

PROTOCOL ON SHARED WATERS

A Protocol on Shared Watercourse Systems in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region was signed by heads of state and government in Johannesburg in August. This was the first protocol ever to be signed on the common utilisation and management of the resources of shared watercourse systems in the SADC region. The signing followed lengthy and difficult negotiations by SADC member states during a process which began as early as December 1991 in Lusaka, Zambia – even before the SADC ratified its treaty. The protocol has now been signed by the heads of state of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. It still awaits signatures from Angola and Zambia, who are expected to sign within the next three months. The main goal of establishing the protocol is to promote environmentally sound, integrated management, and equitable utilisation of water resources in shared river basins in the SADC region, thereby enhancing the socio-economic upliftment of its peoples. It also includes an article on the settlement of disputes.

RHINO HORN – TWO FINED

Two men found guilty of the illegal possession of rhino horn were each fined R15 000 in the Bellville Regional Court. The men, Gideon Zandberg and Charl Habbert, were caught after police had received anonymous information that two men driving a green motor vehicle were going to trade rhino horn at a specific place. The police chased them in Parow, and an eye-witness saw the men throw a plastic bag out of the car before it was stopped. The witness picked up the bag and gave it to the police, who found 1,33 kg of rhino horn inside. The police's Endangered Species Unit where called in and charged the men with illegal possession of and trade in rhino horn.

CFCs PHASED OUT

CFCs, also known as oceans, that have been used in refrigerators and air-conditioning equipment, are to be phased out by 31 December. CFCs are ozone-depleting products and are among the more serious manufactured chemicals damaging the ozone layer. According to the Department of Environmental Affairs, many of the larger users of refrigeration equipment, such as the gold mines and larger supermarket chains, have responded to the call to move away from CFC-driven equipment. However, many of the smaller organisations that also depend on refrigeration for their livelihood, such as butchers, dairy farmers and small supermarkets, are not yet

aware that it will not be possible to service their CFC-dependent equipment next year as CFCs will no longer be manufactured. It will be quite legal to own CFC-driven equipment from 1996, but it will not be possible to obtain new CFCs once existing stocks have been sold out. For further information, contact Mr. Morkel Steyn (012) 312-0215.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: URBAN AND REGIONAL TOURISM

The Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies at Potchefstroom University will hold a conference from 10 to 12 January on urban and regional tourism. This will form part of the South African Tourism Board's (SATOUR's) 1996 year-long focus on the importance of tourism in South Africa. A number of key speakers will cover broad themes incorporating urban, regional, and cultural ecotourism as well as Tourism planning, marketing and development. Anyone interested in tourism is welcome to attend. Registration fees are R500, which cover all conference material and official functions. For more information contact Dr. Melville Saayman, director of the Institute, (0148) 299-1810 or fax (0148) 299-1808.

WARNING ABOUT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

It has come to the attention of Cape Nature Conservation that people presenting themselves as CNC personnel are selling various small items to the public under the pretence that they are raising funds for nature conservation projects. They sometimes even pretend to be raising money for CNC, the Wildlife Society or the National Parks Board. CNC would like to inform the public that CNC has no association whatsoever with these people. After an intensive investigation, it was found that the raised funds were not spent on any conservation projects within the Western Cape Province, and that CNC distances itself completely from the activities of these people. Enquiries: telephone Dieter Odendaal (021) 483-3182.

SWAZIS POUNCE ON WILDLIFE TRAFFICKERS

A top team of 16 Swazi game rangers infiltrated the main Manzini market and arrested 11 suspected traffickers in illegal wildlife products. The rangers simultaneously negotiated purchases of various illegal items at a number of market stalls. When the sellers were subsequently asked to produce permits, those that were unable to do so were arrested and charged under Swaziland's strict wildlife protection laws. Manzini is Swaziland's largest commercial centre, and the growth of illegal wildlife trafficking has been carefully monitored by Big Game Parks. The alleged traffickers were from Mozambique as well as

Swaziland, and it is believed that the trade is part of an extensive network stretching into the metropolitan areas of South Africa. Amongst the list of more than 50 illegal wildlife products seized in the raid, were parts of highly endangered species such as Bateleur Eagles and pangolins. At one point during surveillance of the market, as many as 40 vulture heads, including those of the threatened Cape Vulture and the thinly-distributed Lappet-faced Vulture were counted, with information indicating that the vultures were poisoned in areas near the Kruger National Park. Parts of other species found included leopard, honey badger, bushbaby, crocodile, python, klipspringer, red duiker, buffalo, hippo, ostrich and elephant.

POTBERG VULTURE COLONY



Cape Nature Conservation

The Cape Vulture: a threatened species.

A conservation programme for Potberg's Cape Vulture colony was recently initiated at De Hoop Nature Reserve. The success of the programme rests heavily on the support of the local community, particularly farmers in the Overberg and Little Karoo. The programme was compiled during a successful "vulture workshop" at Koppie Aleen in De Hoop Nature Reserve. The Overberg Vulture Group consists of representatives of Cape Nature Conservation, landowners and other interested parties. Various ecotourism initiatives were also discussed. Farmers in the Potberg area are encouraged to leave carcasses in the veld for the vultures, as an increase in the food supply is directly linked with the breeding effort and the survival of young birds in particular. Responsible use of agrochemicals is strongly recommended. Sick, poisoned or dead birds should be reported to Cape Nature Conservation, together with any records of ringed birds. Records of vultures moving into new areas are particularly welcome. For further information please contact Cape Nature Conservation: Trevor Farr, (028) 542-1114, Ann Scott, (0283) 77-0062 or De Hoop Nature Reserve, (028) 524-1127.