

AFRICAN INDABA

Volume 7, Issue No 5

eNewsletter

October 2009

Dedicated to the People and Wildlife of Africa

PHASA President's Opinion

Peter de Villiers Butland

The judgment in the case of the SA Lion Breeders' Association against the Minister of Environmental Affairs has been given at last, the noise from the various parties has died down and South African hunters can hopefully put this sorry saga behind them. A DEAT spokesman summed it up well, saying "Hunting is an important industry but we must manage it in accordance with defensible standards".

Although not all were guilty, the standards which some clients were prepared to accept to tick off a lion on their trophy lists were indefensible. And the willingness of some "PHs" to take those clients' money and to pretend that they were "hunting" a wild animal was despicable.

The damage done to the reputation of our country, to its image in the hunting world and to the reputation of all South African hunters, the good and the bad, by this sloth and greed will take some time to overcome. But it is time to move on.

PHASA has in the past consistently condemned the shooting of captive bred predators, because of actual and potential abuse of the law. PHASA's past president [Stewart Dorrington] was a member of the Panel of Experts. PHASA participated in the consultative process which led to the TOPS regulations and PHASA has noted the judge's detailed comments [see *last African Indaba* for details] and his judgment in the court case.

PHASA has accordingly reconsidered its position on lion hunting in South Africa. It will support the hunting of any and all species that have been released into an extensive wildlife system and can fend for themselves, provided that species listed as TOPS are hunted strictly according to the provisions of the TOPS Regulations and that all species are hunted according to the laws of the land, the PHASA Code of Conduct and the commonly accepted principles of Fair Chase. Unethical and illegal practices will not be tolerated and PHASA members will be held to account if found guilty of misconduct.

The PHASA Executive Committee on Rhino

- Expert evidence from enforcement and trade monitoring agencies indicated a direct link between the export of rhino horn from recent legal rhino hunting by

Vietnamese, from rhino poaching on private and state land, from cross border smuggling and from the theft of rhino horn from stockpiles, museums, etc. and Far Eastern syndicates.

- In the light of the evidence and the questionable legality of the end use of certain rhino horn hunted in South Africa, PHASA strongly advises its members not to book and conduct hunts with nationals from Vietnam or other Far Eastern countries until Government "has removed this abuse from the SA legal system" which it has undertaken to do in the near future.
- PHASA members with a long term interest in South African hunting and conservation are strongly urged to heed this advisory.

Contents Vol. 7, No. 5

Page

PHASA President's Opinion.....	1
Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Ssesse Island Sitatunga.....	2
NAPHA Press Release for the International Hunting Community.....	4
SCI on Rhino Poaching.....	4
Zimbabwe: Occupied Farms.....	4
Meilleures pratiques pour une chasse durable: expériences positives d'Afrique australe.....	5
Giant Sable Report.....	7
Zimbabwe Trying to Stop Rhino Poaching.....	11
Review: Russell Taylor's Community based natural resource management in Zimbabwe: the experience of CAMPFIRE.....	11
News from Africa.....	12
Rhino News.....	14
Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Nile Bushbuck.....	15
Vulture Restaurants.....	15
Watching Wildlife With White People	16
Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Sitatunga DNA Analysis.....	17
Review: Marshall Murphree's The strategic pillars of communal natural resource management: benefit, empowerment and conservation.....	18
Death Warrant on Exotic Species.....	18
Poaching Crisis As Rhino Horn Demand Booms In Asia.....	19
News from Conservation Force.....	19
Niassa Elephant Trophy Import Permits Denied.....	20

For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and the sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources.

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Rhino News

South Africa

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife reported that on Saturday 22 August 2009 a very successful auction of 22 white rhinos brought in a total of R3.7 million. The 22 white rhinos are all surplus to the needs of the various protected areas in which they occur. The prices were about 22% lower than those of the May game auction. The average price per rhino on this sale was R168,318 compared to the average price on the May 2009 sale which was R215,375. The two auctions that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife holds annually - the mixed game auction in May and the rhino auction in August - are primarily biodiversity management tools and secondarily a source of finance.

South Africa

Two suspects from the Lumbe area between Ulundi and Melmoth were arrested on Thursday 20 August 2009 during investigations and follow-up operations with the SAPS Organized Crime Unit from Richards Bay in connection with the spate of rhino poaching incidents in the area. During this operation ammunition and fire-arms were also recovered. KZN has been plagued by a sudden upsurge of rhino poaching incidents with protected areas managed by EKZNW losing 14 white rhino this year and private game reserves losing five. The problem is not unique to KZN as other protected areas in South Africa have also been targeted leading the CEO of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Dr Bandile Mkhize to note that this appeared to be a syndicated attack on the rhino stocks of South Africa.

South Africa

In a major breakthrough in the current spate of rhino poaching in Zululand Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) reports that Hluhluwe-Imfolozi field rangers carried out a highly successful operation with SAPS on 26 August 2009 that resulted in the arrest of four suspects caught with a .303 rifle and two freshly taken rhino horns in their vehicle.

South Africa

The environment department says all rhinos and rhino horns must now be microchipped to deter poachers. The measure is contained in the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, which tightens regulations on rhino hunting and export of their horns. The DEAT said in a statement that horns already in private possession must also be registered at the owner's expense.

South Africa

ID microchips for all rhinos and rhino horns and the military guarding the porous border near Kruger National Park plus more funds spent on rangers and anti-crime measures are some actions to protect South Africa's rhinos. "Poachers must beware," South African National Parks head David Mabunda said in a statement announcing the \$250,000 funding boost. "This is a war we plan on winning." World trade in illegal rhino horns is nearing a 15-year-high, according to a TRAFFIC report.

Zimbabwe

Some 50 rhino have already been taken in 2009, against 120 slaughtered last year to reap between 3 and 4 kg of horn per animal; the carcass is wasted. Zimbabwe's rhinoceros population is now down to about 350. Poaching activity involving Zimbabwean politicians, including ministers Emmerson Mnangagwa and Webster Shamu, was uncovered, but the police docket against them mysteriously disappeared. Police and army personnel have turned poacher too. Zimbabwe's fragile unity government has hardly murmured a word about this looting of its wildlife heritage. There is no condemnation and, most certainly, there will be no prosecutions of that hallowed political fraternity or its minions feeding from the same trough. For the rhinoceros time has actually run out.

Rhino News - Latest newsletter of the Rhino Resource Centre available

During the past quarter over 250 new references to books and papers about the five species of rhinos living in Africa and Asia have been added including the new studbook for *Rhinoceros unicornis* kept by the Basel Zoo, as well as six dissertations or theses by students in different countries. The latest issue of *Pachyderm* (no. 45) was published with a great selection of papers on elephants and rhinos. There are papers issued for the CITES 58th meeting of the Standing Committee, with a detailed paper on current needs in rhino conservation. Download in pdf format [here](#)

DNA barcodes could assist tracking of illegal bushmeat

Researchers say that a simple genetic test called DNA barcoding can distinguish many wildlife species, offering a possible way to identify illegal animal products. Bushmeat is now exported across the world, with illegal trade estimated at \$5 billion to \$8 billion per year. The researchers analyzed specimens of species from Africa and South America, including antelope, monkeys, alligators, and crocodiles. They were able to extract high-quality genetic data from 88 percent of their samples, even specimens that were more than two decades old. Closely related species showed an average of 9.8 percent difference in a key gene fragment, the team reports in *Conservation Genetics*. Investigators could check for these unique DNA sequences, or barcodes, to accurately identify wildlife products from endangered species, the authors say. The team is now developing a test that would allow even more degraded samples to be analyzed.

Source: Eaton, M. et al. (2009). Barcoding bushmeat: molecular identification of Central African and South American harvested vertebrates *Conservation Genetics* DOI: [10.1007/s10592-009-9967-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10592-009-9967-0)

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