

Patrons: David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay (deceased 2012), Nick Price, David Pocock, Kim Hughes.

President's Report

Another horrible year for the rhinos.

2015 has been another terrible year for rhino conservation, with at least **1,175 killed in South Africa**, mainly Kruger, **90+ in Namibia, 52 in Zimbabwe** and about **15 in Kenya**, for a total of **1,332+** for the year. Fortunately, a few more than that number were born so the status quo remains even. The two most startling statistics are Zimbabwe, up from 11, and Namibia with a massive jump from 30. We are now taking a more **overall view** on rhino conservation rather than just Zimbabwe which has been our focus for the last 29 years. To this end we visited Namibia last September and the Mozambique/Kruger border this February.

Most of Zimbabwe's poaching has been in the **Bubye and Save conservancies, 32 and 14 respectively**. The main gang attacking Bubye has been sorted out, involving inside information from a senior ranger and the actual shooting being done by a former scout. Such is the temptation of money. The poaching syndicate that had been active all round Zimbabwe for the past ten years, maybe 150+ rhinos to their name, was eliminated in mid December, and another was captured in March – see Tim Scarrott's story later on. But we can't be complacent as there will be other opportunists lining up to take their places.

Elephant poaching continues unabated along the Zambezi Valley, mainly Zambians, as well as in central and east Africa. Up to **100 elephants per day** are being slaughtered for their ivory for the lucrative Chinese market.

We are delighted with the progress of our **Rhino Ranger Support Scheme, RRSS**, whereby you can spend five days in the bush in **Save Valley**, getting to better understand the work load that rangers take for granted, seeing lovely wildlife on scenic drives, mixing with the

rangers at their special parade to receive our gifts, learning bushcraft, tracking rhinos and plenty more. All this is in return for a modest donation of **\$3,000** to enable these men to remain on patrol in the field. Anyone with a slight spirit of adventure should come on next year's trips, April and May. So why not book your spot now? Upwards of **\$70,000** has been raised this way and through this programme we have expanded the anti poaching unit from **25 to 35**, and two of these new rangers were in the patrol that neutralised the poaching group last December.



Our **AGM last July** was attended by our usual keen supporters and guests, 80 in total, and enjoyed great presentations by **Nina and Harrison Hobson** on their recent RRSS experiences, and **Lynn Vale's** thoughts and videos on her RRSS trip, plus **paramedic Tim Scarrott** outlined his tour round Zimbabwe, and Tanzania, in which he trained about **400 rangers in basic first aid knowledge**.

We thanked and farewelled **Vice President Mike Palmer** after 11 years of great service, both as **treasurer and VP**. He has also been an amazingly generous donor to the rhinos, particularly in some hand picked projects in South Africa. He and Eva have bought a house in Denmark and are spending half their time there, so he has retired from his formal position and is serving on the back benches of the sub committee. Thanks, Mike, for everything and so glad to still have your wise counsel.

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Your new committee is; **President – Nicholas Duncan; Vice President and Treasurer – Nia Carras; Secretary – Rick Hurlbatt; General committee – Cameron Murray; Evan Litis; Heather Atwell; Mark Beamish; Nina Hobson and Steve Harrison.**



Back, L-R; Matt, Evelyn, Evan, Chris, Heather, Steve and Mark
Front, L-R; Nina, Nia, Nicholas, Cameron, Ravi, Tim and Helen

Thanks to all of the above, for all the work they do and the interest they show, for the rhinos. And the same goes for the **sub committee of Candice, Chris, Evelyn, Helen, Lynn, Matt, Mike, Patrick, Ravi and Tim.** This means we have a hardcore support of 19 to help make our mark in the rhino world – great stuff, everyone, and thanks!

Shortly after the AGM, we were saddened to hear that one of our members who attended, **Colin Harrison**, father of committee member **Steve**, passed away. He and Steve both came on our May 2014 trip and I know how proud Colin was to see the results of Steve's efforts in Zimbabwe and I know how much they both enjoyed the trip together. To his wife **Maxine**, and to **Steve and his sisters and children**, we send our condolences on their sad loss.

Our **September safari** brought together an amazing group of people for a fantastic trip to **Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.** We saw everything we could have hoped for, and more, and a detailed report comes later in this newsletter. Our very special **30th Anniversary safari** is now being booked for September 2017 and we will be visiting the best of everywhere we've previously enjoyed – **South Luangwa Valley, Victoria Falls, Hwange, Chobe, Okavango Delta, Etosha and Damaraland.** Wow, what a smorgasbord! There are about 8 places still available so maybe drop me an email.



David Pocock has been a headline act for the past five months since his outstanding performance at the **Rugby World Cup.** He's been one of our patrons since 2012. He was our very special guest at last year's annual gala fundraiser, which raised more than **\$170,000**, plus he visited our main project, Save Valley, to better understand the rhino situation, and he's also featured in a two week edition of **Australian Story.** Thanks, David, for raising the awareness level of the current rhino poaching tragedy.



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Hollywood actress, **Shannon Elizabeth**, of American Pie fame, in collaboration with **Charles Summerfield**, became involved with us last August, and through her **Animal Avengers** blog, raised **US\$15,000 for water supplies in Hwange NP, US\$10,000 for satellite tracking elephant collars and a further US\$10,000 for veterinary work on badly injured rhinos in South Africa**. Her current projects are featured at <https://chuffed.org/project/animalavengers>



Charles, Brent, Shannon and Nicholas

Breaking the Brand's work in **Viet Nam**, campaigning to reduce rhino horn demand amongst the 2,000 – 3,000 rich business men who use it, continues to flourish under the leadership of **Lynn Johnson**. She recently spoke to our members at Perth Zoo, and such was her impact that we immediately pledged a further **\$40,000** towards her next round of advertisements.



As well as being the highest number of rhino deaths for 30 years, it's also been our biggest ever year of donated support, just over **\$700,000**, listed elsewhere. So a very big thank you to all our members, supporters, helpers and donors. Significant donations have been received from **Ann Jones, Ann Russell, Bev Poor, Bob and Barbara Masters, David Ryan, Eva and Mike Palmer, Marije Terellan, Nicholas Duncan, Nola Criddle, Simon Ashton and Tom Fontaine**. We couldn't have done this without you all!

David Pocock was delighted to able to **sign Paula Wiegink's** stunning **"Tears of a Rhino"** print, part of a worldwide Rotary awareness programme, RAGES, Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species. Previous celebrity signings have come from **Sir David Attenborough** and **Jane Goodall**.



Tim Scarrott has just returned from another 5 weeks around Zimbabwe, plying his first aid/resuscitation skills to over **200** lucky rangers. Due to a temporary ban on volunteering in National Parks, caused by the tragic death of two volunteers in a shooting mix up, Tim was unable to train the NP rangers for the first two weeks but we sorted it out after that. He was still able to help out the private sector throughout his trip, which covered **4,800 kms**. As always, Tim, thanks a million for giving up your time and expenses so generously, yet again.



We have had more new members in this last year than ever before and our numbers are now over 400, so welcome to you all! We are in the process of modernising our website, thanks to **Cameron Murray** and **Josh Lynn**, and all members are invited to update their understanding of what we do. Under the "About us" tab there are three very interesting sections, History, Activities and Projects we support. Also, all newsletters since 1988 and our annual audited financials can be viewed. It's actually worth setting aside about 30 minutes to read through all this interesting information – after all, **we are the biggest donors to Zimbabwe rhino conservation**.

Please renew your membership as soon as you can, thanks, and I hope to see many of you at our next **AGM on Tuesday 5 July at 7pm**. They are always very interesting gatherings.

Nicholas Duncan