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PRECIOUS CONSIGNMENT



TRANSWAAL NATURE CONSERVATION

A roan antelope is released into the Nylsvley Nature Reserve.

It's one of the greatest moments in the history of conservation in the Transvaal.

That's how Dr. S. S. du Plessis, Transvaal Director of Nature Conservation, described the release of 10 roan antelope in the Nylsvley Nature Reserve recently.

The roan antelope is not only one of the biggest and most impressive antelope species in South Africa, but it is also one of the rarest. In the Kruger National Park anthrax is a threat to the continued existence of this magnificent antelope, and it has to be annually immunized against this dreaded disease.

The only other noteworthy population of roan occurs in the Percy Fyfe Nature Reserve, near Potgietersrus. Here their numbers have more than doubled in the last three years to reach a total of 79 animals. Despite its small area — only 2 000 ha — Percy Fyfe now has a fifth of the number of roan found in the much larger Kruger Park.

Thanks to the exceptional breeding success of the roan in Percy Fyfe, the Transvaal Division of Nature Conservation is now able to establish new breeding herds in disease-free areas — and Nylsvley received the first precious consignment.

BRITAIN

SCRAMBLE FOR THE LAST RHINO HORN

Victoria Brittain

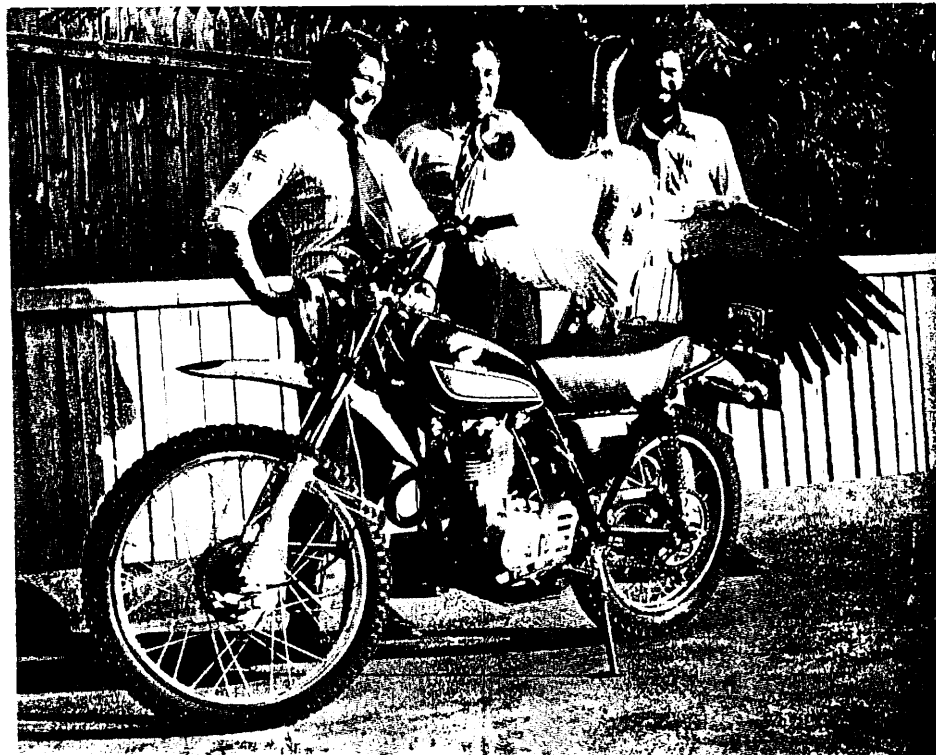
A Canadian aid programme, the Kenya Rangeland Ecological Monitoring Unit (KREMU), has just completed its first aerial count of selected species of animals. It says there are 60 000 elephants in Kenya, compared with a count of 167 000 made by a game biologist in 1973.

The loss of 100 000 elephants in five years correlates closely with World Wildlife Fund figures obtained from the sales of raw ivory recorded in customs and excise figures in various countries. In 1976, 280 tons, or the tusks of 23 000 elephants, were sold as raw ivory from Kenya, according to the Fund in Kenya.

The rhino, with its aphrodisiac horn, is much nearer extinction than the elephant. KREMU counted only 1 800 rhinos in Kenya, compared with 11 500 in 1963. Since then 52 800 lbs of rhino horn from 11 000 rhinos have been exported from Kenya, according to customs records.

Editor's note: Rhino horn currently fetches four times as much per ounce as an ounce of gold.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust is affiliated to the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa. It is research-oriented raising most of its funds through the sale of limited edition prints of wildlife paintings by well-known local artists. It is an independent body governed by a Board of Trustees, with a Board of Scientific Advisors. On these pages the Trust regularly reports on its projects, old and new.



A bush bike for vulture research — and an applauding wing stretch from Timothy Vulcha. Dr. John Ledger (left) and Russell Friedman (right) accept the keys for the bike from Ian McCall, a trustee of the Endangered Wildlife Trust.

This is the second bushbike the Trust has provided

for research projects to facilitate greater mobility in areas that are often inaccessible to conventional four-wheel drive vehicles. Bikes are also more economical. The Vulture Study Group plans to use their scrambler in various areas for the current programme of monitoring the rare Cape Vulture in southern Africa.