



REF NEWS

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FROM THE REF DESK...

A "bumper" issue this time. Enclosed with our compliments is **ON TRACK** – the first issue of a new magazine. At the time of writing, we are not aware of its overall content but we are sure it is great and that you will enjoy reading it.

The story on the Knysna elephants is covered in **ON TRACK**. The project was co-ordinated by the Rhino & Elephant Foundation in conjunction with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry but would have not been possible without sponsorship from the Mazda Wildlife Fund. Special collars and telemetry equipment for the monitoring of the elephants were designed and built by Derek Ritchie of the EWT.

Was it a success? This is difficult to answer as yet – the translocation from Kruger National Park to the Knysna State Forest went very smoothly and the elephants settled down well in their specially built enclosures – but the moment we were all actually waiting for was the final release of the elephants into the forest, the only area in South Africa with elephants and no fences.

We had visions of elephants going window-shopping in Knysna, of people phoning us from Plettenberg Bay with elephants in their gardens, of elephants swimming in the sea at Mossel Bay – a few anxious hours were experienced until we heard that they didn't venture too far away from the forest. Read on for the latest news (Sadly, not all of it is good) in the enclosed magazine **ON TRACK**.

The 9th Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) takes place in



November in the USA. A factual article on what CITES is and why CITES is of special interest to the Foundation accompanies this editorial.

If it were not for the African elephant, CITES would be a non-event for most people. However, the subject of the African elephant is an emotive one as this majestic animal – like no other – represents Africa with its many complexities!

The report on the ecological feeding comparison of elephants and mopane worms is a serious research project and the results are fascinating – the calculations are correct, however unbelievable they may seem.

The Foundation has designed a new T-Shirt. It is colourful and fun... and for wildlife enthusiasts we have produced the same design in bush colours.

Why not buy two, one for the city and one for the game reserve?

To all our members and supporters, a peaceful and happy Christmas season!

CITES

Ninth meeting of the conference

During the 1970s the environmental consciousness in mainly the western world realised that wildlife populations in the developing countries of Africa, south east Asia and South America were being depleted at an alarming rate to satisfy the desire to acquire the byproducts from these animals.

The world's wildlife was disappearing with the developing world blaming the rich demands of Europe and America. The cause of the problem was universal and both sides were to blame. This led to the drawing up of the Washington Convention, better known as CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – in 1973. Today 123 countries (including South Africa) have accepted the Convention which is widely recognised as the most important international body to control the trade in wildlife. →

"The rhinoceros is an animal that we do not eat and that does not eat us, an animal that does not ruin our crops or threaten our children – in short, an animal that we ought to be able to live with in peace". – Glenn Tatham



In terms of CITES regulations, there are three principal listings as follows:

Appendix I: Any species that is likely to become extinct unless the factors surrounding its decline alter. No product of this species may be traded internationally for commercial purposes;

Appendix II: Limited trade in wildlife products permitted providing certain conditions are met and necessary legal permits issued - controlled trade.

Appendix III: Monitoring the trade in wildlife products.

CITES is a complicated legal instrument which is binding on each country as a signatory. However, countries which disagree with the listing can enter a reservation to continue trading with other CITES members who have also entered reservations, or with non-CITES members.

In November, the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES takes place at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA - running for nearly two weeks when various proposals are debated and voted upon.

Of specific interest to the Foundation are two proposals submitted by South Africa, requesting the downlisting of both the African elephant and the white rhinoceros from Appendix I to Appendix II. Obviously both these proposals will produce considerable if not intense debates - with politics and animal rights groups making significant contributions. What do these two proposals entail?

With regard to the downlisting of the African elephant one recalls the 1989 CITES Conference when, against the wishes of the southern African nations including South Africa, the African elephant was moved to Appendix I. This was against a background of burning ivory stockpiles together with an unprecedented world-wide media hype but the whole crux of the matter was an ivory trade that had become out of control.

Five years have passed, during which time South Africa has continued to "manage" its elephant population. In spite of relocating animals nowadays a certain number are still being culled each year and the resulting ivory stock-

piles which could provide considerable funding for the future conservation within national parks. As South Africa's elephants are not endangered, an Appendix II listing would be the obvious category. There is, of course, one problem and that is an Appendix II listing permits limited trade.

The proposal specifically excludes the sale of ivory and deals with meat and hides only. Clearly, the intention is that at some later date, once the necessary controls have been established, to submit an additional application to permit limited trade in ivory.

A similar situation pertains to the **southern white rhino** which is listed on Appendix I with South Africa's full support since 1977. Since that time white rhino populations declined outside South Africa's borders but the opposite occurred within South Africa. Although excess rhinos have been sold and donated to neighbouring countries, and more recently to Kenya, South Africa has a white rhino population of 5 300 which represents more than 90 percent of the continent's white rhino population.

The cost of protecting the remaining rhino populations, both black and white, is becoming a major problem. The rationale behind South Africa's proposal is based on a policy of sustainable utilisation to enable the Natal Parks Board to profitably utilise the large quantities of perishable white rhinoceros products such as hides.

Again, and similar to the ivory issue, no marketing in rhino horn would take place until such time it is generally accepted that the illegal trade is under control and/or South Africa is satisfied that it can in future provide a trade system that would be as secure as possible and sustainable.

In conclusion, it must be stated that there can be little criticism of South Africa's management record of either species. With the new reconstruction and development programme now in place, considerable pressure is likely to impact upon the national parks. However, it is hoped that whatever decision will be taken in November, it is based on scientific data and with real concern for the two species and not on politics alone.

ELEPHANT DEBATE

Earlier this year, the animal rights group, FALCON (Front for Animal Liberation and Conservation of Nature), attempted to put a court interdict on the National Parks Board in order that a moratorium be placed on the elephant cull in the Kruger National Park for a year. The interdict was too late, but this action nevertheless placed emphasis on the annual elephant cull and both a television and radio discussion took place between the two parties. During these discussions, the National Parks Board agreed to a debate on the elephant cull and associated issues (the sale of young elephants, the use of scoline etc.).

The Rhino & Elephant Foundation has been accepted as the facilitator of the meeting which will probably only take place early next year. Both National Parks Board and FALCON will select experts to make presentations in support of their viewpoint in the hope that a satisfactory conclusion can be reached for all concerned.



Mr Bernhard Mhlanga, receiving the Keith Calder Rhino Bronze Floating Trophy as best overall student at Kruger National Park's recent game scout para-military training' course. Well done!

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Comparative data on the feeding ecology of Mopane worms and Elephants

1. FEED CONSUMPTION

Elephant calculation:

Data reflecting the relative percentage of browse in an elephant's diet, as determined seasonally from faecal samples is 26,6% – adapted from various published articles on elephant feeding.

On the farm Hagnewood (Messina district) about 85% of the plant composition is mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*). Thus for academic purposes, assume that 85% of the mean browse percentage (26,6%) reflected above is mopane leaf material i.e. $0.85 \text{ of } 26.6\% = 22.6\%$.

According to the Kruger Park's elephant population density, the desired number of elephants per km^2 is between 0,35 and 0,39 elephants per km^2 . Thus, an area of 4000ha or 40 km^2 , would theoretically be able to support 0.35×40 elephants = 14 elephants.

Thus on the farm Hagnewood, 14 elephants would consume the following amount of mopane leaf material annually:

$365 \text{ (no. days)} \times 14 \text{ (no. elephants)} \times 13,56\text{kg (22.6\% of 60kg)} = 69291.6\text{kg} = 69.29 \text{ tonnes}$

Mopane worm calculation:

The mopane worm population into the fifth and final instar (larval development stage) on Hagnewood was estimated at around 18 937 500 individuals. A mopane worm consumes around 41 gram(g) of dry leaf material (mopane) during its development.

Thus the amount of mopane leaf material (dry mass) consumed by these caterpillars from late November 1993 through to early January 1994 (a six week period) amounts to:

$18\ 937\ 500 \times 0.041\text{kg} = 776\ 437.5\text{ kg} = 776.4 \text{ tonnes}$

● Thus over only a six week period, mopane worms processed 11,21 times the amount of mopane leaf material which 14 mature bull elephants are capable of processing annually ●

2. DUNG PRODUCTION

Elephant calculation:

Data from Meissner (1990) reveals that an adult bull elephant voids around 35kg of dung daily (dry mass). Thus again assuming that the farm of 4000ha supports 14 elephants, then the amount of dung they would produce annually amounts to:

$365 \times 14 \times 35\text{kg} = 178\ 850\text{kg} = 178.8 \text{ tonnes}$

Mopane worm calculation:

Data collected by myself in feeding trials shows that on average a mopane worm voids 35g of frass/dung (dry mass). Thus over the six week period, the 18 937 500 mopane worms would have produced:

$18\ 937\ 500 \times 0.035\text{kg} = 662\ 812.5\text{kg} = 662.8 \text{ tonnes}$

● Thus over only a six week period, mopane worms produced 3,71 times the amount of dung which 14 mature bull elephants are capable of producing ●

Food for thought!

Chris Styles.

Two young White Rhinos poached at the Kapama Game Reserve

An orphaned rhino calf, called Lahliwe (The Rejected One), was obtained by Kapama from Natal earlier this year to act as a companion for Ronnie, a three-and-a-half-year-old white rhino bull, brought to the reserve from the Longleat Lion park in England.

At the end of June, a poacher apparently climbed over a high game fence at the Kapama Lodge, shot the rhino calf and hacked off its tiny horn. Lahliwe was riddled with bullet wounds, and an AK-47 cartridge shell was found at the scene. Ronnie went into hiding but two days later he,



too, sadly died. The post mortem revealed that he didn't escape the alleged poacher's bullets – his body was unable to withstand the wounds inflicted on him at the time of the attack.

Following this double tragedy, an anti rhino-poaching fund has been established in order to financially contribute towards the individuals

or groups of people involved in anti-poaching operations.

Mrs Lente Roode, the owner of the Hoedspruit Cheetah Breeding and Research Centre (part of the Kapama Game Reserve), had been personally involved in the raising of these two rhinos and will do everything in her power to assist against poaching.

The Nedbank Rhino and Elephant Celebrity Gala

Our black tie Gala fundraising evening was held at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg on 3 June and proved to be a resounding success.

Four hundred and fifty guests, including many well-known personalities, filled the glittering ballroom and a happy, relaxed atmosphere pervaded the evening with many old friends meeting each other and the celebrity table hosts doing a wonderful job of keeping their tables entertained.

David Shepherd, world-renowned conservationist and wildlife artist (and also one of the patrons of REF), was our guest speaker. As always, David gave an entertaining, yet impassioned talk about the threats to wild animals and the environment in different parts of the world. Because the evening's programme was so full, we could only give David twenty minutes for his talk and he kept elaborately checking his watch to see how much time he had left – much to everyone's amusement.



One of the highlights of the Gala was the presentation of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation Conservation Award to Clem Coetsee of Zimbabwe for successfully pioneering a method by which to move family units of elephants. A short video of Clem "in action" was shown and it is unlikely that there was anyone in that huge ballroom who didn't find Clem's humility completely endearing.

The "business" side of the evening was the auction. The Foundation was extremely fortunate to have received donations of seven very superior items for auction – original paintings by David Shepherd, Paul

Bosman, Keith Joubert and David Hall-Green (donated respectively by David Shepherd, Paul Bosman/Nelia van Velden, Steve Bales and David Hall-Green), two beautiful books (donated by Anthony Hall-Martin and Horst Klemm) and a particularly lovely elephant sculpture in solid silver (donated by Steve Bales).

David's painting of "Elephants at a Waterhole" was bought for R45 000, with the proceeds being split between REF and the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation. (A limited edition of this print has been produced – see box on facing page).



Tony Yoko and Xolani Dyusha of Nedbank, together with Clive Walker and Rozanne Savory of Rhino & Elephant Foundation.

BANK

YOU TO THE
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TY GAL



Once the programme for the evening was complete, it was time to relax and dance to the music of the Elite Swingsters.

The Gala could not have been the success it was without the help and support of many companies and individuals:

The Celebrity Gala will become an annual REF fundraising event. Next year's Gala will be on Friday, 2 June 1995 at the Sandton Sun Ballroom and our guest speaker will be Dr Ian Player.

Special thanks go to Nedbank, British Airways, Gilbeys, Montage Print, Graphco Processing, the Elite Swingsters Band, David Shepherd, Paul Bosman, Steve Bales, Horst Klemm, Anthony Hall-Martin, David Hall-Green, Nelia van Velden, Stephan Welz, George Allen, Randall Moore, Lucky Mavrandonis, Sue Downie, Petra Stuart, Chantal Mulder and all our wonderful Celebrity table hosts.



DAVID SHEPHERD PRINT

"Elephants at a Waterhole"

This print has been produced in a signed and numbered limited edition of 250 only and is available from The David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, P.O Box 894, Sunninghill 2157.

South Africa at a cost of R280-00 each (including VAT). The print measures 390 x 295mm with an image size of 300 x 193mm and has been produced on top quality paper.

GAME SCOUTS' CHRISTMAS PARTY 1994

The Christmas party for the game scouts and their families of the Tuli areas of Botswana and Zimbabwe was such a success last year that the Rhino & Elephant Foundation would like to repeat and extend it for this Christmas.

Preparations for the Tuli Christmas party are already fairly well advanced. However, REF would like to give at least one other party for the game scouts of another area - this time in South Africa.

If you would like to contribute towards what will undoubtedly be a memorable and happy occasion (especially for the children), donations of good secondhand (or new) clothing - particularly T-shirts, blouses and children's clothes, toiletries, toys etc. can be handed in at the REF office - or we can collect locally. In addition, we need "Christmassy" things like balloons, crackers, sweets, biscuits, wrapping paper etc.

With the experience of the Tuli Christmas party of last year, we know how relatively little can do so much in terms of goodwill. Christmas is a time to give and to think of others - and particularly those people who protect our wildlife, often under difficult circumstances.

DONATIONS

We are grateful as always for the generous donations received in recent months from the following:

Loerie Products
Debbie Lowther of the Puppet Theatre
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Aloe Ridge Primary School
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Eiger Technologies
Kolobe Lodge
The Zschenderlein & Fullerton Families
Roan Antelope Enterprise
Michelle Ward
Verina Blake
It's Africa
Champagne Castle Hotel

Sincerest thanks as well to our donors, sponsors and contributors for their continued support.



Elephants kill Rhinos in park

It's a conservationist's nightmare. Elephants in Pilanesberg National Park have been killing the rhinos.

According to Environmental Conservation N.W. Province (Bop Parks) chief ecologist Dr Greg Stuart-Hill, four white rhinos have definitely been killed by elephants, with another six suspected of having been killed by elephants this year alone.

Stuart-Hill says they know the elephants were the culprits because penetration marks were found on the rhinos' backs, which couldn't have been caused by other rhinos.

Bop Parks was the first to receive orphaned youngsters from the Kruger National Park culls in the 1970s. According to Bop Parks

deputy director Steve Johnson, they are probably feeling the long-term repercussions of being pioneers in releasing juvenile elephants into the wild.

Socio-biological processes among species are playing themselves out among the animals, especially now that populations have grown, says Johnson.

There is often confrontation between rhinos and elephants at waterholes, but it rarely results in death.

Stuart-Hill has a private theory. Great care has been taken to make sure there are matriarchs to take charge of the herds, mostly made up of orphans from the culls at Kruger Park.

The females have settled down well, but males are always kicked out of herds eventually, and they have no dominant bull to keep

them in line or show them how to act, explains Stuart-Hill.

They are like a bunch of male juvenile delinquents without guidance, a classic case of too much testosterone, and not enough maturity or adult supervision.

They might also be too small to dominate the females sufficiently to be able to mate with them, which could make them even more ill-tempered.

Having a bigger adult bull around would also cut down on the period of time they are in musth, an annual condition where males separate and become moody and violent, looking for females in heat, says Stuart-Hill.

Whatever the cause, Bop Parks had to deal with a very novel problem, and fast.

(Courtesy: Keeping Track).

NATAL RHINOS TO KENYA

The Natal Parks Board provided 20 white rhinos as a gift from South Africa to the people of Kenya.

Ten rhino will be donated to the Masai people in the Masai Mara and ten will be donated to the

Lake Nakuru National Park which is run by the Kenya Wildlife Services. Each group of rhino will be accompanied to their final destination by Natal Parks Board staff and a Grindrod Airfreight specialist.

"This is the largest single international donation of rhino the Natal Parks Board has ever made, and is part of the Board's striving for the improved conservation of rhino throughout the world," said Dr

Georges Hughes, Chief Executive of the Natal Parks Board. "The donation of the rhino to Kenya has been made possible by TOTAL South Africa and TOTAL Kenya who are paying most of the costs involved in the project."

"We have also had outstanding and enthusiastic support for this project from the Governments of Kenya and South Africa," he said.

RHINO SYMPOSIUM

- an overview

The South African Veterinary Association Wildlife Group presented a symposium titled "Rhinos as Game Ranch Animals", at the University of Pretoria, Onderstepoort, on 9 and 10 September 1994.

The papers presented dealt with a variety of topics which can be broadly divided into the following categories:

- The present situation with regard to rhino in Africa
- Strategies for conserving white and black rhino
- Behavioural Ecology of white and black rhino
- Management of white and black rhino
- Diseases of white and black rhino

Clive Walker, in his opening address, noted that black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) populations in Africa had collapsed from between 65-100 000 thousand animals 30 years ago to less than 3 000 today. By contrast, southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) numbers had increased from less than 100 in South Africa, in 1929, to in excess of 6000 animals today, largely due to the efforts of the Natal Parks Board. He attributed the continued decline in the black rhino population throughout Africa to continued poaching of the animal for its horn and that the CITES ban on trade in rhino horn had failed to stop the catastrophic decline in rhino numbers. In the light of this failure he proposed that the option of legal, controlled and sustainable trade in rhino horn could no longer be ignored.

The Taiwanese Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Loh I-cheng, stressed that Taiwan had been mistakenly identified as a major role player in the illegal trade of rhino products. He pointed out that the CITES Standing Committee urged all governments to pursue three objectives, namely: to prohibit all sales and commercial trade in rhino parts and derivatives; to destroy all government and parastatal stocks of rhino horns; and to take firm action against middlemen and poachers involved in trafficking in rhino

horns. He felt that Taiwan had complied with all three of these objectives.

Representatives of the Natal Parks Board and National Parks Board noted that South Africa, having in excess of 70% of Africa's surviving rhino, is increasingly being targeted by poachers. The Natal reserves in particular, housing 30% of Africa's surviving rhino, are experiencing an increased incidence in poaching, as is the Kruger National Park.

Faced with declining rhino numbers throughout most countries in Africa, several populations of both black and white rhino have been translocated to rhino sanctuaries in countries such as the USA and Australia. Dr Eric Miller of the St Louis Zoo discussed the progress being made in establishing viable and self-sustaining populations of black and white rhino in captivity in the United States.

Keryn Adcock (Bop Parks) examined the controversial topic of the role of trophy hunting in white rhino conservation and concluded that trophy hunting was not only sustainable but also of tremendous benefit to rhino conservation and conservation in general.

Zimbabwean and Namibian delegates discussed their countries' experience with dehorning black and white rhino and were of the opinion that dehorning is an effective conservation strategy, with little negative health or behavioural effects on the rhinos. They, however, stressed that it could only succeed if supported by aggressive law enforcement.

A host of other papers dealing with numerous aspects of rhino management were also covered. These are all contained in the symposium proceedings which can be obtained from the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria.

Oliver Knesl.

For a copy of the proceedings, please write to: The Secretary, SAVA Wildlife Group, P.O. Box 12900, Onderstepoort 0010, South Africa. The price of R55-00 per copy in the RSA (R60-00 elsewhere) includes postage and packaging. If paid in SA Rands, the price is US \$40-00. Banker's fees of R60-00 from overseas orders are acceptable.

The African Elephant as a game ranch animal

The proceedings of this symposium, organised by the SAVA Wildlife Group at Berg-en-Dal, KNP, April 1991, are now available as well. They contain 17 full-length papers and a cross-indexed bibliography of 789 references to publications on elephants. The price of R50-00 per copy in the RSA (R55-00 elsewhere) includes postage and packaging. Overseas orders add above US \$40-00 or R55-00 by bank transfer.

Elephant workshop

The TEIC (Translocated Elephant Information Centre), in conjunction with the Rhino & Elephant Foundation, held a workshop on 29 October 1994. The Workshop provided a forum where owners of translocated elephants, both juvenile and family units, could discuss any problems they had experienced with their elephants with representatives from the National Parks Board and Provincial Nature Conservation.

Marion Garai, who is studying the social behaviour of translocated juvenile elephants and who established the TEIC, had already identified "problem areas" with young elephants, but felt that these needed to be discussed and formalised. Amongst the topics discussed were the minimum age/size of the young elephants captured from the annual elephant cull, the time of year of translocation, the recommended feeding of very young elephants, boma construction, the criteria used to assess the suitability of the properties to which the elephants were destined, the future of small groups of elephants etc.

The recommendations resulting from the workshop have been submitted to the official conservation organisations for their comment and action.

Our thanks to the management of Mokolo River Game Reserve for its outstanding hospitality.

