

South Africa:

Small things - BIG difference

One of the perks of our job is to be able to hand out much-needed field equipment and take photos of happy rangers to send back to our much-appreciated funders.

Dave Robertson and **Dirk Swart**
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park

Field equipment is essential for our field rangers to be able to do their jobs effectively. Our field rangers work under difficult conditions, in remote areas and often in extreme weather. Having good basic equipment like tents, sleeping bags and backpacks makes this far more tolerable, and greatly improves staff morale and effectiveness.

Recent grants have enabled the purchase of 60 belt-sized first-aid kits which have been a godsend. The kits are of a comfortable size and every field ranger and fence liner is in possession of one, and is actively taking them into the field with them. 60 x 18-litre green daypacks were also purchased. The smiles on law enforcement staff faces after receiving them were priceless; they can now carry water bottles, raincoats, first aid kits and binoculars comfortably into the field, allowing them to concentrate on the job in hand. Fencing pliers were issued to each fence line maintenance staff member. These versatile instruments are the most important item needed to maintain the fence in the field. They are used to cut, join, tighten, and append electric fence components. A M36 electric fence energiser was also procured. This energiser is extremely strong and can ensure that 360km of electric wire fence line has 10,000 volts, thus ensuring the utmost integrity of the northern boundary

IMAGES: DIRK SWART



Receiving new kit is a great morale boost for the team



IMAGES: DAVE ROBERTSON

of Hluhluwe, which borders very closely with impoverished communities who cannot afford to have rhino, elephant and buffalo ploughing through farmland, or leopard and lion killing livestock. We also now use rapid-charge AA battery cell chargers. According to records, 1 rechargeable battery is equivalent to over 1,000 normal batteries! So this is an environmentally sound and cheaper way of ensuring that all torches are lit and GPSs are kept working.

The arrival of the two-way radios now provides good communication, which is essential for effective anti-poaching work, as well as rhino monitoring, and ensuring safety of staff working in a dangerous environment. The two-way radios are somewhat different to the older models we have been using and have been very well received. They have an extra security function that scrambles communication to other radios on the same frequency, which don't have a code number entered into them. The advantage to this is that it ensures completely secure conversation between whoever's using the new radios during anti-poaching work, but they can also be unscrambled for general communication. Communication is probably one of the most important aspects in law enforcement within the Park.

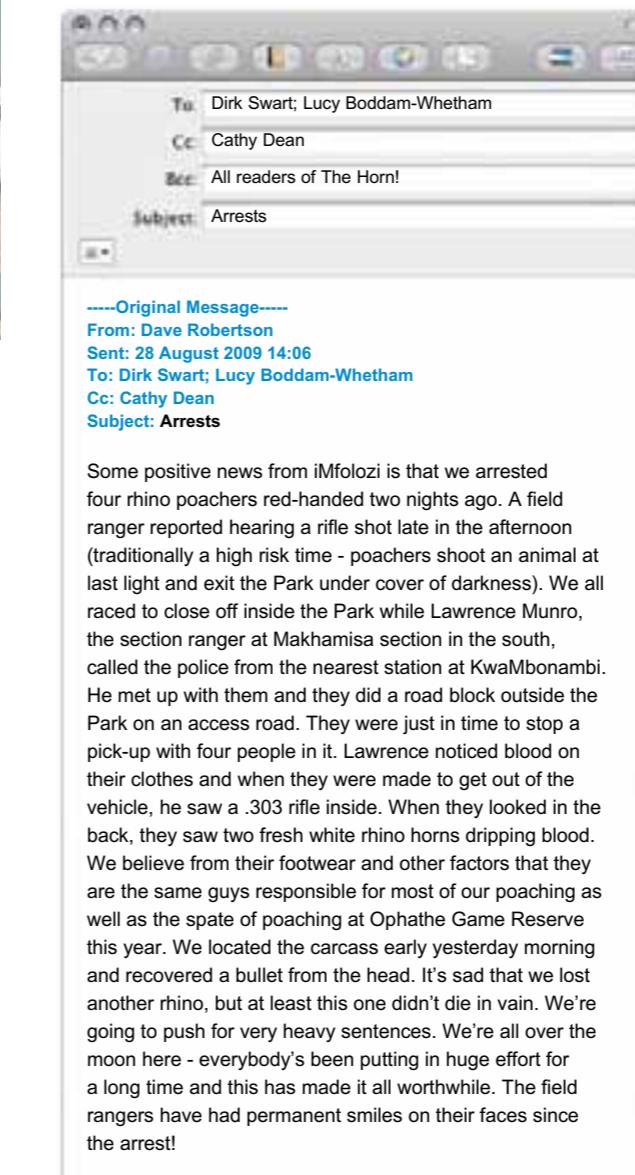
On the iMfolozi side of the Park, 12 Camping Gaz stoves and extra cylinders were bought for field rangers camping out in poaching hotspots; 17 backpack covers to make packs waterproof and assist with camouflage for extended patrols; and 13 hiking mats. A lot of poaching takes place at night over full-moon, or late in the afternoon at last light. This is a time when it is difficult for field rangers to be out in the field far from their outposts if they are not camping. Being able to camp around the clock reduces the hit and miss approach to anticipating when poachers will be in a particular area. Field rangers' movements should be unpredictable to poachers. By walking into a temporary base under cover, and staying there, well hidden for a few days, poachers generally do not know their whereabouts. If they stay every night at their outpost, it is a lot easier for poachers to post lookouts for them.

Thanks!

We would really like to thank the following funders, who have supported Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, in many cases for several years: Colchester Zoo's Action for the Wild fund, Safari Club International Foundation, Safari Club International (London Chapter), and Salzburg Zoo. We are so pleased that their donations are having such an impact.

Events:

Living the dream



IMAGES: DAVE ROBERTSON

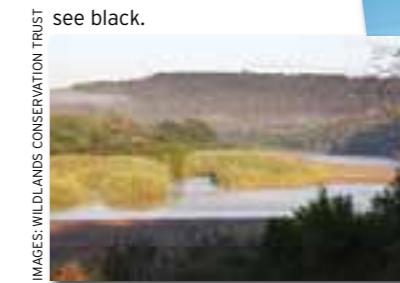
Always dreamt of going on safari and seeing the big five? Or taking on a physical challenge of a lifetime? We can help you do both...

Fiona Macleod
Events Manager

Rhino Trek South Africa 2010
Saturday 21 to Saturday 28 August

Spend a week in August 2010 with Save the Rhino for a trekking challenge through some of South Africa's most beautiful game reserves.

In the heart of the Kingdom of the Zulu, at the foothills of the Lebombo Mountains, the journey begins. With five days of trekking through some of South Africa's best game reserves and camping under the stars, you can be assured of a true African experience and the opportunity to get up close and personal with some of the most amazing creatures that walk, swim and fly on our planet. The amazing challenge, which allows you to see the area your money will be helping, concludes with a safari in the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. You are guaranteed to see white rhinos and may see black.



Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro

Dates to suit

At just under 20,000ft, Kilimanjaro is Africa's highest peak and the highest free-standing mountain in the world. Images of the towering snow-covered cone rising majestically from fertile green foothills have become a powerful example of Tanzania's extraordinary extremes.

IMAGES: FIONA MACLEOD

The challenge starts in the rainforest; home to elephant, buffalo, antelope and monkeys. Higher up you'll cross moorland and beyond this lies the rock and ice zone as you slowly approach the summit. Whether you reach the very summit or not, you'll be greeted by stunning views across the Maasai plains and the euphoria of standing on top of the world.

Get together a group of friends, and we can arrange an add-on visit to the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary, where you might see a black rhino, and will certainly see wild dogs.

Visit our website www.savetherhino.org for details on either of these challenges.