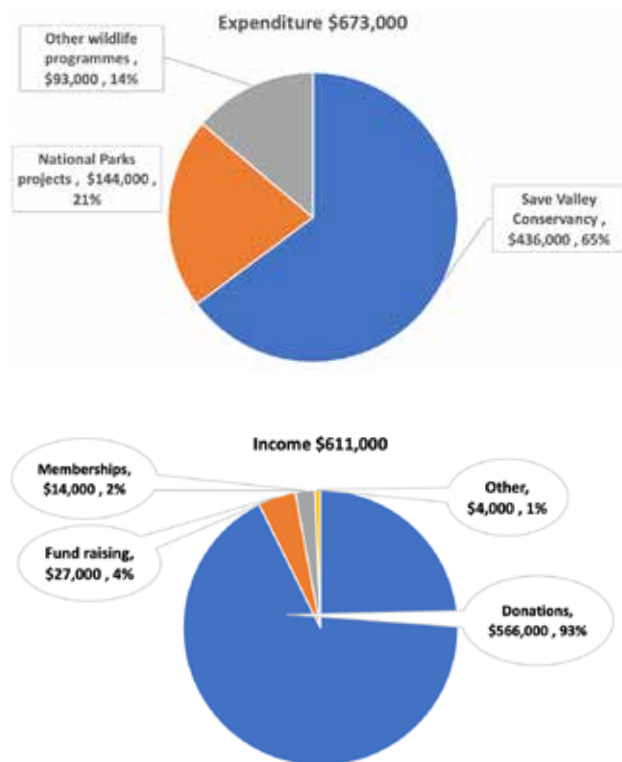
This report will be a synopsis of the main happenings of the past twelve months and a few extra articles on specific projects are also included.

Let's have a look at the financials for our core projects – we had an **income** of **\$611,000**, with 93% coming from more than 450 donations from our 390 members. So it's a big thank you to all our marvelous supporters for their generosity, in particular to the following who made substantial contributions; **Donald, Jill, Karin, Lin Huddleston Charitable Foundation, Nicholas, Nola Criddle Foundation** and **Rob (The Coalition)**.



We raised about **\$27,000** from a few small fundraisers, notably our supper night at Siena's, a whale watching day trip, our AGM, our mango sales and a rhino orphanage film night. Thanks **Evelyn, Nia** and team for helping with these.

On the other side of the ledger we **funded \$673,000** to our main programmes, particularly to Save Valley, 65%



It's no surprise that SVC is our main recipient, as they are not lucky enough to have a rich owner – in fact, they are an amalgam of 17 different land owners on 26 separate titles! So it's not always plain sailing for them. Nevertheless, with a virtually porous fence line (sporadic maintenance and wire theft), a ranger density of about a third of their rich neighbors, a minimal budget and a few other negative aspects to their well being, **it's truly amazing that they still manage to maintain a good positive growth rate for their rhinos.** For this, we acknowledge **Bryce Clemence and his team of 57 excellent rangers.** It's a pleasure to support them with most of the items they request. And we welcome **Harry Idensohn**, an experienced project manager, to the position of CEO, tasked with improving the conservancy's governance and activities, with noticeable improvements.

Near the top of their wish list were 6 new, slightly higher powered motorbikes for the rhino monitoring team, to supplement the 18 we had donated over the past 6 years. Considering they drive on some pretty terrible bush roads, two men per bike, and they do up to 60 kms a day, it's astonishing that some of them are still running at all.



Five years ago we donated five drones, and they've been most helpful over the years, particularly for meat poaching incidents. Bryce has been keeping an eye on technological advances and came up with a much better, and much dearer, model. We've now provided two of them and Bryce and his father, Pete, are using them every day with some terrific results.



We are involved in helping **National Parks in nine different locations** through a number of **local NGOs.** Our main project is **Matobo NP**, home to the most black and white rhinos of any Zimbabwe public park, where we partner with **Verity and Nicky of Dambari Wildlife Trust.** Our main focus is on their camera trap ID programme, plus the annual rhino management operations and repairs to two of our old 4wds, for a total of **\$46,414**, with about \$27,000 going on the dehorning exercise. After many years of nil poaching there have recently been four mortalities. Recently, 29 April, a gang of six poachers was arrested and it's pretty likely that they are something to do with these rhino deaths.



Our other main rhino project is at **Sinamatella**, where we've been active since 1992. Rhino numbers crashed mightily from about 90 in 2003 to a miserable 7 in 2012, and happily, they are now slowly increasing. We support **Stephen and Sue and their son, Nick**, through **Bhejane Trust**, as they

strive to assist National Parks with the management of this wonderful wilderness area. We invested **\$25,456** here in the last year.



Another of our stalwarts, **Paul de Montille**, 22 years now, continues his great work around the edge of Hwange NP. We have made available **\$23,017** to Paul this year, mostly as a result of his own fundraising in conjunction with SARF. You can read more details elsewhere in the newsletter.

Amos Gwema goes from strength to strength as his informer network keeps on feeding useful information to him, with multiple arrests for elephant, pangolin and rhino offences. He has been promoted to **Principal Investigation Officer** for Western Zimbabwe as well as National Wildlife Intelligence coordinator. We've supported his vital work with **\$12,507** of funding to keep his network motivated. His article is a bit further on.

The remaining **\$35,000** that has gone to National Parks projects has been spent in **Kyle, Chipinge, Chivero, Zambezi and Lower Zambezi NPs**, via our colleagues in **AWARE Trust, Zambezi Society and Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust**.

The **\$93,000** for other wildlife programmes was mainly **\$25,000** for **Nature Needs More**, **Lynn Johnson's** project to smarten up **The Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**, by modernising the legal trade system and closing the loopholes. We have been supporting the oldest rhino charity in the world for nearly 30 years, **Save the Rhino Trust Namibia**, **\$23,032**, to keep one of their key staff members in the field, protecting the desert rhino. Congratulations on no poaching deaths in the past year.



Another reasonable grant, **\$12,296**, is to our friends in the **Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy**, also dating back 30 years. Six other smaller projects take up the balance of about \$32,000.

We offered to raise the funding required for the annual Save Valley Conservancy annual rhino ops to **ear notch the 18-30 month old calves**. This was fully funded by SARF, through naming sponsorship by 14 of our members. Our thanks go to the great ground crew of **Nick, Jackie, Josh, Bryce, Lara, Dave, Moses, Mark** and their other helpers. Special mention must be given to the outstanding rhino monitors who tracked and found the targeted rhinos each day.



We acknowledge the **sponsorship fee of \$2,500** made by the following; **Christine Stewart, Evan Litis, Evelyn Wong, Heather Atwell, Jim and Jacky Nissen, Lin Barrie, Lindsay Timms; Lynn Vale, Meineke McDonald, Nelly Newall, Nicholas Duncan, Phil Loader and Will Thomson**.

We'll be funding this year's rhino ops too, **so if you'd like to have one named after whoever/whatever you like**, then please contact me ASAP. There will be about eight available so hop in quickly please, with your expression of interest. And we hope to be able to **visit the project in mid August** and see all this happen in real time – an amazing experience!

The animal world has recently lost two of its champions, **Bev Poor and Dr John Gripper OBE**.



On 31 March, one of our generous and kind members, **Bev Poor**, was farewelled at a ceremony at Fremantle Crematorium. Bev was a longstanding member and great supporter, attended all our functions and was a generous benefactor. She will be sorely missed by many.

She had a stellar business career, was a member of many voluntary service groups, and was a loving mother, grandmother and partner. To Alan and her family, we extend our heartfelt condolences and know that you were all a proud part of her life well lived.

John Gripper owned a veterinary practice in Oxfordshire, and on his retirement, he founded his charity, the **Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust**, in 1989, to protect the falling numbers of black rhinos in Africa. It supports the **Midlands Black Rhino Trust**, which has a wildlife conservancy in Zimbabwe. Here the rhino were free to roam some 150,000 acres of land, their numbers rose to 60 and then land invasions and chrome mining caused a breakdown in law and order and there are now only 8.

Nevertheless, as part of their efforts to educate the public on conservation and sustainability, John, **his beloved Annie and the Trust built the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre nearby**. Through the centre, the charity provides books, school furniture, building materials and even a scholarship project. Their son, **Rob**, has taken the reins in recent years as John's health declined.

John was made an OBE for his services to rhino conservation in 2009. He was an outstanding champion for Zimbabwe's rhinos and wildlife conservation in general and without his drive and determination it's doubtful that the MBRC would still exist. He passed away last October and our condolences to Annie, Rob and their families.



Our **34th Annual General Meeting** was held at the Perth Zoo function centre last August, fairly well attended in person and by zoom. Besides the formalities, we were also treated to most interesting live zoom chats with Verity and Nicky, Bryce and Amos. We'll do something similar again this year, set for **Wednesday 27 July**. **Your elected committee is; President – Nicholas Duncan; Vice President – Nia Carras; Secretary – Evan Litis; Treasurer – Heather Atwell; committee members – Evelyn Wong, Julie Bain, Cameron Murray, Mark Beamish and Steve Harrison.**

Thank you everyone for making yourselves available and for all that you do for the rhinos. We welcome Julie to her position as replacement for Mike who has stepped aside to the sub committee after many years of dedicated service, where he joins **Lynn Johnson, Greg Nicolson, Luke Basson; Oliver Basson and Tim Scarrott.**

Thank you to Nia and Cameron who nominated me for an **Order of Australia Award**. I was so proud and honoured to receive it in this year's **Australia Day** awards list, and recently received it at Australia House, London, from the outgoing **High Commissioner, the Honourable George Brandis.**

We thank and congratulate **Cameron Murray for his 10 hour non stop table tennis** event to raise just over **\$5,000 for World Games For Wildlife** – what an effort, thanks and well done. This was followed a few months later by twins **Luke and Oliver Basson** and two friends, taking on the challenging **19km Rottnest Channel Team Swim**. They completed in just over six hours, a wonderful effort, and raised more than **\$10,000** for WGFV, a fantastic effort. Thanks so much to you all and your backup team. 2023, here they come!



It's now time to kindly accept our request for you to renew your membership to our wonderful organisation, please? And if possible, please add a donation at the same time as that's currently our main source of income for rhino conservation. Thank you.

I hope you're enjoying our news so far and there's now a few specific articles with a bit more detail on the work that you help us to fund. Please enjoy.

Nicholas Duncan | President



**THANK YOU
PICASSO PRINT**

After more than 15 years of most generous printing and graphic design sponsorship from Picasso Print and Design, our friends Iain, Gemma, Cobey and Bruce, are no longer able to support us as before. Thank you so much for all your past support, the rhinos have been very lucky. We wish you continued success. Cheers!

35th AGM



Notice is hereby given that the Thirty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Save African Rhino Foundation (Inc) will be held on Wednesday 27 July at 6.30 pm, in the Education Centre at the Perth Zoo, Labouchere Road, South Perth

AGENDA

1. Acceptance of the minutes from the Thirty-fourth Annual General Meeting held on 18 August 2021
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Executive Committee
5. Any other business

At the completion of the formal part of the meeting, we will be joined, by Zoom, by three of our VIP colleagues in Zimbabwe for a general update and Q&A.

Nomination forms for positions on the Executive, together with proxy forms, are available by emailing nicholas@savefoundation.org.au and nominations should be lodged at 229 Oxford Street, Leederville WA 6007, or by email, by 6.30 pm on 22 July 2022. Please feel free to bring your family, friends and acquaintances along.

SAVE VALLEY CONSERVANCY ANTI-POACHING SUMMARY REPORT 2021

2021 started out tough! After an extended rainy season, the bush was very thick well into the middle of the year. This made vehicle access difficult, and it presented challenges for the K9s to work in the long grass. The loss of Dolice & calf (black rhino female and calf) on Sango in March had us under some pressure from a gang comprised of an ex scout and a notorious gunner. The team worked tirelessly until success came in July, when the aforementioned poachers were tracked and shot dead by the K9 unit and Parks. That success has had a significant impact, with no rhino related incursions recorded since. It also positively impacted the meat-poaching on the west for a prolonged period.

Meat poaching was high in 2021, in the same traditional areas for the north and south. Although we contributed to its reduction and deterrent, we were unable to have the same impact that we had in 2020, due to having been forced to focus our efforts more on rhino security in the first half of the season. As the rhino poaching threat has been reduced we have been able to focus more time on the anti-meat-poaching as this serves as good training to keep our team sharp. We also intend to bring in a good quality thermal drone to assist in this area, specifically for the night work. We expect this to have a significant impact.



We lost 5 rhinos in 2021, 3 poached (Dolice & calf #2272 on Sango and Jacs #2245 on Sango) and 2 natural (Nkosi #1436 on Sango and Faro #1060 on Mapari).

They were replaced by 14 new calves, 10 black rhino and 4 whites. This gives an overall growth rate of 5.6%, an acceptable rate.

The Zimbabwe national rhino herd of both black and white rhino has passed the **1,000 mark** for the first time in 30 years. This is largely credited to the larger populations in the country, namely **Save Valley, Bubyee and Malilangwe**. We are proud for SVC to have contributed a significant

number to the national herd in the past 10 years despite the immense challenges.

We are also very happy to have concluded the rhino audit conducted by **African Rhino Specialist Group (ARSG) and IUCN**. The black rhino individuals verified fell within a 5% variance and all the white rhino individuals were confirmed. We are extremely proud of this achievement given how challenging the year 2021 was and how strict a process we had to comply with in the audit process. The audit period was closed on the 27 November and by the year end we were able to confirm another 5 black rhino which were not verified during the auditing period.



Tremendous credit goes to our top-notch ranger team for pulling through another difficult year. The amount of self-sacrifice, and their willingness to remain dedicated and committed when under pressure, is commendable. They also did a phenomenal job of locating and keeping track of the 14 rhino that needed ear-notching this year and more importantly they delivered the needed rhino in record time for the vet unit to process during the rhino ops period (14 out of 15 rhinos in 8 operational days).

We have 37 anti poaching rangers, 12 K9 handlers and 7 Rhino Force monitors, for a total of 56 operational rangers (with 1/3 on time off at any time, it leaves 38 on the ground all the time). This is about 30% of the ranger density of the other large rhino conservancies!



Huge credit and thanks goes to Nicholas Duncan and SARF for their support to our rangers this year, they have stood by us through thick and thin. Also, for completely funding this year's rhino ops.

Our accomplishments for the year included 5 rhino poachers arrested in Gunundwi and Humani; 2 rhino poachers shot dead (in Savuli entering Sango); 4 rhinos to Gonarezhou, a great accomplishment for SVC; 14 rhinos notched and

named in 8 operational days and a successful rhino audit.

We recruited 9 new rangers, 7 going in to bolster the rhino monitoring effort and 2 to the K9 team- thanks to ND!



The aircraft has contributed significantly as a psychological tool, on follow-ups, with auditing and rhino operations- thanks to RF.

Bryce Clemence received the top game ranger for Africa for 2021 and a commendation for top field ranger by GRAA, went to **Givemore Baku**.

We are in great need of an enhanced radio communications system for our unit and the whole conservancy. The digital/ analog system would be best as it would be more secure and would allow the tracking and management of scout patrol efforts, as well as asset management.

In conclusion, we are proud to be on track with our steady rhino growth; we are happy to be working with Harry, our CEO, a significant change in leadership and teamwork and we are trusting to help build the donor support that's needed for sustainability.

Our special thanks go to the donors for their support, and especially SARF (Nicholas Duncan) for sticking with us through a tough year; to the SVC members for their collaborative support on the ground; to the SVC CEO and admin team for their work and support and to Zimparks and MMFU for their operational support, collaboration, and indemnity.

Moses Mutemeri | Ecologist



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN COVID PANDEMIC ERA

By Amos Gwema

Winner of 2020 Tusk Africa Ranger of The Year Award

Wildlife conservation was difficult in the Covid-19 pandemic era. Initially it was quiet since most people were staying indoors and there was a feeling that if you move out of your house you may be affected by the Covid virus. However, gradually people adjusted and adapted, leading to subsistence poaching. Subsistence poaching was most rampant during the Covid era.

The economic hardships incentivized subsistence poaching for it was a matter of survival and hunger. If you remain indoors you will die of hunger so lack of patrols gave the poachers the chance to snare animals for bush meat and the market was ready, since there were restrictions on business operating hours. The most cunning poachers would move around knocking on the doors selling and delivering the bush meat.

There was a decrease in elephant poaching and rhino poaching. The poachers could not move the ivory or rhino horn during the early start of the pandemic. However, as the restrictions were eased, elephant poaching and rhino poaching was witnessed. Resultantly, **Matopos has so far lost four rhinos** since the beginning of the year.

Of the four 3 had the horns removed while horns were recovered on one carcass.

On a positive note elephant poaching is still low even though there are some signs elephant poachers are regrouping.

All rhino poaching in Matopos took place outside the Park which shows that the poachers are afraid to enter the Park but wait for the rhinos which stray outside. This now requires community involvement in conservation because the community is the first line of defence for effective wildlife products in the community. **The communities around Matopos are encouraged to report the presence of suspicious characters within their communities and this will greatly assist.**

Save African Rhino Foundation used to make donations of medical supplies in Hwange at St Patrick's Hospital and also was donating at Cinderella old people's home. The foundation was also donating school books.

I propose if the similar donations could be done around Matopos if resources permit this will greatly assist in the community helping with vital information about suspicious people within their communities. I realise that all of these donated goods came from Perth with passenger luggage and look forward to these trips resuming with more help for the communities.

The donations can be complemented by the community awareness team I work with through the TUSK award programme. The community can make a great difference if involved in conservation.

I'm the Principal Investigations Officer and am now in charge of Matebeleland North, Bulawayo, Matebeleland South and Midlands Provinces. At National level I am responsible for Wildlife intelligence. I was promoted and am currently based in Bulawayo and this means more travelling. Most of the time I don't stay in Bulawayo but will be moving around to correct the situations.

This means more resources are required, for example, fuel, unlike when I was responsible for Hwange area only which is now a quarter of my area of responsibility.

The current challenge at hand is to apprehend the culprits responsible for rhino poaching in Matopos and this should be brought to an end urgently otherwise it will degenerate into chaos. I am on track with my team to apprehend the culprits.

I would like to thank Save African Rhino Foundation for assisting me to attend the recent TUSK symposium in Kenya. It was an eye opener and it was good for networking. I eventually received my 2020 award.

I would like to advise that TUSK invited me to the UK in November 2022 and the trip should be fully funded.



MEDAL OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA (OAM)



On 26 January 2022 we were delighted to announce that our **President Nicholas Duncan** was awarded the **Medal of the Order of Australia** in the Australia Day 2022 Honours List for services to animal welfare.

Nicholas has worked tirelessly over the past almost 35 years to keep rhinos protected and safe and below are some of his achievements in the rhino world.

He was the co-founder of SARF in mid 1987, making it the world's second oldest rhino dedicated conservation charity.

Nicholas has been pro bono President since 1989 and is the longest serving rhino conservation fundraiser in the world.

Using his passion, initiative and drive Nicholas has been instrumental in raising more than ten million dollars for our rhino projects as well as donating over three million dollars from his own resources.

Nicholas has also attracted our great patrons starting with the late Lord McAlpine, then David Gower, Nick Price, the late Bryce Courtenay, Kim Hughes and David Pocock.

He has built strong relationships with key people in the fields of rhino conservation, government and tourism making SARF a highly recognized NGO on the ground.

As a result of all of the above, we are a major donor to Zimbabwe rhino conservation, where numbers have been steadily rising for the past ten years.

Sincere congratulations Nicholas on all that you have inspired our team to achieve and all you have done for the rhino world. We look forward to working with Nicholas for many years to come!

Nia Carras | Vice President

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Two of our really loyal and concerned members, **Lynn Vale and Will Thomson**, who've been on countless visits to **Save Valley Conservancy** and each named three rhinos so far, donated some prize money for outstanding ranger work, and SARF added to it. Recently, their anti poaching manager, **Bryce Clemence**, presented the six winners with their cash prizes, as follows;

Anyway Zivimi: Outstanding rhino work

Herbert Matekwe: Most improved ranger

Simon Maretso: Most consistent ranger

Emmanuel Mazuru: Outstanding rhino work

Givemore Bako: Outstanding leadership

Charles Mubhika: Most consistent ranger (south) not pictured here.

Congratulations to all the winners and thanks again to Lynn and Will for their initiative in sponsoring this series of awards.



CASH FOR CANS AND BOTTLES

C10283898



It's worth a reminder with regard to the Containers for Change program that was introduced in Western Australia last year. **This is a great opportunity for everyone of all ages to chip in and help the cause.** The old saying of many hands make light work could never be truer and while the proceeds are helping our beloved rhino, you're also helping the environment by seeing as many eligible containers recycled as possible.

The following is a message from Tim Scarrott, an inaugural SARF member, who has been the cornerstone of our initial efforts to see this become a meaningful fundraising program for SARF.

Dear Members,

Just a little note to urge our members to collect /recycle cans/bottles/ cartons –I believe we could more than double this year's total if we ALL gave it a "go"? (\$11,000 + has been raised via our **SARF Donor No C10283898** since this scheme began 15 months ago). **All amounts are valuable as they ALL ADD UP !**

I have been doing this and \$6,000+ has gone into the coffers – a simple formula, regular walks and relatively small weekly pickups from industry and offices near my home in Neerabup, together with the big player **Enex in the city**, who have made a STIRLING effort. I collect between 6-16 bags per week from them on the Terrace, and they really do a marvellous job separating/emptying/bagging and de-topping the containers (the tops are also recyclable for reuse in the prosthetic limb industry). Many thanks to **Jennifer and staff** for their support (approx. two thirds of the \$6,000) Plus my occasional minesite work sometimes has produced some good bagfuls also !!

If people would like to call 0403 115 331 or email me tim.scarrott@gmail.com. I am happy to explain in more detail and then we can liaise every couple of months, when I will email all on the list to update on how much raised and where the \$s are spent in Zim to help the rhinos and their brave protectors. As you all know \$A5 goes a long way for our friends there.

Please consider this everyone (a bin in the shed is all that is required to start!) – 1 hour a week from lots of you and we'll see the tally rise considerably?

Thanks for reading and keep well everyone.

Tim Scarrott



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you for being a current member of SARF. We hope that you will consider renewing your membership for another year.

This year we have a new interactive membership form that will hopefully make the process much easier for you. The form can all be filled out and returned via email without printing it out. However, you are more than welcome to print it and fill it out by hand and return it via email or post.

We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions on this new form and anything else you might like to see from us in the year ahead. Please email us on save@savefoundation.org.au.



A PERMANENT ANTI-POACHING BASE FOR DART

After years of searching, the DART Team recently received permission to set up a permanent anti-poaching base camp on a piece of wildlife land bordering the Hwange National Park. This new anti-poaching facility will enable the DART Anti-poaching Team to patrol a vast 30km stretch of previously unprotected Park Boundary north of Dete.

Located outside the National Park, the most important feature in this area is a beautiful rain-water dam that holds the only reliable water for many kilometres in an otherwise harsh and parched landscape.



An important water source of this size should provide relief for many thirsty wild animals from the National Park, especially during the long and hot dry season.

Unfortunately years of neglect and uncontrolled poaching had decimated the populations of resident wildlife and new snares were constantly being set by poachers to target any desperate or vulnerable wild animal from the Park that follows one of the predictable game trails to drink from the dam.



The need for building a permanent Anti-poaching base camp and regular snare removal patrols in this area became apparent as soon as the DART Team first started patrolling this 30km long stretch of National Park Boundary back in 2020. On the very first patrol we began finding wire snares everywhere!!

On a subsequent patrol we found a record haul of 24x snares in less than 2 hours and the Team also found the snared carcass of a duiker that the poachers had failed to retrieve it and it had subsequently become a free meal for

a leopard that had started feeding on the snared carcass.



Developing the NEW DART Anti-poaching Base

With this in mind, the DART Team welcomed the opportunity to build a permanent anti-poaching base and immediately set about drilling a borehole, erecting a solar-powered borehole pump and building a fully equipped base to feed and accommodate both our anti-poaching team and the Park Rangers working with DART in combined patrols to control the rampant poaching in this area.



The DART Women's Anti-poaching Team

The next DART objective in 2022 was to set-up a long-awaited, all-women anti-poaching team.



The DART selection course attracted 62 hopeful candidates who took part in a series of six physical, written and bush awareness tests.



The top 4x candidates with the highest scores were recruited and now form an integral part of DART's combined men and women anti-poaching team.



The DART Team would like to thank the many kind SARF members who helped to make these developments possible and have been donors and supporters of our DART wildlife rescue and anti-poaching activities in Hwange over the years. This never-ending wildlife protection work is expensive and the DART Team will gratefully welcome any additional support we receive from the kind SARF members in 2022 and beyond.

Thank you, Paul de Montille

NEW DRONES FOR THE ATS TEAM

In 2017 SARF donated **5 DJI Mavic Pro Drones to the ATS Team in the Save Valley Conservancy**. These drones have been useful over the years, being employed in reaction to poacher incursions. They did however have their limitations, including their flight time, zoom and picture quality. The main element of their success was the mental aspect, in that the poachers knew that the team had them, as opposed to what they could be employed to do. Therefore, when ATS queried whether SARF could supply some new drones, we investigated the specifications of the latest versions and realised they would be a game changer

As is the case with most technology, **5 years of technological advancement has turned what was a semi-useful, if not somewhat gimmicky tool, into an essential component of the team's equipment in both antipoaching and rhino monitoring**.



Some of the biggest improvements in the drone's technology include its **battery life (increasing from 27 minutes to 45 minutes)**; transmission range (increasing from less than 5 km to a massive 15km); and the hugely advanced camera, which allows for massive improvements in low light photography, capture of up to 20mp images and a **huge 7x optical zoom and 28x digital zoom** (the old version had no optical zoom whatsoever.)

The team at ATS have now had them for several weeks and the ability to monitor the rhino from a safe distance, whilst capturing clear and dated identification photos of each rhino's ear notch has been helpful beyond their wildest dreams. The drone's use will mean rangers can remain safe when an animal is in a dangerous area or injured, while the rhino is protected as they will not be being disturbed as frequently. The team have also been impressed at how quiet the drone was, as the animals would barely hear it.



The ATS team has recently had an amazing win from the use of the new drones. The photo of the rhino with the yellow ear tag is of a young cow named Generous. She was 'turning orange' on the monitoring colour code system, meaning she hadn't been seen for 8 months, and therefore there was concern for her safety.

Within the first few weeks of using the drones the ATS team have been able to confirm her ID using the drone, and ensure she is safe and healthy!

Here is what Bryce from ATS had to say recently **"The new Mavic 3 drones that SARF donated to us recently have been an absolute game changer! Because of the increased flight time and the much improved camera zoom, we are now able to successfully identify rhino without disturbing them. This is contributing significantly to our rhino monitoring and auditing efforts. We are also expecting an increase in anti-poaching wins with this upgraded drone. Thanks to SARF for this fantastic upgrade! Will keep you posted."**

We look forward to hearing about how effective they can be employed in the antipoaching arena as well.

This article would not be complete without reference to **Camera Electronic**, who have stores both in Perth and online, and who kindly assisted us with the purchase of the drones given the good use they would be put to. **We thank them very much for their kind contribution.**

Please enjoy the first few snaps from the drones and we hope to get some more on our social media in the coming months.

Evan Litis



FREESTYLE RHINOS

The image of rhinos swimming is not one that would immediately spring to mind for many. Certainly in the famous project to translocate black rhino away from the flooding of Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba in the 50s there was some potential but in reality it's a sight not often seen. However, in late February there were many strokes taken to partially make it a reality.

25 February saw the annual swimming of the **Rottnest Channel Swim** with teams, duos and individuals tackling the 19.7km open water swim from **Cottesloe to Rottnest**. This year an intrepid band of four brave souls tackled the event under the team banner of **Rotto for Rhinos**. Swimming in relay fashion from the support boat flying a SARF banner the team of **Oliver, Luke, Lucy and Thomas** reached the finish line in a little over 6 hours. This was an amazing effort. While conditions were reasonable at the start line it wasn't long before a pretty fierce southerly had whipped the white caps up on the channel and while sea sickness became an issue on board, the team stuck to their guns to reach the white sands of Thompsons Bay.



While the sense of personal achievement was enormous for the four swimmers the reward for their efforts did not stop there. In the weeks leading up the event the team registered themselves with the **World Games for Wildlife** platform and ran an enormously successful fundraising drive on the back of their commitment and dedication. In all they raised a whopping **\$10 298**, which was fantastic.

In addition to our gratitude to the Rotto for Rhinos team we would also like to thank **Tim Shervington** who at very short notice stepped up and offered his services to skipper his boat across to Rotto for the team to swim from. This was a very generous contribution in time and fuel and in light of the

conditions meant a very rough trip home at the end of the day. Thanks Tim for your support!

The team organised their fundraising through World Games for Wildlife (WGFW) of which we are a beneficiary. Word of mouth is our most valuable tool for spreading the word about World Games For Wildlife 2022. If you know someone training for an event, a group who may be interested in supporting conservation or a young relative looking for a challenge, we would love your word of recommendation for WGFW. You can help by just:

- Verbally recommending World Games for Wildlife to family or friends
- Liking our Event on Facebook or Instagram and sharing the occasional post

