



CLIVE WALKER

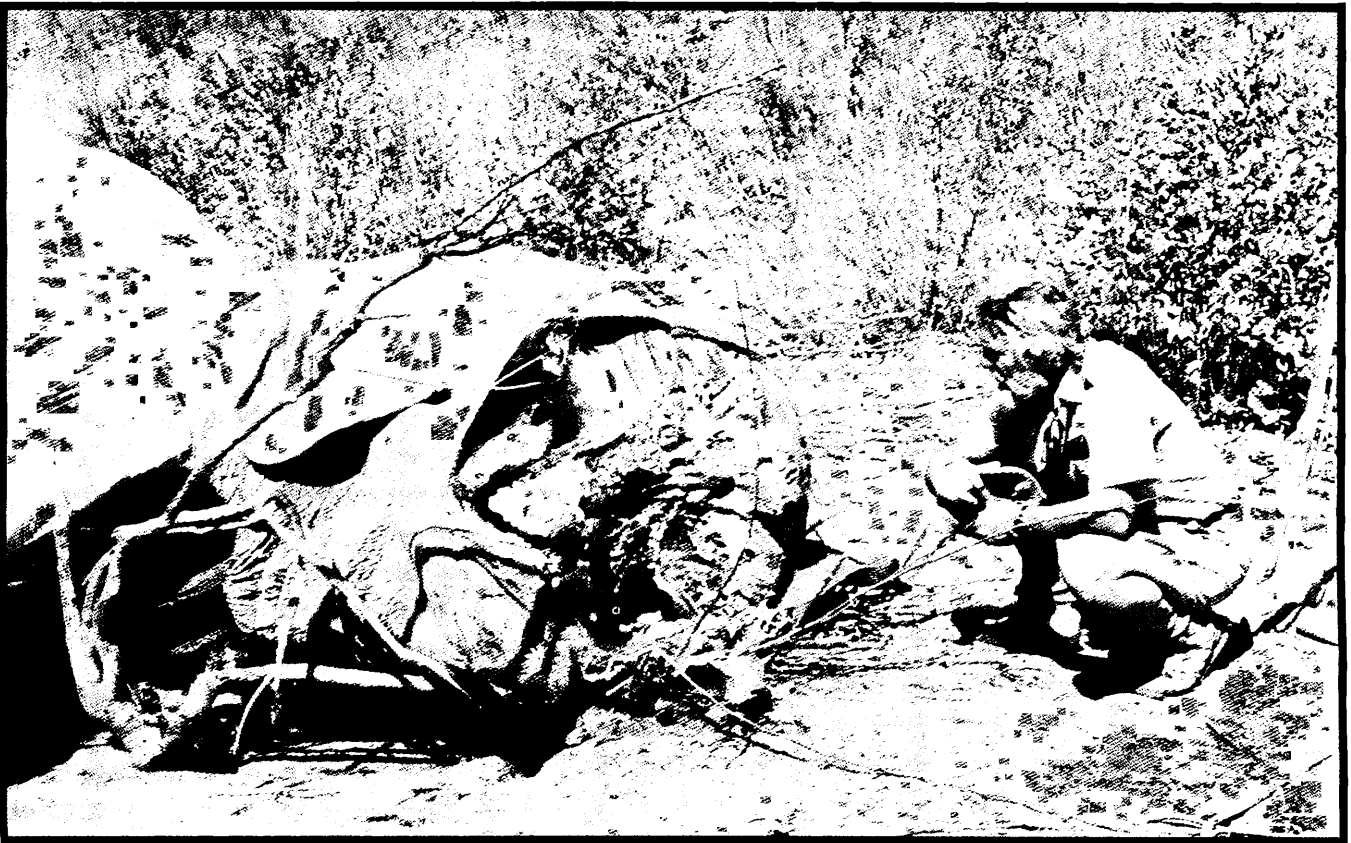
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE RHINO & ELEPHANT FOUNDATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR MARCH 1990 TO APRIL 1991

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This year has been marked by consolidation of the Foundation's activities and a departure from the high public profile experienced during the previous year thanks to Pledge Day. Although Pledge Day was a financial success of considerable proportions, the Foundation drew adverse publicity from various quarters, some justified and some not. The problem chiefly lay in our allowing the Pledge Day joint organisers to run ahead of themselves, which lead to difficulties and in some respects, embarrassment.

In spite of criticism levelled at us – the “are rhinos more important than people?” syndrome – the Foundation should guard against being stampeded into abandoning its mission of *conservation of rhino and elephant*. We should not be made ashamed of our stance by what is politically fashionable. Mankind is the cause of problems for rhinos and elephants, and there are fine organisations better qualified and geared than REF is to tackle issues related to the welfare of mankind.

The plight of people living alongside rhino



The Chairman, Clive Walker, examining the evidence of poaching.

Learning – Assuming a lack of old experienced cows, how do infants and juveniles learn the mechanisms of intricate social life? Is there more communication between young group members, does each individual learn by trial and error, or do certain individuals communicate newly acquired abilities to other group members, using the mechanisms occurring from mother to infant? Do the elephants need the lengthy period of physical maturation for socialising and learning?

Communication – Do the juveniles use vocal communication and have they had sufficient time around adults to learn the different contexts. Do vocalisations of specific social and individual context have to be learned? Does temporal gland secretion serve a communication purpose – are individuals recognised by their specific smell, does the secretion give any information on the state of the individual

(aggressive, excited, receptive female, danger situation, etc)?

BEHAVIOURAL-ECOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Have the translocated elephants adapted to their new habitat? How do they learn what is edible, and where to find it? How are movements related to vegetation types? Is the home range small due to lack of environmental knowledge by experienced adults, and does this cause destruction to the vegetation? Is there a seasonal change in movements? How do they cope during the dry season? How is danger learned and communicated?

The results of the study will be compiled in a thesis for a Ph.D. at the Mammal Research Institute, and following this, further publications will be attempted.





and elephant is an indisputable factor in our lives, and we do take note of this situation – and in fact, have provided support for such communities as in the case of the Kasane Environmental Project under the Chobe Wildlife Trust. Furthermore, the Foundation is intimately linked to broader environmental activities via the chairman's role in the Wilderness Trust of Southern Africa. I need hardly point out the importance of rhino and elephant in terms of tourism, the private game industry, or wildlife utilisation. The Foundation is on record as supporting utilisation which has benefits for both man and conservation. Whilst it may be unpalatable to accept taking of white rhino as trophy animals in South Africa, it is a fact of life and some 48 have been taken in this manner between 1989 and 1990, with considerable returns for conservation. And the Foundation fully acknowledges the importance of considerations such as the key importance of conserving biodiversity, and the role of rural women in conservation.

All that aside, Zimbabwe faces an extremely serious situation and Botswana has mobilised its defence force along its northern and eastern borders. In September 1991, a white rhino was poached in Zululand and the first poaching of a black rhinoceros in living memory took place in May last year in Botswana's Chobe National Park. The illegal trade continues in spite of the good work being carried out by the Endangered Species Protection Unit of the South African Police. Both Botswana and Zimbabwean authorities and the Endangered Species Protection Unit receive support from the Rhino & Elephant Foundation. The crisis in other words, persists. If we shift our emphasis too far towards the aspirations of the *New South Africa* the rhino could become extinct in the meantime.

The Foundation plays a vital role assisting the authorities by providing equipment and support of a classified nature. The Foundation also provides financial support for the important meetings convened by the Rhino Management Group on matters related to security, the training of game guards, and the role of the private

landowner, and will continue to do so. Projects funded by REF during the year under review are listed in our journal vol. 5, 1991. Special thanks must go to our corporate, individual and field members for their combined backing. It is their contributions that have enabled us to provide the support which has been of such value.

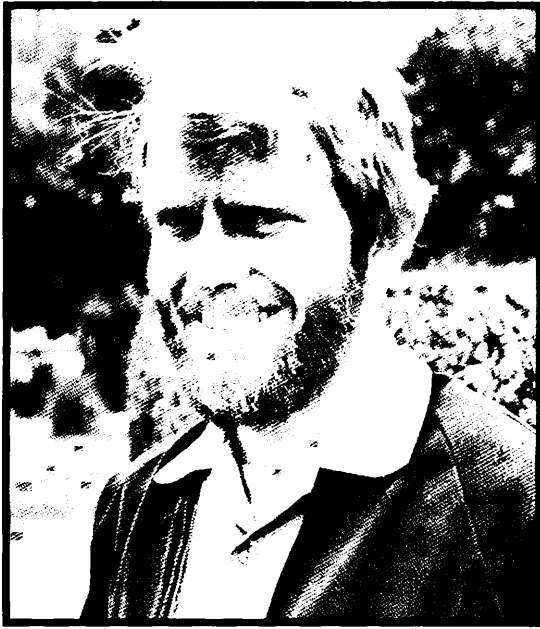
The Foundation continues to work closely with the various official conservation agencies under whose control rhino and elephant fall in South Africa, especially the Natal Parks Board, KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources and the National Parks Board, as well as the Namibian, Botswana and Zimbabwean wildlife authorities. We have close working relationships with the Rhino Management Group, Game Rangers Association of Africa, Rhino Co-ordinating Group, Southern African Nature Foundation, Wildlife Society, Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Chobe Wildlife Trust. The Rhino & Elephant Foundation is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Dr Anthony Hall-Martin, advisor to REF, and one trustee, Peter Hitchins, are members of the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group.



STRUCTURE OF THE FOUNDATION

The past chairman, Anthony Hall-Martin, referred to change and adaptation in our Foundation in his 1990 report to the Board, and now, on the occasion of our fourth annual general meeting, I can report a satisfactory state of affairs in our organisation. The Foundation has settled down and found its niche as a *specialist* working group. We do not see ourselves competing with other non-governmental organisations, but should concentrate on being a specialist group.

We have not, however, achieved our original objective of having a full-time field officer or director, and rely instead upon volunteers and a secretarial staff to handle our affairs.



Dr. Anthony Hall-Martin

The Board of Management met on various occasions and in addition to the affairs of the Foundation, took decisions based on advice from the projects committee. That committee agreed to see greater input from the Foundation's advisors; the committee's function is to evaluate proposals and requests for funding and make recommendations to the Management Board as to which projects should be funded on a priority basis.

During the year under review Anne Wilkes resigned to move to the Natal South Coast and her place was taken by Petra Mengel. Petra has taken over the administration task in a most admirable manner and has proved of great assistance to the chairman and vice-chairman. Val Howard resigned as public affairs officer and her place was taken by Liz Stone, who also has a fundraising mandate. Heather Cowie acts as secretary to the chairman and has proven invaluable in this task. Financial control and reporting have been fully computerised and monthly reports are produced with a full breakdown of income and expenditure.

FUNDRAISING

No major fundraising function was undertaken as it was felt a low key approach should be

adopted for the year. A special word of thanks to Noelle Bolton who arranged a fashion show which raised R6 000. A highly successful awards evening, held in November 1990, achieved considerable awareness and goodwill, as did the excellent film *Genesis*, produced by Marie Bruyns and her team. Paul Bosman's prints of the "Magnificent Seven Series" continue to bring in a steady income, for which Paul is warmly thanked.

A fundraiser in Hong Kong, arranged by friends of Dr and Mrs Anthony Hall-Martin, achieved a remarkable R176 000, which is earmarked for rhino conservation in Botswana. Funding from individuals and corporations has made up the balance of income. The Foundation has thus had a quiet year, in line with our stated objectives. I now believe that a fundraising committee should be formed with a chairman, and its work should be linked directly with Liz Stone's activities.

One issue each of the journal and newsletter were published. Media activity was reasonable and we need to maintain good media relations and awareness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our trustees to the affairs of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation. Much good advice has been given. I wish to thank particularly Rob Schneider for his unselfish devotion to the cause of the Foundation. Likewise, thanks go to our advisors, especially Dr Anthony Hall-Martin, who, whilst having stepped down as trustee and chairman, continues to play an important role as advisor to the Foundation. We thank Noelle Bolton for her continued support and dedication, and Petra Mengel, who took over at an extremely difficult time. The appointment of four new trustees, Mrs Noelle Bolton, Steve Bales, John Ilsey and Lionel Lindsay fell outside the year under review, but I extend a warm welcome to them on behalf of the Foundation.