



Spring
2005

SEBAKWE NEWS

Editor : John Gripper

Registered Charity : 328461



Rhino Births

Last year we recorded 5 new rhino calves born in the Conservancy

The revised known figures for the last three years are:-

2002 - 7 calves born to Chipo, Guru, Deli, Rozalind, Mkai, Jokai & Shamisa.

2003 - 3 calves born to Anigripa, Tapiwa & Tarisai.

2004 - 5 calves born to Rebecca, Felokazi, Rozalind, Makuti, & Senorita.

The gestation period for a black rhino is 15 to 16 months and the normal inter calving interval is between two to three years. During the last three years we have had three rhino deaths, so our total rhino numbers have increased from 56 to 68.

This net increase of 12 rhino in the Midlands Conservancy over the last three years is in excess of the National parks recommended minimum target of a 5% increase for annual rhino population growth. As a result of our breeding success, National Parks now plan to move six rhino from the Midlands to help establish a new breeding group of black rhino elsewhere in Zimbabwe.

New Conservator

On 1st November 2004, Stan Elliot was appointed the new Conservator at the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy.

He was born in Zimbabwe and has lived there all his life. He has a wildlife/hunting background and has worked for National Parks. Stan can speak the local languages and is used to working in the bush.

As Conservator, Stan will have overall responsibility for Security and the Anti-Poaching Guards, as well as overseeing the Monitoring team.



Rhino Monitor

Last year, Michael James, from Kent in the UK, joined the monitoring team as a volunteer to assist with the identification of rhino in the Midlands Conservancy.

He is working on all the farm properties in conjunction with the monitoring guards and identifying and photographing the rhino. He travels with his laptop, GPS and Digital camera by motor bike.

Mike is computer literate and is entering our rhino records into the Wildb system under the watchful eye of Eleanor Lowe. He tells me he has only been charged once by a black rhino but managed to take cover behind a small tree as the rhino brushed past him at high speed.

He took these photographs of Tangarira crossing the Sebakwe River



Anti - Poaching Security

On 15th October 2004, armed poachers on Circle G killed Fungai, a four year old juvenile rhino, with a single shot to the neck by a high powered weapon.

The horns were taken from the carcase and it is thought that this killing was carried out by a professional poacher. This incident is under investigation by National Parks and the Police. In view of this tragic killing involving an armed poacher, we have reviewed and upgraded our anti-poaching security in the Conservancy.

Under Stan Elliot, our new Conservator, there will now be a ten man 'A' team of trained armed rhino guards who will be working closely with the 45 range guards on the different properties. National Parks have also offered the part time loan of two of their guards who are based at Sebakwe Recreational Park.

The Police and the local farmers are also co-operating in a plan to translocate the existing satellite police station at Sebakwe Park, to a more central and accessible site on the Mvumi Road, where it will be much nearer the Conservancy.

There is constant theft of wire (used for snares) from the perimeter fences of Moreena, Mazuri, Circle G and East Range with the result that some of the rhino are able to break out of the Conservancy. It is a constant battle to patrol and repair these fences.

There is also a team of three monitors who work closely with Michael James in the location and identification of rhino. Mike will shortly be joined by another volunteer, James Pollard from South Africa. The monitors report their findings to Eleanor Lowe at Mazuri Ranch, who is the designated Conservancy monitor responsible for submitting regular reports to National Parks in Harare.

The costs of the salaries and wages of the Conservator, the 'A' team Guards and monitors, their maintenance allowances and arrest bonuses, are now shared between SAVE Australian Foundation and the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust.

It is planned, probably in May, that Dr Chris Foggin, from the Wildlife Veterinary Unit, will conduct a darting exercise on the Midlands rhino. This operation will involve ear notching of younger rhino for identification, the introduction of transponder microchips, the implant of radio transmitters into the base of the horn and the translocation of those rhino which are most at risk of escaping out of the Conservancy through the perimeter fence.



School Visits - by Annie Gripper

During our week in Zimbabwe in February, we visited five local schools. The children were keen to learn and each school had a very happy atmosphere with delightful smiling boys and girls. About 600 of the school children at the five schools enjoy their high protein daily drink.

Most of the five schools have had a significant increase in numbers of their school children. Tashinga School at Moreena Ranch has now a kindergarten class of 30 children, aged 3 to 6 years. Bricks are ready to build this school on a new site to house the 195 children, My visit coincided with a parents meeting, so I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet the parents as well.

At Rockvale, the school is called Tagwireyi, which means '*why should we fight*' and since our last visit they have started to build a new block of classrooms with bricks which they made themselves. They have done so well for the children and have made great progress from the empty water tank which was their first class room.

Pauldale School is called Gutsarhuzhinj - which means '*a place of satisfaction to strive for the best*'. They are still short of classroom space which, with the increase in pupils, is very cramped – 180 children in three classrooms.

We managed to visit Mopani Ranch school called Kaguvi which means '*spirit of the area*'. This school has been converted from the original homestead and they have very good solid buildings. They are very lucky to have small table desks and chairs and excellent outdoor facilities for games and gardening They have 60 children and their catchments area is a 3 to 5 Km radius, so the children have less distance to walk to school each day.

At each school we were able to watch boys and girls give a dancing display – oozing rhythm with their whole being, we heard poems recited and songs were sung whilst the children were swaying in unison – it was all very moving to watch. But most of all there were so many happy smiling faces - all keen to look after the wildlife of Zimbabwe and to learn about their environment, so that it will be preserved for generations to come.

The schools are fortunate to have very enthusiastic teachers, who are working with a very limited amount of equipment.



6 year olds learning to write the letter M for MIA (mother)

Thanks to British Airways for allowing us a special extra 50Kg luggage allowance, we took with us pens, pencils, crayons, exercise books and a friend from Cassington in Oxford donated 120 sports shirts. These were all gratefully received and the shirts brought great excitement.



The children in the football and netball teams at each school quickly put on their new shirts and all promised to win their games later this season.

Art materials, sewing and knitting requisites and games equipment are in short supply in all schools. Also reading books for all ages, but these are bulky and heavy to take in a suitcase.



Can You Help ?

One sad aspect of rural educational in Zimbabwe is that whilst every effort is made to give these children a basic primary school education, once they leave school at the ages of 12 to 14, the majority of the children do not have any secondary education, unless they can obtain a scholarship.

The cost for their education and boarding fees for five years plus uniform and books will be a total sum of £200 each child at present day costs. If you would like to sponsor a boy or girl for a scholarship please contact Annie.

Clinic Update

The local clinic benefited from the gifts donated by Centaur Services Ltd at Castle Cary and our own G.P practice at Wychwood Surgery in Milton-under-Wychwood. Our grateful thanks to both of them.

The hand knitted baby clothes were also from the staff and friends at Wychwood Surgery and were gratefully received for orphaned babies whose parents had died from AIDS. Thank you everybody for your much appreciated kindness.



The Education Centre

On our recent visit in February 2005, we found the Education Centre looking more mature with the newly planted trees growing well, the vegetable garden flourishing and the grass in the lawns having to be cut on a regular basis.

Our building contractor has completed the work we requested at our previous visit and we now have a security light at the main entrance gate, a supply of electricity for the four staff houses and the ablution block, a worktop installed in the kitchens of the staff houses, a steel plate sign at the entrance gate and a security door for the stock room.

Further maintenance and repairs were agreed with our building contractor at our visit.



The Centre has beds and mattresses to sleep 52 students overnight, but we still have a lot of equipment to purchase i.e. dining room tables and chairs, bookshelves and library books, computers, laptop and overhead projector. We have found that it is expensive to send these items from the UK with cost of transport and Customs charges, so will try and source them in Harare.



So far we have failed to get a telephone line for the Centre, as they are still waiting for the new Chinese exchange system to be installed. In the meantime we have had to buy our own aerial and rely on the cellphone for communications.



Clayton Zazu, the programme manager, was a tutor at a SADC/Rhodes University Environmental Education Course in South Africa for six weeks during October and November, but the Centre has been used by a number of schools, KweKwe local Council and a Church youth Group.

As well as the programme manager and three staff, we now have two resident University students on attachment. Interviews have been arranged for three candidates for the post of assistant Education Officer for the Centre.

A two days teacher's workshop was held last year to introduce teachers to the environmental educational process.



A number of school visits have been held and on the first one the children enjoyed a wildlife drive on a tractor and trailer and were lucky enough to see four rhino on Bemthree Range.



Future plans for the centre will be the usual school visits and environmental courses and a three day environmental and conservation seminar for the local village leaders, with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of conservation and how the local leaders can contribute to this process.

This seminar will be attended by staff from the Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Wildlife Authority, Forestry Commission, Sebakwe Police, Campfire and the local District Council. As a result of this workshop the villages will be encouraged to form local village conservation committees.

In Clayton's monthly report, he writes that as *Programme Manager he continues to link and network with other individuals and organisations with interest in the environmental issues and education, especially for children. Liaison and close co-operation with local communities' leadership have also seen relations between the Education Centre and local people flourish. It is important to bring in all local schools at least for a day's camp so that when they get home they will bear testimony of the Education Center's noble vision of educating people about the environment for the benefit of both nature and humanity.*

We are fortunate to have been able to work closely with WEZ (Wildlife Environment Zimbabwe) and have sought advice on staff selection and appropriate salaries from its Director, Dr Willie Nduku. During our recent visit we have been able to agree a budget for next year which allows for inflation at over 100% but includes some income generated by the organizations who visit the Centre.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Clayton Zazu for his enthusiasm and dedication to the successful development of the Education Centre. To Bob Swift at Bemthree for overseeing the management of the Centre and Jenny Swift for helping with the acquisition of the curtains, the tree planting and organizing the computers and to Ray Gripper from Harare for help as financial administrator and also for sourcing some of the furniture and other items.

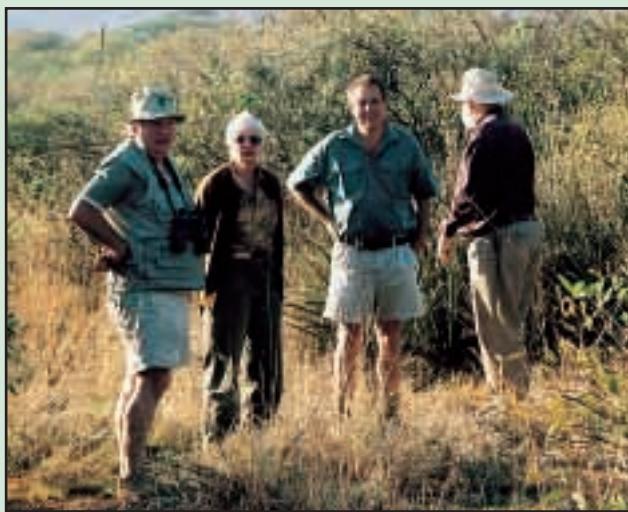


Jenny Swift

Lewa Wilderness Conservancy - by John Gripper

I first visited Lewa Downs on the northern slopes of Mount Kenya, fifteen years ago and met the remarkable Anna Merz who had founded the rhino sanctuary in 1983 on five thousand acres of land leased from the Craig Family.

Anna Merz now lives in South Africa but remains a trustee of the Lewa rhino conservancy which has expanded under the direction of Ian & Jane Craig into the Lewa Wilderness Conservancy. This extends over 45,000 acres and as well as black and white rhino, has abundant wildlife including Giraffe, Lion, Cheetah, Sitatunga and the endangered Grevy's Zebra. Visitors can stay at the safari camp or at Lewa House, which can accommodate 16 guests in thatched cottages and has its own airstrip.



Lewa's experienced capture team has assisted in the translocation of giraffe from Bamburi's Haller Park near Mombasa to Nguuni Nature Sanctuary and they have helped move eleven eland from Lake Mburu National Park to Kidepo Valley National Park in Uganda.

Other projects are the establishment of the Lewa Clinic to help the Leparua community, and the Mutani irrigation scheme to provide overhead sprinkler irrigation to help 300 local farmers. The Northern Rangelands Trust is a wider institution which brings all the communities together.



We stayed one night at Il Ngwesi lodge which is run by the local Maasai community and were privileged to accompany Anna Merz and Ian Craig to look at the two white rhino which had been translocated and introduced into a large fenced area of the neighboring community land.

Omni, the five year old black rhino from Lewa, was hand reared because its mother Mawinge is partially blind, also lives in this enclosure and shares watering points and the mud wallows with the white rhino. His younger sister, Tula was born in May 2004 and is being hand reared at the Craig family home.



Lewa Wilderness Conservancy is an example of excellent and practical rhino conservation work combined with protection of the habitat and the involvement and support of local community development projects.

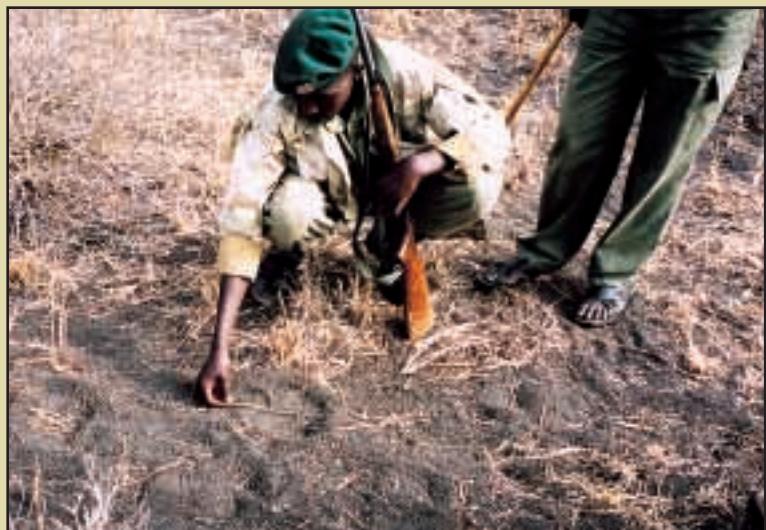
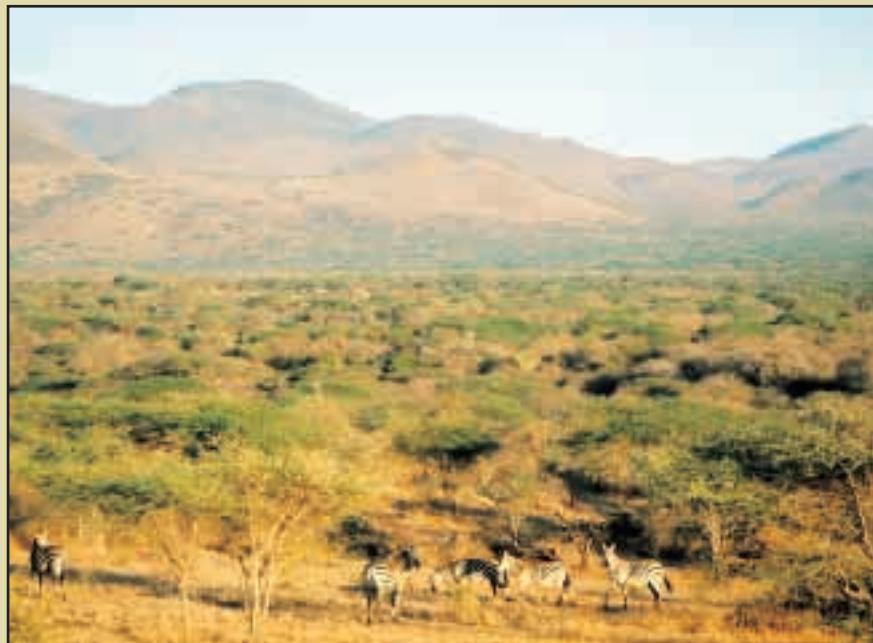
Further details can be found on their website: www.lewa.org

Chyulu Hill Rhino Project

This project has been set up by Richard Bonham of the Maasailand Preservation Trust to protect a previously unknown population of black rhino which have survived in the Chyulu Hills, Kenya.

There are seven rangers from Kenya Wildlife Services, and fifteen dedicated community scouts who have a permanent presence on anti-poaching patrol and rhino surveillance in the rhino habitat which extends over the Chyulu Hills and onto Imbirikani Group Ranch

All patrols are carried out on foot, as tracking is very difficult in the thick bush and on the rough rocks of the lava flows. Sightings are rare, but the evidence has regularly confirmed the presence of this small rhino breeding population.



This project has been supported by a number of animal charitable organizations including Save the Rhino, Chester Zoo, Anna Merz and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Six of the Maasai owned group ranches that surround Amboseli National Park have formed the Amboseli Game Scout Association, covering over a million acres and supporting 80 game scouts who undertake joint anti-poaching operations, general security and wildlife monitoring

We stayed for two nights at Ol Donyo Wuas, a lovely Safari Lodge in the Chyulu Hills, overlooked by Africa's largest hill slope, Mount Kilimanjaro and spent two mornings with Anna Merz tracking rhino on foot, along with the rangers and the scouts - but without any sightings.



Trustees & Patrons

We are pleased to announce that the following four people have agreed to become patrons of the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust:-

Nicholas Duncan

He is Founder and President of SAVE- Foundation Australia – a charity set up to help endangered wildlife with a special interest in saving black rhino in Zimbabwe. Nicholas has been successful in raising funds from organizing charity cricket matches and also arranging personally guided tours of Zimbabwe (see back page of this newsletter). Over the last few years his charity has been generous with financial and material support for the Midlands Conservancy.

Dr Willie Nduku

He is Director of Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe (WEZ), which is an independent organisation to assist people in Zimbabwe to understand the importance of wildlife and the environment, especially through environmental teaching programmes. He is a past director of National Parks and is also a Trustee of the Sebakwe Education Centre, in which he has given us some very useful help and advice.

Professor John Cooper

John Cooper is a well known and respected international wildlife veterinary surgeon with a special interest in veterinary pathology. His international career has involved working in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, the Middle East and also working with the mountain gorillas in Rwanda. He is currently a Professor of Veterinary Pathology at the University of the West Indies.

Gregory Rasmussen

Greg is Director of the Painted Dog Research Project based at Dete in Zimbabwe. He has worked tirelessly for many years to study and protect the endangered Painted Hunting Dogs in Zimbabwe. In 2003 Greg had a serious crash in his micro light aircraft which has been followed by a long period of convalescence and confinement to a wheel chair. During his recovery he has continued with fund raising and is also studying for his Phd degree at the Department of Zoology, University of Oxford.

TRUSTEES

John Gripper (Chairman)
Peter Borton (Treasurer)
Annie Gripper
Paul Holmes
Nigel Overal
David Gripper

In Zimbabwe

Ray Gripper
David Ellman-Brown

PATRONS

Pam Ayres
Professor John Cooper
Nicholas Duncan
Dr Jane Goodall
Anna Merz
Dr Willie Nduku
Malcolm Penny
Julian Pettifer
Gregory Rasmussen
Dudley Russell
Tony Soper
Robert Swift

Rhino Quiz

Thank you to everybody who supported the Christmas Car Quiz. Nobody got 100% but it was a popular quiz that raised £234. The next quiz will be out at the end of the year, so watch this space. Remember you can keep up to date with all the

SEBAKWE BLACK RHINO TRUST

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Income	£	£
Donations & Covenants	12,479	38,488
Membership	1,277	1,276
Adopt a Rhino scheme	1,283	1,225
Gift Aid Refund	1,073	1,505
Quiz	524	234
Dividends & Interest	8,153	4,605
Special Events	0	5,545
Sub total	24,789	52,878
Expenditure		
Printing, postage & tel	1,917	2,241
Legacy advertising	900	895
Travel	1,767	2,090
Miscellaneous	60	115
Transfer to Africa	9,055	29,156
Transfer to reserves	10,000	15,000
Excess inc over exp	1,090	3,381
sub total	24,789	52,878
Capital Expenditure		
Education Centre		
Building & equipment	85,093	32,416



SAVE FOUNDATION of AUSTRALIA

THE BEST OF ZIMBABWE AND BOTSWANA 14 DAYS, 24 AUGUST- 6 SEPTEMBER 2005

"Thank you for the most amazingly wonderful trip, it was the trip of a lifetime!" Carol; June 2004

"I have travelled with holidays in Europe, America and Asia, but this was definitely the best holiday I have experienced" Leanne; June 2004

Come with the SAVE FOUNDATION tour for 20 people, fully escorted, and enjoy the fabulous times that our recently returned groups of 22 and 15 experienced.

**The OKAVANGO DELTA is just simply magical!
Enjoy the boat trips on the waterways and game viewing in the MOREMI WILDLIFE RESERVE .**



CHOBE NATIONAL PARK is home to massive herds of buffalo, elephant, hippo and their predators, lions, not to mention the plentiful birds.



VICTORIA FALLS is quite rightly one of the 7 Wonders of the world.



3 days at THE HIDE in Hwange National Park, will always be remembered, winner in 7 of the last 10 years for "Lodge of the Year."



Then it's ANTELOPE PARK and a truly unique experience, walking with the lion cubs.



Interested ?

For further details or to make a booking telephone Nicholas on :- 00618 9444 6550
or email him at nicholas@savefoundation.org.au

"Barely a day goes by that we don't talk about the trip and the experience. Never to be forgotten and we have been permanently changed." Sonja and John; November 2004