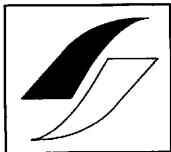
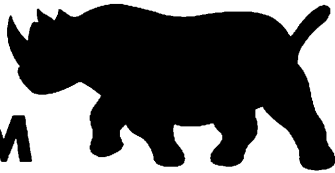


**RHINO
MUSEUM**



From the
REF DESK



**Dr Kees Rookmaaker joins the
Foundation**

The Foundation is pleased to welcome Dutch historian and biologist, Dr Kees Rookmaaker, as Curator of the Rhinoceros and Cultural History Museums, at the Clive Walker

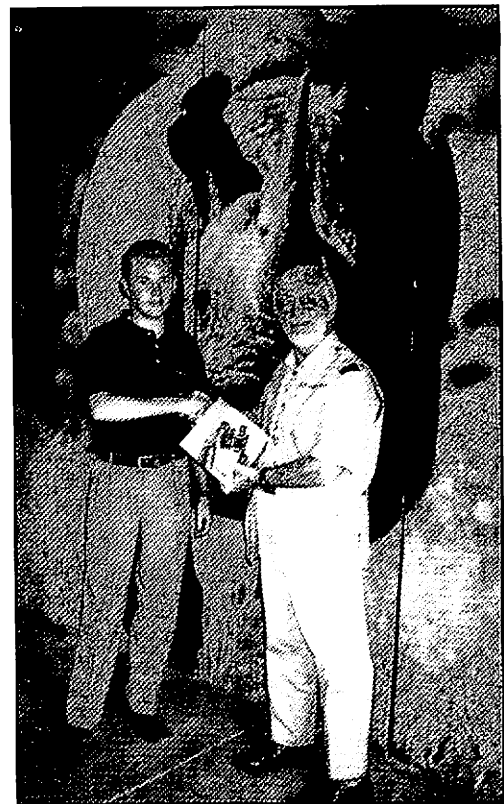
Centre in the Waterberg Mountains of the Northern Province. Dr Rookmaaker will be mainly responsible for control of the rhinoceros bibliography database and the security and record keeping of all natural history material relating to the Waterberg Mountains.

The Centre, under the overall supervision of Chairman, Clive Walker, is progressing remarkably well and promises to be one of the most exciting projects undertaken to date. With increasing tourism to the area, it will double up as a Tourist Information Centre and furthermore, serve as the headquarters for the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve. With the important need for environmental education, the Centre is strategically placed for accessibility, and will be able to cater to the youth and teachers of the entire region.

A further point of interest is that, through the generous support of the British High Commission, a replica of a Pedi homestead has been established within the grounds of the Centre, which will exhibit certain Pedi lifestyles.

*Watch this space for the
official opening date.....*

***Bushnell* assists Masebe Game Reserve Project**



During September 1997, Mr Michael van Harmelen of Bushnell Sports Optics, generously donated six pairs of field binoculars to Chairman Clive Walker, for use in the field, by gameguards at Masebe Game Reserve.

The Rhino & Elephant Foundation, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, Northern Province, hopes to see the reintroduction of white rhinoceros to this tribal reserve, before the end of the year.

IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

The AfESG, a subgroup of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, meets every one and a half years. This year the meeting took place in a West African country. Important issues concerning the African elephant at a continental level were discussed.

The long-term survival of the African elephant is cause for great concern, although some populations, namely in Southern Africa, have held their numbers and even increased. In most range states in East, Central and West Africa the habitat is declining due to human expansion and resulting increase in land use. The proportion of protected areas within the total elephant range is estimated at less than 20%. Two important issues have emerged. The first is the impact on the habitat caused by increasing elephant densities within the protected areas. The second has to do with the increasing competition between humans and elephants outside of protected areas, for resources such as water and space. In numerous cases elephants have turned to crop raiding, which in some instances can lead to death of humans and elephants.

Trade in ivory has always had a major impact on elephant populations. In 1989, the Parties to CITES agreed to place the African elephant on Appendix I, thereby banning all international trade in elephant products. At the last Conference of the Parties in Harare last year, three populations, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, were placed onto Appendix II, allowing limited, tightly controlled trade in ivory for these three countries. Although the 1989 ban had by no means put an end to the illegal ivory trade, the large-scale massacres of elephants during the mid-eighties were largely reduced. There is no doubt cause for concern that the opening up, of only limited trade, within some countries could bring about an increase in poaching of elephants. In order to try and evaluate whether the CITES decision in 1997 has a negative impact on elephants in other range states, CITES, together with TRAFFIC, are setting up a monitoring system. To this end the technical expertise of the AfESG was solicited. *Marion Garai*

Technology tracks jumbo contraception

In a recent news release, local notebook specialist, Digitec, announced its intention to participate in a drive to end the culling of African elephants through the concept of mobile computing.

The elephant project, one of three that focuses on the reproduction of endangered and rare wild species, is spearheaded by Professor Henk Bertschinger, a veterinary scientist from the University of Pretoria's Onderstepoort Faculty of Veterinary Science.

The project is planned in three phases. The first two phases, already completed, aimed to prove that a non-hormonal vaccine did not interfere with the natural sex cycle of the cow. It also established the dose needed to block fertilisation.

The third phase, involved 19 elephants from the treatment and control groups being examined for pregnancy. The research team is evaluating results. Due to the 22-month gestation period for African elephants, this phase is not due for completion until 2001.

Elephant Pill successful

SA National Parks scientists have released preliminary results of new elephant contraception tests which show a 100% success rate in jumbo cows in Kruger National Park.

Experiments with a group of 66 elephant cows showed a preliminary 100% success rate with the hormonal oestrogen implant method and a 44% success rate with the porcine zona pellucida (PZP) vaccine.

Dr Hall-Martin acknowledged that cows did attract "increased bull activity" for two to three months after receiving the hormonal implants. However, media reports of the "alleged harassment" of hormone-implanted cows by bulls seeking to mate with them were "greatly exaggerated and sensationalised". *Natal Mercury, 11 March 1998*

News Flash

On 4 November 1997, the **European Union (EU)** agreed to relax a ban on imports of live elephants, ivory and other elephant products from selected southern African nations. Under the EU regulation, travellers from Zimbabwe can bring ivory and elephant skin souvenirs into the EU on condition they do not try to sell them in the 15-nation union. Under similar conditions, hunters will be able to import elephant trophies from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. The rules, which must be formally approved by the 15 EU governments, will allow live elephants from the three African nations to be shipped to zoos and other "appropriate and acceptable" destinations within the union. **Business Day, 5 November 1997**



Mozambican Elephant Study

A study on elephant movements in southern Mozambique was launched in February this year with the aid of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation. The research aims to study elephant movements and distribution in the Maputo Elephant Reserve and the proposed Trans Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) along the Futi River.

The TFCA project proposes the joining of the Tembe National Park and the Maputo Elephant Reserve, which will increase the conservation area for the elephants. The movements of the elephants, however, need to be researched in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the project. For example, it has been speculated that the female herds in the Maputo Elephant Reserve move south along the Futi River to meet bulls in the Tembe Park.



The study involved the capture of five elephants, of which four are females and one male. Each animal received a collar with a satellite and VHF receiver, enabling the researchers to track their movements on a daily basis. The four designated females are from different herds, in order for the researchers to collect and interpret data on the female herd movements compared to the movements of a solitary male.

During the capture operation, large herds were observed & totalling approximately 200 elephants. One herd comprised 96 animals and it was remarkable to note the high number of calves in the herds & an indication that the elephant population is increasing.

A vegetation study, linking elephant distribution to vegetation preferences, forms part of the study.

Research on the diet choice of the elephants and crop damage in the region has previously been conducted.

The current research on elephant movements will hopefully assist the Wildlife Department to solve the conflict between authorities and local communities, which stems from elephants being poached and the damage they cause in the agricultural field alongside the Futi River. Previous attempts to study the movements of the elephants failed when after months of research, a satellite elephant and two other elephants were poached.

The research, coordinated by the Biology Department of the Eduardo Mondlane University and the Wildlife Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, also includes the training of students. Fred de Boer, Biology Department, Eduardo Mondlane University

For more information, contact Fred at tel: 258-1-490009 or e-mail him at fred@fredpat.uem.mz

News Flash

Some more news on elephant movements.....

Out There magazine, March 1998 issue, published the following insert, written by Duncan Guy:

Among the game species that wander through Mt Kenya's bamboo tunnels are a threatened population of around 80 elephant that traditionally move on trails between the forested slopes of the mountain, the Aberdare range and the plains between. Their urge to travel to fresh areas of vegetation and diet, clashes with the presence of subsistence farms whose owners cannot risk crop losses to jumbos on the move.

There are National Park plans to have the herd confined to a protected area, but the Elephant Walk lobby considers this unsustainable because they would perish through the destruction of their dwindling food supply. They are urging farmers to allow the herd to walk through a corridor that includes the Aberdare National Park, Sangare Ranch, the Thego and Nyeri forests and the Mount Kenya National Park.

Elephant Watch is a group of committed individuals who sleep, live and walk with the elephants all day, all night, all year. They study their movements, habitats and behaviour, ultimately preventing them from inflicting damage on local farms, and encouraging subsistence farmers to become involved in the corridor idea. Commercial farmers, whose much larger ranches also carry sustainable herds of game, tend to be in favour of the corridor.

Time to say Thank You



The Foundation would like to extend its sincere appreciation to the following supporters:

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A special thanks to SAFREN for their large donation
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Guillemot Business Forms, in lieu of clients' Christmas gifts in 1997, decided to make considerable donations to charities of their choice. The Board of Trustees would like to sincerely thank this company for their generous donation of R10 000 to the Foundation.

Donations from individuals:

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The Foundation would like to thank Engen for their donation towards the acquisition of computer equipment for the Museum Centre.

Bequests/Legacies/Estates

Please remember the possibility of including the Foundation in your estate plans.

For further details, please write to:

The Executive Officer
Rhino & Elephant Foundation
P O Box 381
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Do not forget to visit REF's exciting Internet site at <http://www.ref.org.za> and e-mail us your comments at school@wildernesstrust.org.za.

We would like to thank Wildnet Africa (Pty) Ltd for their support of the Foundation by developing and maintaining our site on the Internet.

Last year in October, Wildnet Africa launched the most comprehensive collection of wildlife information yet seen on the World Wide Web & 8 000 pages covering 2 500 wildlife destinations, services and organisations & giving major impetus, to the work of Africa's wildlife conservation fraternity. Wildnet Africa has developed or taken over the administration of websites for 25 wildlife bodies, enabling them to send out news to their constituencies at minimal cost and to solicit membership and support from around the world.

Their websites, and all the other information available via Wildnet Africa, can be accessed via the Wildnet Africa website at **HYPERLINK** <http://wildnetafrica.co.za>

This publication is sponsored by



First National Bank

Once again, but unfortunately for the last time FNB has sponsored the printing of the newsletter. Thank you, FNB, for your wonderful support.

Editor: Lucinda Scholtz

Tops (011) 683-1929/30

White Rhino Survey on Private Land

In November/December last year, the African Rhino Owners Association (AROA) conducted a white rhino survey which covered the developments in the rhino populations during the periods January 1996 to the end of 1997.

The goals of the survey were to make contact with all rhino owners, to establish the contribution of private ownership to rhino conservation, to gauge the opinion of rhino owners on responsible utilisation of white rhinos, and to provide official nature conservation authorities, the IUCN Rhino Specialist Group and the South African CITES authority, with accurate information.

Twenty four new populations were recorded, eight had become extinct, five could not be traced due to contact numbers of those reserves having changed, and the sizes of two known populations were estimated because the owners were reluctant to divulge information. Of the populations present in 1996, 136 still exist. Of these, 19 have decreased, 46 have remained unchanged and 71 have grown.

A minimum total of 1494 white rhino is in private possession, which is an increase of 20.19% from January 1996 to December 1997. The number of populations has only increased by 8% to 162.

The number of rhinos in the private nature reserves, where the fences have been removed between the reserves and the Kruger National Park, has also increased to 248. This brings the minimum number of white rhino under private management to 1742.

The Rhino & Elephant Foundation and WWF South Africa made financial contributions towards the project. *Daan Buijs, Committee Member of AROA*

Press Watch Poaching

The Endangered Species Protection Unit reported in January that police had seized illegal abalone, elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns to the value of R5,6 million since the beginning of the year. 14 people had been arrested:

- Six elephant tusks worth more than R53 000 were confiscated in Mayfair. Two South Africans and a Malawi citizen were arrested for allegedly trying to sell the ivory.
- In Pretoria, a man was arrested for allegedly trading in two rhinoceros horns, with an estimated value of R1,2 million.
- Two pieces from elephant tusks were confiscated in Carletonville and a man was arrested.
- Four men were arrested in Springs after two tusks were found in their possession. *The Citizen*, 23 January 1998

Two men appeared in the Nelspruit Magistrates Court over the killing of a black rhino in the Kruger National Park. Bail was refused. **Business Day**, 6 March 1998

News Flash

Poachers have killed 20 elephants in Kenya during the months of January and February this year. Rangers are fearing a renewed increase in illegal ivory trade. The rangers found the elephant carcasses during reconnaissance flights in the central district of Laikipia and in the region of Marsabit, close to the Ethiopian border. All the carcasses had their tusks removed. The Kenyan Wildlife Service is badly equipped and virtually powerless against poachers infiltrating the country from Somalia and Ethiopia with modern weapons.

The Citizen, 19 February 1998

Keeping Track magazine survey



In the July 1997 issue of REF News, we requested our readers to give us their input regarding whether they wanted to continue to receive the environmental magazine, Keeping Track. The reason for the survey was to determine if it was worth our while to regularly mail complimentary copies to all our members.

Out of all responses to our survey, only one member was not in favour of the Foundation continuing to provide members with this magazine on a complimentary basis.

The bad news is that the publishing of Keeping Track is to be terminated, because of Penta Publications being taken over by a new media group.

We will be sorry to see the discontinuance of such a well produced, quality magazine.

News Flash

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) donated R1,96 million to the Addo National Elephant Park near Port Elizabeth. This donation will enable the Park to purchase land on a neighbouring farm, linking the northern part of Addo with the southern areas. The enlarged area will enable the more than 250 elephants to resume an ancient migratory route through a cutting in the hills, which surround the park. The famous actress Mia Farrow was invited by IFAW to hand over the cheque to National Parks Board conservation chief, Anthony Hall-Martin at a ceremony on 20 February 1998. *East London Daily Despatch, 21 February 1998*

AN APPEAL

The Rhino Museum is nearing completion and we still need to purchase the following items.

Join us and become part of this exciting, unique experience.

With your donation, you will know exactly where your money is being applied and that your part, no matter how big or small, is going towards history in the making!

10	X	Fire Extinguishers	R55-00 EA
2	X	First Aid Medical Kits	R150-00 EA
1	X	Electrical Lawnmower and Cord	R1 569-00
1	X	Executive Chair	R1 360-00
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3	X	Glass Fronted Book Cases	R1 200 EA
5	X	Steel Filing Cabinets	R549-00 EA
20	X	Punker Fans	R120-00 EA

Appropriate acknowledgments of all donations will be made by the Rhino & Elephant Foundation.

Please send donations to the following address:

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