

## Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence?

Regular readers of *The Horn* may remember that in the last edition we reported on the arrest of four rhino poachers in iMfolozi Game Reserve. The last few months have proved even more eventful.

**Lawrence Munro**  
Section Ranger | iMfolozi Game Reserve

On 1 March we heard that Lawrence Munro has been admitted to hospital with serious foot injuries after a crocodile attack. We wish him a full and speedy recovery from this terrifying ordeal. When you next moan about your Tube journey into the office, please spare a thought for the guys in the field...



On 12 November 2009, an informer contacted the Masinda Section Corporal and told him that there were poachers on their way to the iMfolozi Game Reserve to kill rhino. The Corporal quickly sprung into action and mobilised teams of field rangers to help apprehend the poachers before they shot a rhino. Everything happened very quickly once the ambush was sprung and two suspects were able to flee the scene in a vehicle. The Corporal gave chase and pushed them off the road in a high-speed chase. Two suspects in possession of a rifle were arrested.

In December, during a combined South African Police Service National (SAPS) Intervention Unit and Makhamisa field ranger security operation, it was noted that two incursions by suspected rhino poachers had occurred in the Nqolothi area of iMfolozi Game Reserve. On 24 December the iMfolozi Anti Poaching Unit (APU) located a hidden poacher's camp outside the Reserve and comparison of tracks confirmed that it had been used by the poachers who had entered the Reserve. On 25 December detailed records of the camp were

taken, as well as of the escape routes used by the poachers while exiting the Reserve. GPS coordinates and photographs were taken of all exit points.

On the same day at sundown, a field ranger working in the western area of Makhamisa section contacted a neighbouring camp Lance Corporal on the radio, stating that he had heard three gun shots in the Slevane area. He asked whether the Lance Cpl had heard the shots. The Lance Cpl replied in the negative. Mhlolokhazana field rangers proceeded to the area and set up an ambush along the boundary fence and along the Sangoyana railway line, in places they suspected the poachers would use to exit the Reserve. The decision was made to set up an ambush on the outside of the fence due to the presence of elephant.

Shortly after, field rangers positioned on the outside of the boundary fence in the Nqolothi area heard poachers approaching. As the poachers reached the fence, the field rangers identified themselves and attempted to arrest the suspects. The suspects cocked their rifles and aimed them at the field rangers. The field rangers opened fire in self defence. Two of the three suspects were wounded



For security reasons the Anti Poaching Unit must remain anonymous.



and one was killed. On arrival at the scene, Section Ranger Makhamisa administered emergency first aid to the wounded suspects. The scene was secured and then photos were taken of all evidence and exhibits at the scene. The key findings were:

- > Three suspects - all adult African males, two wearing South African National Defence Force military camouflage
- > Two .308 hunting rifles with slings
- > One long-handled axe
- > One short-handled axe

At sunrise on 26 December, the helicopter arrived and Section Ranger Mbuzane, Section Ranger Makhamisa and staff from the SAPS local criminal record centre in Ulundi boarded the helicopter to look for any carcass. One was located on the south bank of the white iMfolozi River in the Slevane area. The scene was secured and field rangers swept the area for tracks which were located and covered with boxes for preservation. A veterinarian conducted a postmortem on the carcass in the presence of police officers from the Organised Crime Intelligence Unit in Richards Bay. Six bullet heads / fragments were located in the carcass, of which four were fresh. All ballistics evidence was photographed, recorded and stored by the local criminal record centre inspector. The horns and skull were handed over to Section Ranger Makhamisa for secure storage and a legal case of poaching was opened.

The type of training being given to the APUs has adapted to the threats we are countering. Recently the APU members were put through their paces on the shooting range during a fire and movement training exercise. They are well aware of the challenges awaiting them when countering the efforts of rhino poachers.

## Support

The rhino monitoring and anti-poaching work of the teams in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park have been greatly supported by the grants over the past year by Colchester Zoo's Action for the Wild Fund (£5,178), Safari Club International (London Chapter) (£3,105) and SCI Foundation (\$1,000). Without the field equipment provided through grants like these, the rangers working in the Park would be in even more danger from armed poachers. An armed response is only ever invoked as a last resort.

## Thanks

Save the Rhino is very grateful to Continental Tyres for this unique opportunity, which we hope will be a huge success. Come on England! Come on rhinos!

# Continental's Big Game

Continental Tyres is an official sponsor of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa™ to help raise awareness about the plight of the rhino in South Africa and other African and Asian countries, Continental has joined forces with Save the Rhino International.

## Continental Tyres

As part of Continental's 'Don't miss the big game' promotion, Continental is launching a search for the UK's biggest football fan. We are asking lovers of

The Beautiful Game to come forward with their tales about what lengths they have gone to in order to get to a match.



For every qualifying entry that Continental receives, the company will donate £1 to Save the Rhino.

So, if you or anyone you know has a story to tell, all you have to do is fill out the entry form at [www.continentalsbiggame.co.uk](http://www.continentalsbiggame.co.uk) and tell us, in no more than 500 words, how you have proved your loyalty to your team by going to extreme measures to get to a game.

The deadline for entries is 26 April. A judging panel will then select 10 quarter finalists on 3 May, which will then be whittled down to four semi-finalists on 12 May. Each of these semi-finalists will then have to make a video telling the world why they deserve to scoop the top spot and these will be posted on the website and voted for by members of the public.

The contestant with the most votes will be announced on 4 June and will win an amazing holiday to South Africa and, of course, the honour of being awarded the title of 'Britain's Biggest Football Fan'.

Customers buying two or more Continental tyres during March and April can also enter the prize draw in the 'Don't miss the big game' promotion to win a 5-day trip to see a quarter final match in Soccer City, Johannesburg and some amazing wildlife on safari. For every entrant buying tyres, Continental will also donate £1 to the Save the Rhino fund.

