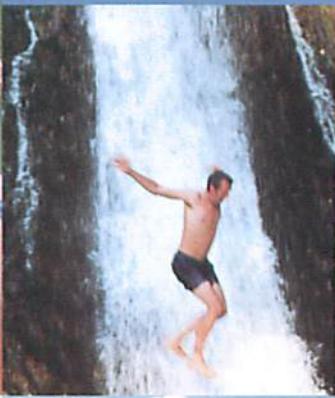
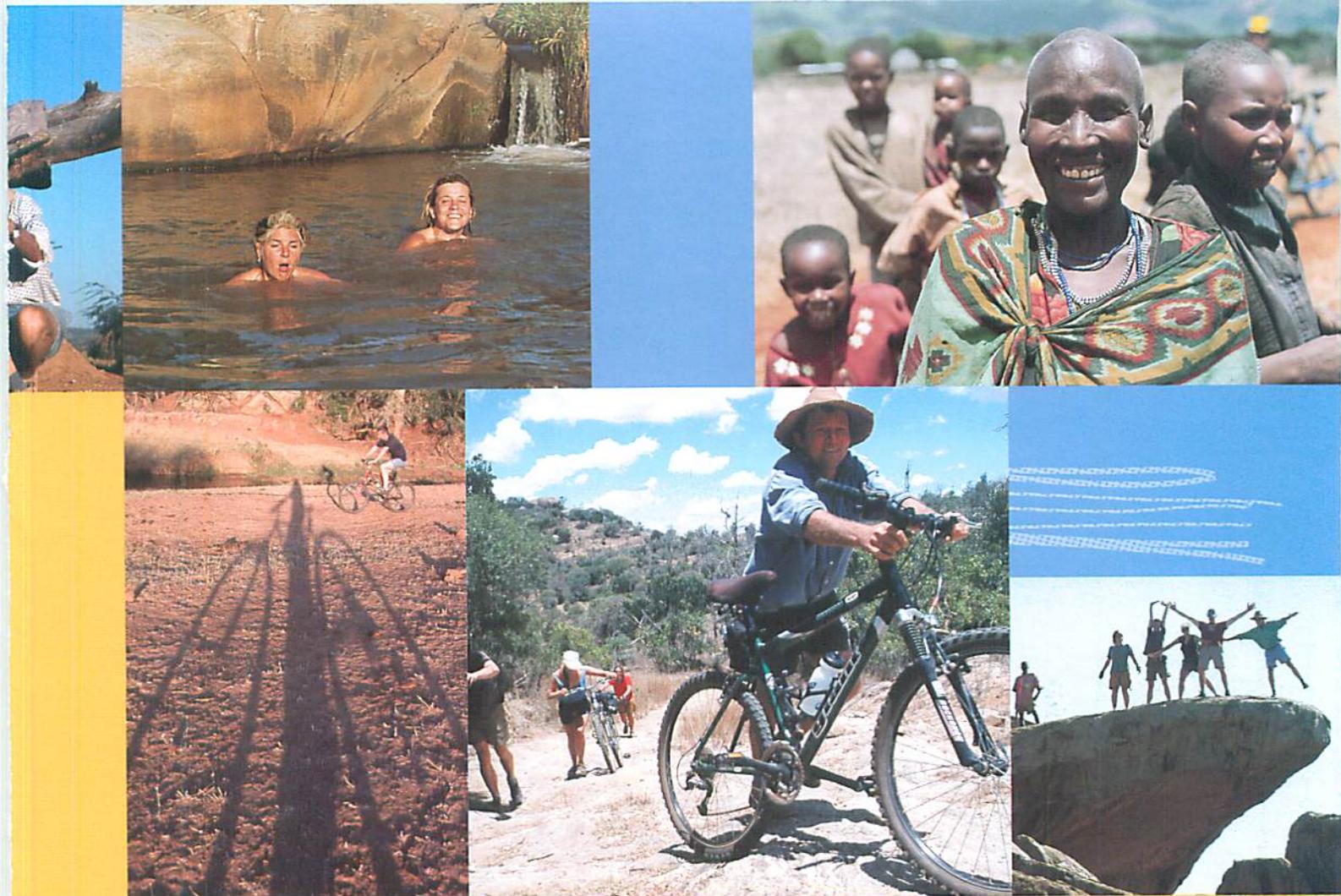


Join us for the
Rhino Cycle

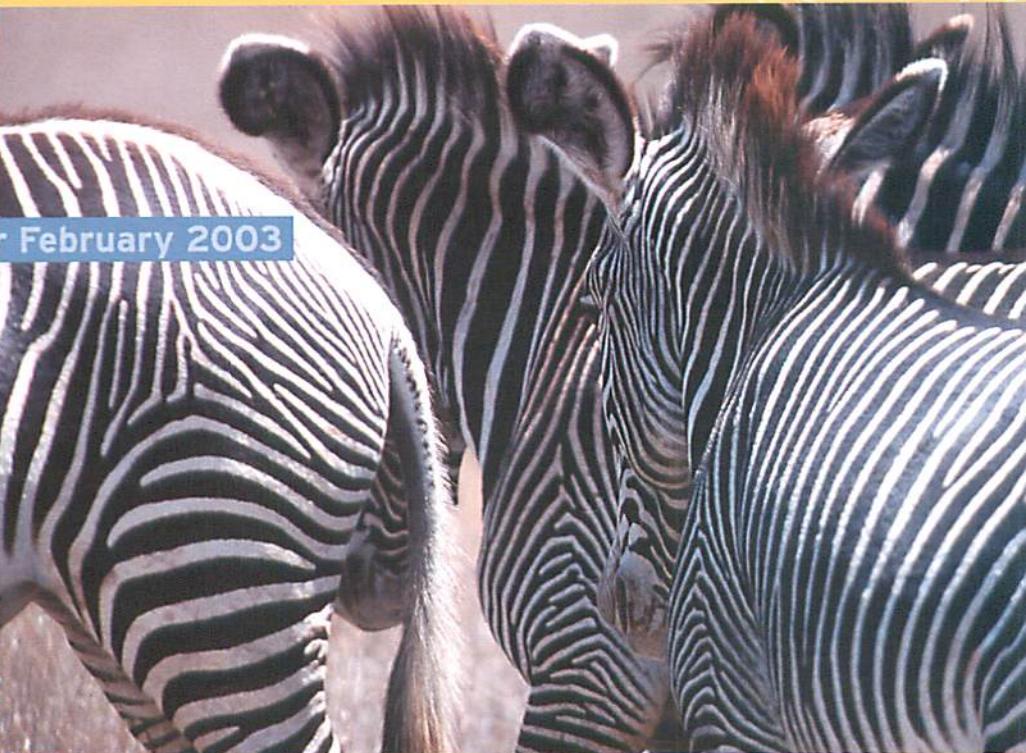
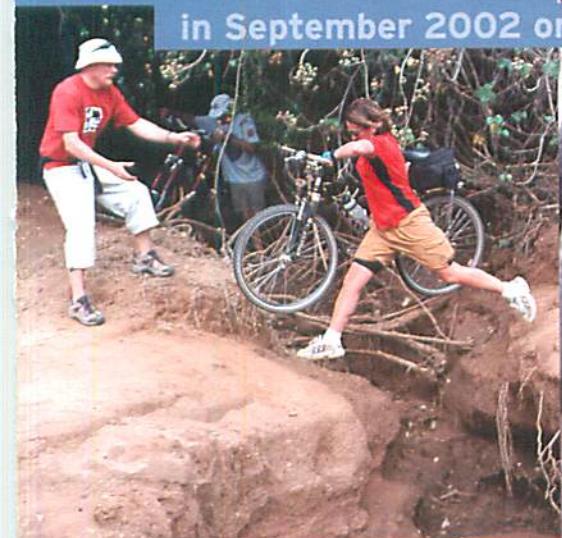




save the rhino

Kenya

in September 2002 or February 2003



Photos by Vicki Couchman, participant in the
Rhino Cycle Kenya 2001.

Thanks to Morco and Pro-centre for their
support with this event.



Poaching in Tsavo East

Shortly before Christmas, SRI heard the terrible news that four black rhino had been poached in Tsavo East. I immediately sent an email to find out what had happened, and was told that as the KWS's rhino co-ordinator, Martin Mulama, was away on leave, no one could say.

I had already arranged a reconnaissance trip to Kenya for January, and dealing with the situation in Tsavo East became my top priority. My meeting with Martin Mulama confirmed the report that 4 black rhino had been poached from Tsavo East in December, and I also learnt that another carcass had been found in early January, bringing the known total to five animals - 10% of the total black rhino population in Tsavo East. All sorts of speculation has been raised about how and who carried this out, but the fact is that the patrol team on the ground was pitifully under-resourced in manpower and equipment. There were only 5 or 6 men covering a 4,000sq km rhino home range.

When I arrived at the rhino camp in Tsavo East, the dilapidated camp and demotivated unit told a sad story. My biggest fear is that other carcasses may yet be found. At the end of 2001 we financed an aerial survey, which only found 24 animals, yet the figure quoted for Tsavo East is 53 black rhino.

The KWS has responded to the crisis by deploying another 15 men to the anti-poaching and monitoring patrol, and setting

up semi-permanent observation posts at strategic points in the rhino range area. New leadership has helped remotivate staff and this renewed sense of purpose will, I hope, send a clear warning to would-be poachers. One poacher was shot and killed in mid-February and another captured and interrogated. He confirmed suspicions that disaffected former KWS staff have been in league with poaching units, giving them details about the rhino camp and patrols.

Save the Rhino's immediate response was a grant to pay for:

- a mobile water bowser to reduce time spent ferrying water to the observation posts
- 6 x 460 litre plastic water tanks with taps
- materials and labour costs for a carpenter to complete the mess area at the rhino camp
- 10 x sleeping bags for the patrol teams
- new tyres for the SRI vehicle

We are also discussing with other UK conservation charities the need to grade the roads along the Galana river and north over the Yatta plateau. Improved roads means less wear on the vehicles and a faster response to poaching activities. Save the Rhino intends to monitor the situation closely.

David Stirling

News: Garamba National Park in Congo

While in Nairobi in January, Dave Stirling had a brief conversation with Kes Hillman who now lives in Nairobi and works for UNESCO on their world heritage sites in Central Africa. She brought him up to date with the situation in Garamba. The encouraging news is that the rhinos (Northern Whites) have remained at the same population levels that they were prior to the civil wars in the 1990s. The last count conducted in June 2000 (and funded by SRI)

found 30 animals; we may have had as many as 40 by now. Kes was keen that we consider financing another count to get an up-to-date figure, and will submit a proposal to SRI's Trustees accordingly. Infrastructural support for the park is being given by UNESCO and the International Rhino Foundation. The longer-term question must be whether we can move a breeding nucleus of these Northern Whites to a secure area in Uganda.