

meant to share this planet with the animals, not to have the sole benefit of the earth's resources for itself. I also feel that other living creatures have not been put here on earth solely for the use of selfish man, as most people seem to think. I think that other creatures' lives are as sacred as man's. But when I have put forward these views, and the view that it is necessary to drastically curb human fecundity, I have met with apathy and complacency.

I am a life member of your society, and I love animals.
Johannesburg

MRS. G. A. GRANT

CONSERVATION MUST BE TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS

The article on "Making a Good Start in Schools" by Andrew Cowell in December's "African Wild Life" pointed out that it was essential for young people in South Africa to be given an understanding of nature conservation.

The formation of clubs would, indeed, foster more interest among school children if they were led or encouraged by

someone with a good knowledge of ecology and practical observation in the field. This is unfortunately seldom the case, and, as Mr. Cowell noted, the club members tend to lose interest and drop out. Besides, the conservation of our natural resources has become such a vital issue that the teachings of its principles cannot be left solely to small voluntary gatherings of adults or children. Nature conservation should form a part of the primary and high school compulsory syllabuses and be taught to black and white children in both theory and practice.

American schools have had conservation as part of their compulsory curricula for over 20 years. Young children are introduced to and grow up with at least a basic knowledge of the problems of maintaining their environment natural and livable. The need for the future generations of South Africa to have a sound background of conservation understanding is surely as great.

The Wilderness Leadership School in Natal is doing a magnificent job of ecological training. However, too few future users of our land can benefit from this school as, being voluntary, it deals only with those boys who are interested.

The training these boys receive should produce fine and knowledgeable leaders, but if the masses they will lead are still suffering under the prejudices and ignorance of their fathers and grandfathers it will be a hard and uphill struggle to reach a stage where our remaining natural resources are soundly and ecologically managed. The man who will have our country under his plough, the man who will plan our cities and our dams, even the man who will throw future beer cans out of the window are the ones who must have some basic conservation concepts drummed into them with their ABC.

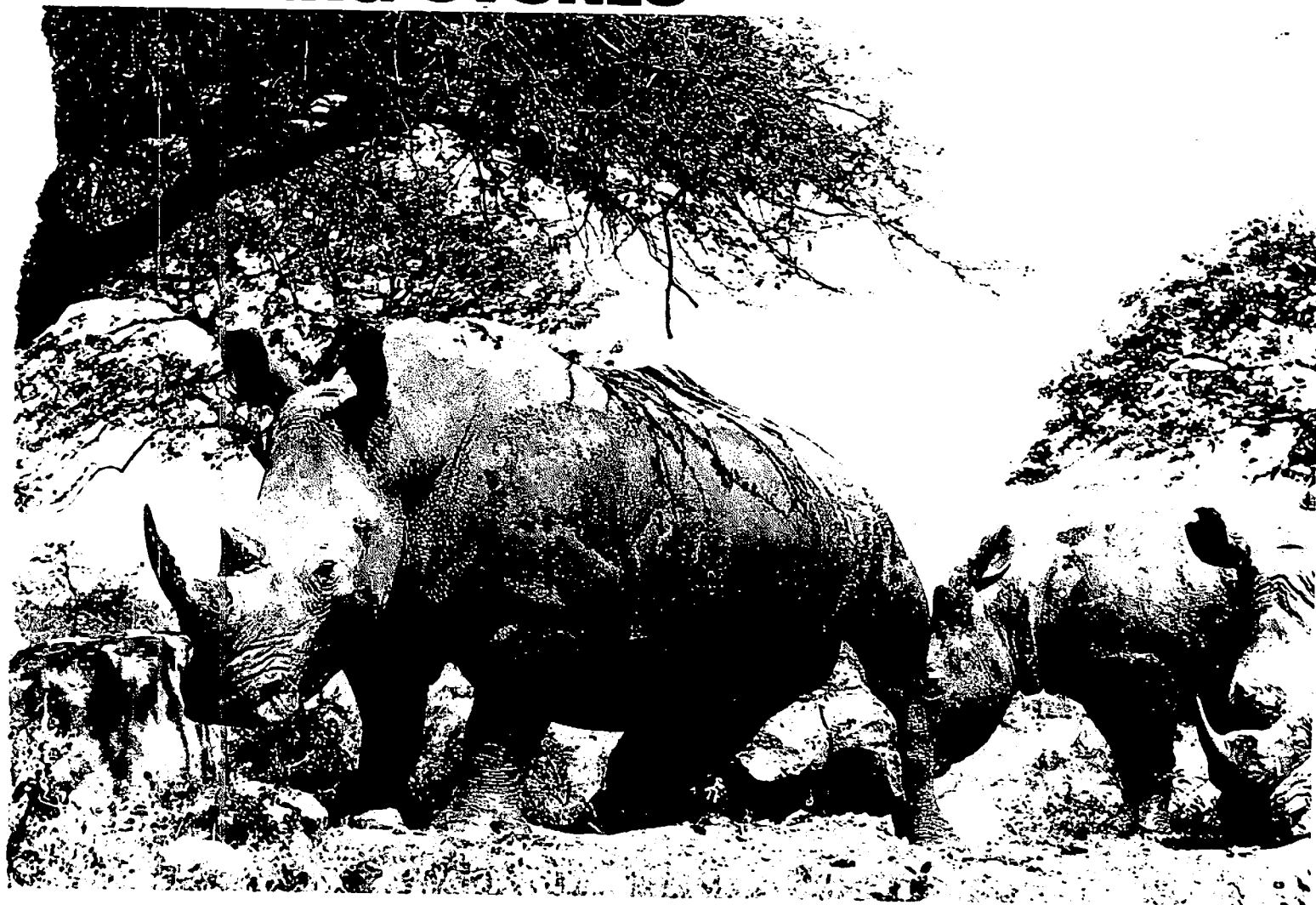
Apparently some aspects of conservation have found their way into the nature study and biology courses of South African Schools. But as teachers are untrained in the subject and lack textbooks, these have been largely ignored.

Perhaps with a public demand for more emphasis on conservation in schools and with the production of some elementary textbooks of South African ecology future generations will be better equipped to plan and manage our land than this generation is, tragically, proving to be.

Gorongosa National Park

LYNNE D. TINLEY

RUBBING STONES



White rhino queuing up at a rubbing stone at Hluhluwe

I was very interested to see the photograph of two animal rubbing stones which accompanies your letter in the March 1971 issue of *African Wild Life*. In Umfolozi Game Reserve one commonly finds old tree stumps which closely resemble the stones shown in your photograph. These stumps are used as rubbing posts by white rhinoceroses following a mud wallow. The animals spend some time rubbing various areas of skin on these posts, favoured spots being the groin and axillary region and the underside of the neck. The remains of ticks which have been rubbed off in this manner may sometimes be found on these posts. A three foot high pillar would be of a very convenient size for rubbing the underside of a white rhino, whereas one five feet high would be suitable for the flanks and sides of the neck.

One may also find boulders in which part of the surface has been worn smooth in Umfolozi, but stones here are rarely as suitably shaped for rubbing posts as the dolerite pillars depicted in your photograph.

I am less familiar with the habits of the black rhinoceros and am not sure to what extent they use rubbing posts in a similar fashion. I doubt if any smaller animal would be able to achieve the degree of wear evident on the stone pillars. The white rhinoceros was first encountered by Burchell in 1820 in the Kuruman district, and it was apparently common then in this region of the northern Cape and adjacent parts of the Transvaal and Bechuanaland. The locality for the origin of the stones given by Dr. Pringle, that is between Mafeking and Vryburg, is thus in accordance with my belief that the

stones are probably old white rhinoceros rubbing posts.

Mtubatuba

NORMAN OWEN SMITH

The articles on rubbing stones appearing in your magazine (Vol 25 No. 1) contributed by Mr. C. J. Skead prompts me to let you know of a large stone on the farm Cottesbrook, about 15 miles from Adelaide. From memory it stands 8 - 9 feet tall and is about 3 - 4 feet in diameter.

On the one face it is worn very smooth and legend has it that this was the work of elephants long years ago - a very probable explanation no doubt judging by its height above ground.

Adelaide

C.B. HOCKLEY

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