

## AN EVENING WITH GREG RASSMUSSEN AND THE AFRICAN PAINTED DOG

On Thursday 6 November, 68 members from the SAVE FOUNDATION with the Docent Association of the Perth Zoo enjoyed a very entertaining and informative evening with Greg Rassmussen.

Greg is the Director of the Painted Dog Research Project, a self-funded project that focuses on the study and conservation of the species, and education and awareness of the plight of the Painted Dog.

The existence of the Painted Dog, previously known as the African Wild Dog, and Cape Hunting Dog, like many other wild creatures, is severely threatened by farmers, motor vehicles and encroachment etc. Part of Greg's study in fact showed that plastic bags, when ingested, were the greatest killers of domestic cattle, not Painted Dog. The Painted Dog is responsible for only a very small number of cattle deaths.

Translocation programmes are successfully placing these threatened carnivor in areas less effected by civilisation.

Some wonderful slides supported Greg's talk. These showed the strong social aspect of their lives (they never fight each other) and the great variety of the markings of their coats created by black, gold, white and tan. These markings are being computerised and used to identify individuals.

A fund raising sale was conducted at the end of the talk, offering Painted Dog T-Shirts, children's books, beautiful limited edition prints, etc.

The evening was a great success all round and raised \$1,400. Part of this was used to purchase camping swags and small camp cookers for Greg and his team to make their lives a little more comfortable

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when they return to the bush, and the balance went towards Landrover repairs.

We thank British Airways for their generosity in providing airfares allowing Greg to come to Australia and the SAVE FOUNDATION and Docent members for making the evening a success.

*Ken McDonald*

## PLIGHT OF THE RHINOS

To most, the name 'Memphis' would be associated with the USA and Tennessee.

To 90 SAVE FOUNDATION members and friends who attended our last meeting held at the Perth Zoo on 17 March, it must surely bring to mind a very large white rhino that we were fortunate enough to visit at close quarters.

In small groups, guided by the Zoo's Docents, who very generously donated their time and expertise, we were led to the enclosure of the zoo's resident white rhino named 'Memphis'. Not just to look, but also close enough to touch as can be seen from the close-up photo.

Memphis arrived at the Perth Zoo in 1990 from, of all places, the Memphis Zoo in the USA, so the connection was there. Unfortunately, he has been living the life of a recluse ever since.

During a very interesting and informative talk given by Colin Wallbank immediately following the tour, we were told this could change. Colin is the zoo's Curator of carnivores and hooved animals and who also has Memphis under his umbrella.

The plan is to acquire two female white rhinos late this year or early next year to form part of a major breeding programme.

Question time satisfied the curiosity of most, except noticeably one very young lady who wanted to know it all!

The film that followed, "Flight of the Rhinos", told a dramatic story of the

decimation of the rhino by poaching, the anti poaching teams and their unenviable task sometimes ending in the death of the poachers, and the final decision to dart and capture the remaining rhinos in the wild (in this one very vulnerable area) and relocate them in Australia. An incredible task by some very dedicated people. A film that can be watched many times -the impact is tremendous.

Actually we nearly didn't see the film at all. Some very slick footwork by Kevin Carter, President of the Docents, to quickly find the VCR technician and get the equipment up and running, saved much embarrassment.

Your President, Nicholas Duncan, then gave us, as only he can, a very detailed rhino update.

The two most exciting facts to report

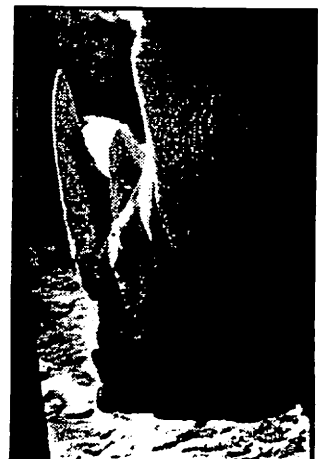
1. There has been no recorded poaching in Zimbabwe since March 1994, and
2. Numbers have increased to 340 due to births of calves in many of the I.P.Zs and conservancies.

About \$1,100 was raised from the sale of various items, together with some donations, and the supper was a pleasant way to end the evening.

It was wonderful to see so many members bring their young families and show an active interest in the SAVE FOUNDATION. If this is what it takes, we will certainly have meetings along the same lines in future.

Ideas or input from members would be most welcome.

*Ken McDonald*



*Memphis - close enough?*