

SAVE FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA (INC)

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September 1999 Update

There are various points of interest and importance and I thought you might like to know about them.

The Chief Warden, Glenn Tatham, resigned from National Parks on 30 June, after 28 years of loyalty and hard work. The 'system' finally wore him down, as was the intention, and at 53 years of age, he could no longer manage on a nominal income of some \$500 per month. His pension, if he had continued, would have been minuscule. As Chief Warden, under the government gazette, he was classed on a similar salary scale as a second class cattle trough attendant! Currently, the scouts in the field are being paid Z\$2,500 (\$100) and it is very difficult for them to manage. Their daily subsistence allowance for staying out on a 10 day patrol is Z\$40 (\$1.50). It's all quite outrageous! And the economy is worsening by the month.

Glenn also succumbed to the total mismanagement of the Department and their inability to make the simplest of decisions, and the continual anti-white bad feeling. Glenn's work with his men in the field will be sorely missed and he is now setting himself the task of earning some decent money for the next 10 years so that he can enjoy some form of retirement.

His replacement in an acting capacity is Donald Mutape, former Provincial Warden at Hwange Main Camp.

On our recent trip to Zimbabwe, we were delighted to be able to donate to Andy Searle and his Animal Capture Unit some 25 newly purchased rhino tracking collars from Sirtrack in New Zealand and cleverly taken into the country by our group. These were purchased with funds raised by all the branches during Andy's visit earlier this year and topped off from our account. Our pleasure was short lived, as on the very same day, Andy received a fax from Head Office putting a stop to all rhino collaring! He was asked to transfer his helicopter (we also donated a brand new helicopter pilot helmet) to the other pilot, an African chap who had pranged his own smaller helicopter. This was to be used to catch some buffalo to fulfil a customer's order dating back to 1994!

This has now been used for the buffalo catch and the pilot has now gone on leave with orders not to return the helicopter to Andy, and Andy will get the smaller chopper when it becomes air-worthy.

On closer examination behind the scenes, it appears that members of a British conservation group, are trying to prove that darting of rhinos is detrimental to the birth rate and causes abortions. The local scientific community questions their theory, however, National Parks are running with it for the time being. Accordingly, the existing rhino management programme has been postponed indefinitely!

We also donated 4 x Motorola GPS 300 radios to Bubiana Conservancy as thanks for their great birth rate with rhinos, their numbers have risen from 36 to 80 in the last eight years. They were also a great help with the 1997 cricket match in Bulawayo. Iwaba Game Ranch, home of many black and white rhinos, received 6 batteries for their radios. National Parks is getting 80 replacement batteries. Night vision binoculars were given to Andy for his lion / hyena work.

Now for some good news! From a low of 270 in September 1993 the numbers of black rhinos in Zimbabwe have risen to nearly 400, an annual rise of 9%. Good growth has been recorded in all the Intensive Protection Zones and the private Conservancies, auguring well for their future.

Congratulations to the NSW branch and members for organising such a

successful raffle and thanks to all the interstate members who sold books of tickets. It seems that there will be a net profit of \$7-8,000 and that's a great result. In what is probably seen as a controversial result, the winning ticket was drawn in the name of yours truly - fortunately, I was 4,000 kilometers away in Perth and totally blameless.

The recent 14 day safari to Zimbabwe and Botswana was a mere \$5,590 and similar trips can be organised for our members and their friends at any time to suit themselves. This is the best value we have ever offered and please encourage your members to take advantage of this opportunity. The only condition is that you have to allow me to organise it through my network of contacts.

Nicholas Duncan

*Please keep up your good work in these difficult times; let's have even more resolve to preserve Zimbabwe's 395 black rhinos.
Thank you.*