

# BUZZWORM

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- |    |                       |    |                       |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 4  | GREETINGS             | 24 | GREEN BUSINESS        |
| 6  | LETTERS               | 74 | JOURNAL               |
| 11 | NOTES, NEWS & REVIEWS | 78 | BIOSPHERE REPORT      |
| 16 | <b>ECOVOICE</b>       | 80 | <b>ECOSHOP</b>        |
| 18 | URBAN ECOLOGY         | 86 | GREEN PRODUCTS REVIEW |
| 20 | <b>ECOHOME</b>        | 90 | CONNECTIONS           |
| 22 | ORGANICA              | 96 | <b>ECOKIDS</b>        |

## ECOFEATURE

### 26 ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF COMPROMISE

Now 100 years old, the environmental movement is faced with more questions than answers, more compromises than absolutes. Will a leaner and perhaps greener environmental movement made up of grassroots organizations take the lead as America's conservation conscience?

By Jay Letto

## ECOREPORT

### 35 CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Today's EPA is taking environmental violations seriously. In the last three years, more eco-criminals than ever before have been fined millions of dollars and many are facing jail terms.

By Patricia A. Parker

## ECOESSAY

### 40 WORDS OF WARNING

An alarming environmental message from the Kogi, an ancient people living in the mountains of Colombia. From the book, *The Elder Brothers*.

By Alan Ereira

## SPECIAL LISTING

### 46 DIRECTORY TO ECOTRAVEL OUTFITTERS

This year's directory highlights over a hundred outfitters who specialize in ecotravel and will give you the ways and means to a multitude of exciting destinations around the globe.

## ECOTRAVEL

### 57 SOUTHERN AFRICA

A guide to the wildlife-filled Edens of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, including a trip down the Zambezi River. Here are the news, reviews and what you need to know, see and understand about the complex landscape of southern Africa.

## ECOVENTURE

### 67 OKAVANGO SAFARI

Travel by elephant and canoe through the bush of Botswana, exploring the gem-like marsh of the Okavango Delta. Crocs and hippos, lions and zebras, are among the myriad of wildlife residents.

By Lisa Jones

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**On the cover:** An African elephant charges through muddy water on the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Photo: Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures.

**Opposite:** Emerging from the smoke of a wildfire high in the mountains of the Colombian Sierra, an elder of the hidden Kogi tribe returns from a prayer ritual to stop the flames. Photo: Brian Moser/Hutchison Library.





**Africa's most dangerous vegetarian.**

**BIG BEASTIES** While childhood storybooks have instilled in most of us a healthy respect for lions, leopards and crocodiles, one of Africa's most dangerous animals is a jovial-looking vegetarian—the hippo. While these roly-poly water-lovers appear content to honk and slosh their day away in Africa's waterways, woe to the person who gets too close. They can chomp large holes in boats and bipeds alike with their gigantic jaws, and should be given extremely wide berth. It's not a good idea to camp in clear areas near the water, as they could well be the trails hippos use to walk to their nighttime grazing grounds.

Also to be approached with care, or preferably not approached at all, is the muscular Cape buffalo, which can act like a bovine on PCP.

Crocodiles come by their reputation honestly, and can strike at amazing speed to pick impalas, or whatever happens to be loitering, from the riverbanks. It's very, very unwise to sit or walk dreamily along the water's edge in croc country.

**RHINO RHINOPLASTY**

Three years ago, the Namibia Nature Conservation Department started an innovative experiment to foil rhino poachers: They anesthetized the animals and removed their horns, which are worth more than their weight in gold on the black market.

Since then, all of the animals in a desolate 300-square-mile area in the northwest of the country have either been dehorned or moved. The program appears to have been a success in deterring poaching: None of the animals have been reported killed, and the program has recently been applied to Namibia's white rhino population.

It's a drastic move, but the drop in rhino populations in Africa and Asia has been nothing short of cataclysmic: 20 years ago, there were 65,000 black rhinos in Africa; today there are less than 4,000. The situation is even worse in Asia. The population crash is "the most dramatic event in natural history since the extinction of the passenger pigeon and the near-extinction of the American bison," according to Peter Jackson of the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission.

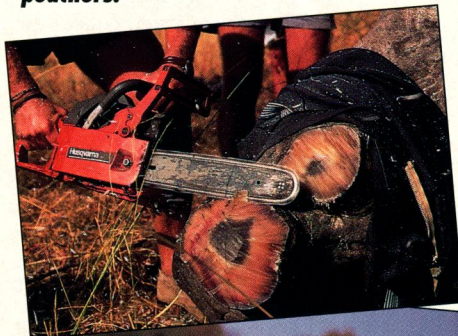
To the impoverished and well-armed poachers in Africa, however, one rhino horn represents a fortune. Despite a 16-year-old ban on trade in rhino products, they continue to risk their lives to get a rhino horn—most of which are destined for Asia, where they are used primarily as an ingredient in folk medicines and occasionally as aphrodisiacs.

More than 200 rhinos were killed in the mid-1980s in Zimbabwe's Zambezi Valley. In 1984, the government declared war: They launched "Operation Stronghold," a shoot-on-sight campaign against poachers, and moved vulnerable rhinos to areas where they could be better protected. Zimbabwe reports losing about 650 rhinos to poachers since Operation Stronghold began, with a low number of 44 rhinos killed in 1989 rising to 64 in 1990 and to over 100 last year. Zimbabwe recently launched its own pilot dehorning program. Zimbabwe is home to about 2,000 black rhinos. In Botswana, the IUCN counted two black rhinos in 1990, yet a rhino was poached there last year.

The white rhino has fared much better: Considered extinct a century ago, its population in South Africa numbered 2,500 in 1980 and nearly 5,000 today. ("White" and "black" don't pertain to color. White is a mistaken translation of the Boer word "wijde" for wide, which refers to their broad, square lips.)

While a few conservationists say the ban in rhino products has slowed the killing, many contend that it hasn't worked, and argue that legal, monitored trade could save the lives of both rhinos and poachers as well as fund wildlife protection programs. Zimbabwe is petitioning the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna to allow for the legal export of the horns yielded by their dehorning program, which would allow funds to be plowed back into conservation programs.

**Rhino horns are removed to discourage poachers.**



Photos: Russell Dorrell

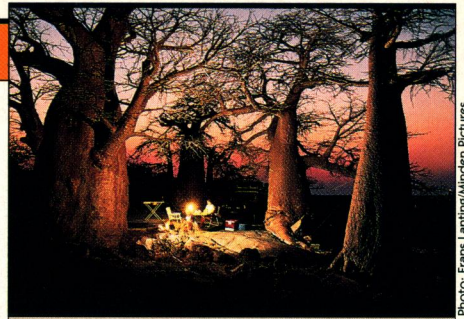


Photo: Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures

**Luxury camping in a baobab grove.**

**GOING SOFT**

The **Crocodile Camp**, on the riverbanks outside Maun, Botswana, has nicely appointed cabins made of reeds. The food is excellent, and you can paddle around on the river in front of the lodge, or take a longer trip into the Okavango Delta with Crocodile Camp Safaris. Contact the camp at Box 46, Maun, Botswana, Africa, fax (267) 660-493, or call (267) 660-265.

You can enjoy beautiful sunsets and game viewing at **Fothergill Island Camp on Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba**. Contact Fothergill Island Camp, Postal Bag 2081, Kariba, Zimbabwe, Africa, (263) 4-705-144.

The following **Africa-based outfitters** run trips in the area: **Goliath Safaris**, P.O. Box 294, Chisipite, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa and **Buffalo Safaris**, P.O. Box 113, Kariba, Zimbabwe, Africa. In Botswana, contact **Bushdrifters**, Private Bag 035, Maun, Botswana, Africa, (267) 660-351, fax (267) 660-571.

Lots of **stateside tour operators** have operations in Africa. Land cost listings range from \$1,400 for **Journeys' 13-day Okavango Explorer**, to \$4,000 for **Hemingway Safaris' 16-day luxury overland trip**.

**Wilderness Travel** will take you on three-week adventures in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia or a sampler of southern Africa in their **Ultimate Bush Safari**. Contact them at 801 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94710, (800) 368-2794, or (510) 548-0420.

**Journeys** runs trips to Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe from 12 to 21 days long, with their "explorer" trips running about half the daily land cost as the luxury safaris. Contact Journeys at 4011 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, (800) 255-8735, fax (313) 665-2945. They donate a portion of their profits to conservation efforts in Africa.

**International Expeditions** goes to Zimbabwe for a 16-day safari, with possible trip extensions to Botswana. Contact them at One Environs Park, Helena, AL 35080, (800) 633-4734, or (205) 428-1700.

The **Africa Adventure Company** creates custom trips to Africa. Contact them at P.O. Box 2567, Pompano Beach, FL 33072, (800) 882-9453.

**Overseas Adventure Travel** runs trips to Zimbabwe and Botswana ranging from two to three weeks in length. Contact them at 349 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139, (800) 221-0814.

**Hemingway Safaris** runs 16-day luxury overland safaris through Botswana to Victoria Falls, as well as a 10-day trip exploring tribal art in Zimbabwe. Contact them at 1050 Second Ave., New York, NY 10022, (212) 838-3650.