

DAGABOYS NEWS OCTOBER '04

The lack of news negated my starting this letter a month or so back as planned, input had certainly been much less than expected! Of late feedback has certainly improved; no doubt this was as a result my note requesting news and updated information! Please bear in mind that although I have a pretty vivid imagination it's certainly not suitable to producing a newsletter of any description. As you all know the answer I will, without further ado, move on.

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Tommy Orford

Tommy's memorial service was held on Wednesday afternoon the 12th of May at the Bulawayo Baptist Church. Very few of us could have imagined the day would arrive when we would need to say a final farewell to Thomas Patrick, it was certainly a very sad occasion. Amongst his old colleagues attending the service were Mike & Gerry Bunce, John & Jill Osborne, Richard & Liz Aylward, Alan & Max Sparrow, Mike & Jenny Fynn, Drew Connybeare, Mark Butcher, Richard Peek, Derek Littleton, Ducks Donaldson, John Minshull, and myself. At a guess I would say that most of the city's resident Dagaboys were in attendance. As the number of tributes and messages of condolences were too numerous to read during the eulogy given by Paul Mackay only the names of those sending condolences etc were read out.

Tommy's ashes are, I understand, to be scattered in the Mabalauta section of the Gonarezhou.

The wake in Hillside was well attended. Reliable sources report that a couple of our more "senior" colleagues were still swapping yarns and sipping away well into the early hours of the morning!

Bryan Orford is currently collecting and collating information on Tommy with the intention of writing a book. Those who have any interesting anecdotes or stories relating to the late TPO please contact Bryan on bush@netconnect.co.zw

Dagaboys News

1. **USA**

Rob & Paddy Francis:

The Francis's are due back in the Falls early in December, booked to leave on the 2nd of the month. They have already started packing and have been liaising with freight and clearing agents, hopefully their pre-planning will ensure a fairly trouble free and smooth return. After their lengthy sojourn in the 1st world I am not sure whether they're in for a "reverse culture" shock, the Falls residents tell me there's more to life than shopping at Jays or purloining fuel in the dusty back streets of Chinotimba, I'm sure there is!!

Robin Morris

Herewith excerpts from an email from the Morris's entitled "Hurricane Charlie & Frances" "Finally got our cable back last night so I can email a quick update. Thank you all for your concern - luckily we are fine!

We were having a wonderful holiday in the keys with the PA family when we heard about Charlie so decided to come home on the Thursday to prepare.

Friday 13th Punta Gorda closed down so we could prepare for Hurricane Charlie. The storm was projected to hit about 100 miles north of us around Tampa, which meant, being on the right side of it we would most probably get a lot of rain. About 10.30 AM Fige happened to be watching the weather update and the local station picked up a wobbly towards us. A bunch of neighbours and us got together and starting scrounging ply wood and helped board up everyone's windows. Then we got the news that it was going to be a direct hit. The wind really picked up around 3 so everyone went to their respective houses. We got our bathroom ready (no windows) by putting a blanket in the bath and having a mattress ready to pull over us in case the roof came off. We also had a cooler of beer just in case we got thirsty!! As it turned out, we braved it on the porch for a lot of the time - it was the most scary, awesome, mesmerizing sight we have ever seen!!!! To watch our huge old oak trees blow over like twigs and the tops of pine trees snap off and fly by - totally unreal!!! It finally subsided after 2 hours. All the neighbours came out and we walked around making sure everyone was alive and checking on damage. We were totally hemmed in by trees and a lot of people have roof damage - this little town is a sea of blue tarps on roofs. We were so lucky in that a huge big old pine tree missed the back of the house by about 6 inches. We lost phone service that night and of course power.

Saturday morning first thing we went into town to check on Fige's office. A window had blown out and the roof was badly damaged which let in a whole lot of rain. Thank goodness they had put plastic over all the machines. The devastation driving to and fro just gave me such a lump in my throat, especially for all the people who have mobile homes that were literally strewn all over the place. The devastation is so hard to describe.

We got home and all the African contingent from Sarasota etc. arrived with food, water, generators, beer, ice, cigs - you name it, they had it, and not forgetting chain saws and gas. There must have been 12 of them. We all set to work to at least get the drive way cleared so we could get in and out. Thank goodness the pool was still standing and only one side had a huge branch pulling it down so we got that out and it served as water for the loo and the neighbourhood bath at the end of the day!!!!

Monday a friend of Bruce's who's an electrician hooked the generator up to the box which meant we could flush the loo, have a cold shower and use a light at night - talk about UP TOWN!!!!.....

So that's somewhat of an account. Frances came through this last weekend and produced 4" of rain in 24 hoursafter Charlie that was a breeze. Now we are watching Hurricane Ivan which is 1100 miles away still, is already up to a massive category 5 and headed on Charlie's course!!!! At this stage it's too early to tell if it'll go up the east or west coast when it gets to Florida so we'll wait and see. The windows are still boarded up from Frances thank goodness. This poor state just cannot take another hit. I feel so sorry for all the disaster relief workers - they must be exhausted. Red Cross, Salvation Army etc. etc have been relentless in serving meal, free ice, diapers, just everything family's need. What a wonderful community.

Anyway, we got our power back on day 10 after the storm which was a real treat.

Sorry this a joint email, but after Ivan comes thru we might be in the same boat again. At least this way you have a little news."

2. South Africa

Co-ordinated by Pete Thomson and Annie van Eyssen the "Natal boys" are having a get together on the 23rd of October at Midmar Dam. Every effort has been made to advise all on

the mailing list and requesting recipients to notify others of the event. I attended two get togethers in the mid '90's, they were well-patronised and great fun.

Yes, we've all "matured" a little since those halcyon days of the 60's and 70's, memories now need jogging and it's gatherings such as these that tweak the brain cells to the events of yesteryear. It's a great place to do some catching up with old friends and their families and there's laughs a plenty.

Jeremy Anderson

Jeremy is currently in currently in Angola searching for the giant sable – on his return he has promised to let me have some feedback as to how the expedition went. Hopefully his information will be to hand prior to December when the year-end's newsletter is to be written.

Ed Ostrosky

Now in the KZN Wildlife Training Section and in charge of all field training with the emphasis being on law enforcement and firearms.

Angus Anthony

I can't remember exactly who put me in touch with the Anthony's but at this point in time it's of no real consequence, what matters is that contact has been made and that they're on the mailing list.

Angus provided me with a fairly detailed review of their lives since they left the Department and emigrated, a synopsis of his letter follows:

Angus has been with De Beers Consolidated Mines since early '83 and now, after 21 years with the company plans to "retire" towards year end and move down from the Kimberly area to George.

Following their move to Dronfield farm where cattle and game were run together some four years after joining De Beers Angus noted the following which, to me, was of particular interest:

"I took over the running of the cattle operation on some 36,000ha with 1800 breeding cows. I developed four of the five units into a Holistic Managed Unit and was able to stop dipping and dosing of the stock, (haven't dipped in ten years) which has resulted in increased dung beetle activity and a major improvement in the grass cover. On the game side we were first in breeding disease-free Buffalo and are now concentrating on the breeding of Roan, Sable and Tsessebe. We will later this year add White Rhino to the list."(For those would like to contact Angus re his Holistic management approach he email address is

bizzybees@mweb.co.zw

Angus and Sue plan to continue with the "hobbies" of bee keeping and pottery when they move to George.

Of the family – after ten years of teaching Sue is back nursing and hopes to continue when they move. Ruth is in London working for a large engraving firm with a goal of becoming a gun engraver. Colin is in his second year of a BSc degree at Cape Town studying Chemical, Molecular and Cellular Sciences.

Some will recall Angus's interests in vultures, on this he writes *"I have kept up my interest in Vultures, there are over 50 pairs of White-backed Vultures nesting on Dronfield, and we have been colour ringing the nestlings for the last 12 years. A couple of years back we found the rings from a White-backed Vulture that had been ringed as a nestling in the 70's by Peter Mundy, some 20 years later! We currently have five of our ringed nestlings back breeding on Dronfield. We have also had a number of ring recoveries mostly within a couple of hundred km of Kimberley, but the record distance goes to a fledgling which, three months after leaving the nest, was found in Etosha some 1640 km away. The next best was on its way to the coast (Queenstown way) some 680 km away. I will be keeping up the Vulture work here on Dronfield with the help of a dedicated team in Kimberley.*

Scratch Tebbit

It was good to receive news of the Tebbits, in her email Sheila notes –*"Scratch is developing our smallholding outside White River. He has a macadamia nursery and has grown (from nut), grafted and planted out about 2800 trees on our property (aiming for about 4000) and will be selling grafted trees to get some income while we wait for our trees to start producing. They do take some time to produce a crop, so in the meantime we are both working, me doing secretarial work at an accounting firm in Nelspruit and Scratch tackling*

some large building projects as well as smaller building alterations. I guess most of us are in the same situation of having to keep working, not much chance of sitting on the stoep drinking tea. (hmm, very true!!)

We hope to spend Christmas at Vic Falls with our daughter and her family, but it seems we will miss seeing Rob and Paddy Francis, which is a pity. (Leaving on the 2nd The Francis's may just be back)

Frank Junor

A week or so back Frank and Jean moved back to Port Alfred from Cape Town, their new address is 4, Koblejou Rd Port Alfred, at this point in time Jean has still to let me know their telephone number. Their email details remain unchanged fjunor2@telkomsa.net.

Excerpts taken from the notes on a trip they took up the west coast with Dale and Raggie Kenmuir follow – *“The trip up the West Coast was well worth it. The flowers were beautiful all along the coast but outstanding at Langebaan.*

The nature Reserve there is very wild -- wild fyn bush country and wild sea, coast full of muscles etc. It was wonderful for Frank and Dale, all along the way to Lamberts Bay we stopped and looked at tortoises, different birds and vegetation. Frank, Dale and Raggie {and me where it was possible for my rheumatic and artificial joints,} would go striding over bushes etc and spend hours looking at little leaves or buds and marvelling anew at God's creation-- in the minutest detail.”

Jean continues and notes that development is set to ruin the breeding colony of birds on the island in Lamberts Bay – *“The whole island used to be just gannets and cormorants now they inhabit one fifth of the island and the rest is being developed into a sort of museum. There were even two cranes on the island to move the concrete used in building a new causeway to the island, very plastic American scene coming. Last time Frank went when only Parks or research ornithologists were allowed on the island, everyone else had to observe from the main land. Bet there won't be any birds left in five years time. It is the only gannet breeding island on the west coast of South Africa-- next one is in Namibia.”*

I spoke to Jean just prior to their departure from Cape Town – Frank is sleeping a lot these days but is still managing to maintain his wonderfully positive approach to life.

I would ask that you maintain “comms” with the Junor's and remember them in your thoughts and prayers. I will circularise their telephone details once these are to hand.

Tony Ferrar

Both Sandy and Tony now firmly settled in Barberton. Of the district and their interests Tony notes, *“ I got involved with the local Wildlife Soc (now referred to as WESSA) here organising a public debate on KNP's elephant problem. South African National Parks wanted to stop the meeting initially but we went ahead with it and they eventually came to the party and attended* Following the local Great Elephant Debate Tony wrote up two short reports – The first being a press release of the meeting and the second Tony's thoughts on the various issues.

3. UNITED KINGDOM

George Begg

Early in September I received a note from George, who as you recall, has taken to a nomadic life style and is wandering the globe with Lea. George notes that he is about to spend a couple of months in the Niassa Reserve in northern Mozambique with his son and daughter in law who are studying the carnivore population in the area. George continues and writes - *“they have, of late. Also become involved in attempting to establish the impact (if any) of African fishermen on fish stocks along a 30km stretch of the Lugenda river. I am going out to assist them and, if the truth must be known, as well escape the onset of the UK winter! We will be using a 5m dugout which, according to the maker, has been specially "protected" by some traditional muti against crocs and hippo (!) for getting around so I am sure to be in safe hands. One way or another I look forward to re-acquainting myself with some of our Zambezi fish fauna and, if you wish, will keep you informed of the outcome”*

Otherwise Lea and I have been travelling widely since I last made contact ... Zanzibar, Mozambique, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Norway, France, Ireland, Scotland and throughout the UK. We consider ourselves to be "citizens of the world" and are presently much enjoying our nomadic lifestyle”.

George's email address in Mozambique is ratel2@bushmail.net

4. GHANA

Charles Mackie

From the equatorial regions of west Africa Charles emailed me the following – “I continue to bang my head against a brick wall working in conservation in Ghana. Have a year to go on my contract and will locate back to Zim or South Africa after that. One of my options is to work in the tourist industry somewhere; perhaps hunting but not guiding. Please note this address will fall away in a few weeks and will be

csmackie2004@yahoo.com

5. ZIMBABWE

Although conservation issues frequently make the papers in Zimbabwe thus coming to my attention the same cannot be said regarding news of ex colleagues! In the past few months I have received very little feedback, I trust this is not to become the norm.

Vernon Booth

Shortly after dinner on the 30th August Lynne and Vernon were relaxing in the lounge of their Highlands home when there were suddenly confronted by five hooded men one of whom put a gun to Vernon's head. Précising events from point of their having been blindfolded both were slapped about, verbally abused and continually threatened and finally locked in their daughter's room after the house had been turned upside down. Apart from taking Lynne's personal jewellery and both their watches at the onset of the heist and other precious items later, the gang absconded in Lynne's Nissan with their stereo/video equipment, laptop computer, binoculars, digital camera, cash, bankcards and various other items.

In his summation Vernon notes –

“Remaining calm and not confrontational I believe de-escalated the situation. But at the same time remaining firm and convincing when negotiating their demands.

We are both very thankful that neither of us was harmed in any way. We have had a fantastic response from the immediate community, from people we have never met in Highland despite living here for more than 15 years. All of them have had a similar experience in the last 8 months.”

What can only be termed as a unbelievable is the sequel to the above – *“This afternoon(2nd Sept) Lynne received a call from the police based at Kambuzuma - for those of you who live outside of Zimbabwe, its in a very poor area of Harare, and definitely not somewhere one would frequent even in broad daylight.*

The stolen car reported on Monday night had apparently been driven and abandoned in the car park of a small scruffy shopping centre in this high-density area. In the next parking bay were a couple of young guys running a "street vehicle repair" business (old Peugeot 404's etc). The Nissan had been parked there since Tuesday and they became suspicious when nobody came to take the vehicle away, and the fact that all these items were lying around on the back seat. They notified the local police foot patrol who investigated and found that All four doors were unlocked and the keys were lying on the floor of the driver's seat. On searching the various bags etc they found a nametag on a camera bag that had my name and the phone number of the pharmacy. The police phoned Lynne at 2 pm who then got hold of me. After some pointed questions to see whether I could identify the car, they said I should come down to the station and I could collect it.

I hastily got a lift to the police station where I met the policemen investigating the case. They took me to the vehicle, confirmed it was the stolen vehicle from the house and then drove with me to the police station. The Vehicle Theft Unit was also at the scene taking figure prints. At all times the police acted in an extremely professional manner, and were extremely sympathetic to what had happened...I cannot speak more highly of the men involved.

We recovered: the vehicle; my digital camera; binoculars; video camera; all Lynne's documents (ID, drivers licence, bank cards (except Barclays), cheque book etc). The vehicle itself was UNTOUCHED. Still missing are my wallet, cell phones, laptop, jewellery, watches, stereo and video machine.

..There are obviously still some true Zimbabweans out there who are trying to maintain some standards. We went through a horrific experience and had written off all the material things - this leaves us just as shocked as we were the night after the robbery."

Graham Child

Graham writes of his son and other colleagues – *"Our only real news is that Brian and his family are going to the USA where Brian will be taking up a job with the University of Florida in Gainesville, to teach both undergraduates and graduates. His topics will be CBNRM or what we call the CAMPFIRE concept in this part of the world and Park Management, based on the southern African paradigm which is now so different from the Way we use to think and do things in the old Dept. He has also edited a book for the Southern African Sustainable Use Specialist Group, entitled "Parks in Transition: Biodiversity, Rural Development and the Bottom Line". Besides Brian other ex Parks men to have contributed as authors are Dave Cumming, George Pangeti, Steve Johnstone and myself. My task was to outline the events that set the stage for southern Africa to lead Africa and much of the world in nature conservation."*

Seb Audin (1978-79)

Out of the blue a week or so back Sebastian popped into my office for a quick chat. For the past three years he's been in "exile" in the UK and is currently working in Southampton, he is now married with three children. Certainly a "go getter" and I found it not only interesting but very entertaining listening to what he's been doing over the past two decades. He still has a property just out side Bulawayo plus a few head of cattle.

Chris Warden

Over the last few years I've heard very little of Chris who is still running his tour business in Kariba. He writes *"still in Kariba, living on Aerial hill, with great view over Lake and Zambezi gorge. Have a guest cottage – Any daga boy who needs a night or 2 bed passing thru is welcome.*

I consult for a UK based travel safari operator and put together photographic safari trips in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi and Uganda. Also off the beaten track stuff, like Odzala and Ndoki in the Congo (Brazzaville) and Gorilla treks in Rwanda/Uganda. Take a few private safaris each year, all regionally and mostly with wildlife photographers.

See Rob Clifford each year at a travel show in London in January and again in Durban at Indaba – he represents the Rwanda Tourist board and is living in Basingstoke in the UK. He is doing much the same work as I am.

Steve Edwards passes thru here on a regular basis (bit too regular!!) – his Musango Camp near Bumi is ticking over. He and Wendy and the kids are now based in the Falls as there is no decent children's education here.

Willie de Beer

Alistair Hull visited Willie a few weeks back and notes – *"Bill Sykes (ex Group Captain, Rhodesian Airforce) and I went out to Ruwa yesterday(4th Sept) to visit Willem and Hazel DeBeer. We both needed to get details from him about the Shapi Lion incident for two people (Colin Saunders and Pete Simmonds, ex Rhodesian Airforce chopper pilot) who are writing books. Anyway, Willem seems pretty much his old self but has aged a bit and has difficulty walking, but typical of Willem, not one breath of self-pity or complaint. We also saw Hazel who unfortunately had a bad fall recently and broke her hip and some ribs and is in a wheel chair with a nurse in attendance. Willem just craves contact from his old Parks mates but unfortunately he has no phone so if anyone out there who has some time on their hands when passing through Harare please could they consider a visit to Willem and Haze."*

Norman Gardener

I bumped into Norman amongst one or two other Dagaboys whom I had not seen for many years of at the launch of John Osborne's book. Norman presently lives in Bulawayo and like many "ex farmers" is now in the mining business. He does not have email facilities and can only be contacted by cell phone (+263 91 383 084)

Viv Wilson

Now back from the Amazon and still very involved in research projects. Viv writes – *“enclosed a number of documents concerning our Carnivore Research Institute, which I hope will be of some use to you in any future news letters that you may send out regarding things still being undertaken by ex- National Parks’ staff.*

Roger MacDonald (1981–82)

Still in Harare where he runs a plastics company (Plastique Industries) manufacturing packaging. As readers of the Zimbabwe Fisherman magazine will confirm Roger is still a very keen and active angler who participates regularly in the Kariba tournaments. Married with three boys Roger notes that his family share in his enthusiasm for the outdoors and fishing.

New E-mail Addresses

Johnnie Bunce mungoko@ledanet.com.au

“Speedy” Holden holden@mweb.co.zw

Charles Mackie csmackie2004@yahoo.com

“A Guiding Son” – John Osborne launches his first book

Some two months back the Bulawayo Country Club was the chosen venue for John to launch his first book. The launch was exceptionally well attended with quite a number of Dagaboys present. Peter Rollason was the master of ceremonies and, after reading a passage from the book, “A Guiding Son,” introduced John to the folk present.

From the Fly cover - *“John Osborne has the remarkable gift of being able to see the funny side of most situations. In simple, easy style, he has recounted personal experiences in the African bushveld which captivates, entertains and instructs the reader of a passing era when animals roamed in great hers and concession areas offered proud trophies. This book is hilarious.*

“African hunting stories don’t come much better than some of those recounted in his book. Some of them will bring tears of laughter to you eye, some goose pimples to your skin, and a chill to your spine. It deserves to be required reading for all who have experienced the excitement of an African hunting safari, and it will be enjoyed by many who just like a good read, or who appreciate extraordinary characters. John Osborne is certainly one of that breed.” - Colin Saunders

The fact that over two hundred copies were sold at the launch speaks for itself. John writes entertainingly and in a manner similar to the way he speaks. “A Guiding Son” certainly gives one an insight into one aspect of the life of a PH not often dealt with namely the foibles and whims of some of the world’s would be hunters, it is light reading and amusing. For those in South Africa who would like to obtain a copy the cost will be eighty rand plus postage which I guess will be a further fifteen rand. John or possibly I will take books south for distribution, orders are required. Details regarding payment will be notified later.

Aubrey Pachtenham

Aubrey passed away on the 2nd of September after a long and bravely born illness. Many will remember Aubrey for his input into “Wildlife Forum,” the Sunday evening radio programme, hosted by Peter Rollason that ran for so many years. Incidentally I recall, on different occasions, hearing the voices of quite a number of Dagaboys over the air discussing issues pertinent to the day at gatherings or get togethers at the “Waterbucks Head”, the Wanke Safari Lodge and in the Matopos . He was also deeply involved in the Wildlife Society, the Hunters Association and the Bulawayo Bass Club. Aubrey was certainly a very active conservationist and his input will be sorely missed.

Conservation Issues

Carnivore Research Institute (CRI)

Taking into account that a number of Dagaboys do not have facilities to download attachments it has been regrettably necessary for me, to facilitate transmission to these folks, to amend the original layout, I have also unfortunately had to exclude whole sections of text. I will gladly forward the attachment in its entirety to those who are interested.

7 **A message from Vivian Wilson, Bulawayo Zimbabwe**

The face of Zimbabwe and especially the wildlife and 'Big Game' areas of Matabeleland are being altered at an alarming rate. Deforestation and the destruction of prime wildlife habitats and expanded agricultural programmes are causing great changes to the environment. As a result many wildlife species, and the large carnivores in particular, especially lions, leopards, cheetahs and wild dogs are now under greater threat than ever before.

At the present time land ownership in Zimbabwe is changing rapidly and while there are still small pockets of cheetah and other large carnivores outside National Parks, the situation could quite easily be very different in a few years time. Many cheetahs, leopards and even lions are snared and hunted illegally these days and I sincerely believe that if we are not careful we could quite easily lose all of our large carnivores outside protected areas in the very near future. For example an article in "The Standard Newspaper" of 7th March 2004 gives details of how lions in Matabeleland are being affected (Appendix 'A'). But it is not only lions that are suffering – the cheetah population in Zimbabwe is in an even worse situation and yet hunters are allowed to hunt cheetahs on licence. Even though we do not have the slightest idea how many leopards there are in Zimbabwe hunters are allowed to hunt about 350 animals each year.

Our knowledge of the carnivores of Zimbabwe is extremely poor and our understanding of the role that they play in areas outside National Parks is especially weak.

In view of the above the Carnivore Research Institute (CRI) was established in January 2004 with the specific intention of looking into the distribution and numerical status of the six large predators of Matabeleland. Without an accurate knowledge of the size of the populations of these predators it would be impossible to give accurate hunting quotas each year. A letter from the Senior Warden of National Parks at Sebungwe (Chirisa/Chizarira/Chete) to me dated 28th June 2004 gives some idea of what I am talking about (see below)

The CRI is a unique Zimbabwe and multi-species Carnivore Institute, with a Scientific Advisory Board of 10 eminent Zimbabwe Scientists, bringing world class research opportunities for the study of carnivores under national conditions in our National Parks and also in areas outside protected areas where several species are being hunted, some to near extinction.

In collaboration with the staff of the Parks and Wildlife Authority, supported by several Zoological Institutions in the USA the CRI has initiated a number of Carnivore Projects (as detailed).

Letter dated 28.06.04 from the Warden Sebungwe to the Carnivore Research Institute (The contents in paragraph 2 are of importance)

RE: CARNIVORE RESEARCH : SEBUNGWE SUB REGION

I am now the Senior Warden for the Sebungwe sub region, incorporating Chirisa Safari Area, Chizarira National Park and Chete Safari Area. The Two Safari areas have carnivores on their hunting quotas.

Usually carnivore populations and distribution are only indices from historical information on hunting success. While lion and leopard occur in the two Safari Areas and in the Chizarira National Park, cheetah may be extinct. The lion and leopard populations are not well known.

May I therefore invite you to help with some research work on carnivores in the said region. This research is important for management in general and for quota-setting in particular. I sincerely hope this invitation is in order and consistent with your passions and operations.

The Sebungwe sub region is part of the Western Region, of which Mrs. D. Tom is the Principal Warden. She is based at the Bulawayo Parks Office. You may communicate with her on this issue.

Best regards to your family.

C. Jakopo

Senior Warden

Sebungwe (Chirisa/Chizarira/Chete)

7 CARNIVORE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CRI)

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MISSION

The Carnivore Research Institute is dedicated to the conservation of all mammalian carnivores.

Its mission is to ensure the long term survival of all carnivores by sustainable utilization and conservation through field research, management programmes and captive breeding of endangered species.

Introduction

A study of the distribution and abundance of leopard, cheetah and brown hyaena in Matabeleland has drawn attention to the importance of the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site, the Hwange National Park and north-western Zimbabwe to the regional welfare of these and other large predators.

The Matobo Hills is highly significant as one of the areas of major biological diversity with multi-ethnic connotations of importance to an understanding of the ethno-biology of southern Africa since the stone age. Because of its geomorphology and climate it has been a focal point of biological diversity and social interaction for millennia. Its special attributes combined to bring together a surprising array of wild species and attracted people from a broad spectrum of activities as cultures evolved and underwent changes in south-central Africa. Recent recognition of the area as a World Heritage Site has intensified the need to better understand the area within its broader biological and cultural environment. The Carnivore Research Institute has therefore been set up to study the bio-diversity of this area and to further examine the home range, movement, behaviour and ecology of the leopard, cheetah and brown hyaena of this unique site.

In addition to the distribution and status of these three large predators, the distribution and status of lion, wilddog and spotted hyaena will also be undertaken for the whole of

Matabeleland. At the same time that the large predators are being studied the Southern African Python's distribution and status will be investigated.

As only a few small carnivores have been studied in depth and as the large members of the group have a strong positive tourism value and a strongly negative agricultural livestock value, it has been decided to focus attention on all species occurring in Matabeleland. Initial studies have already begun to examine these predators within the context of their prehistorical and geographical ranges, and in the light of ongoing investigations into the biological diversity of the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site and the Hwange National Park.

Recognizing the need to have clearly defined research objectives, the Institute will in the initial stages concentrate on the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site, Hwange, Kazuma Pan, Zambezi and Chizirira National Parks. While doing so it will also exploit other research opportunities elsewhere in Matabeleland as they arise, that are cost effective, or provide comparative information and a fuller understanding of the carnivores. It will establish a computer database covering all carnivores occurring in Western Zimbabwe. It will also make maximum use of the literature and co-operate to the fullest with appropriate research being undertaken by the staff of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and by other conservation and research organizations in order to deliver the products expected of a high calibre scientific body.

Commencing with the six large predators mentioned above, the Institute will also examine the distribution and abundance of all the lesser carnivores occurring in Matabeleland in relation to their main prey or shifts in their feeding preferences. Examination of factors limiting population growth will include the numerical relationship between predators and their prey; the importance of habitat change; and the significance of human persecution, in relation to the legal status and financial value of the species to landholders and the broader wildlife sector.

History of Research

The Carnivore Research Institute is a direct product of research that has been undertaken by the Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage and Research Centre since 1973. The Organisation then became the Chipangali Wildlife Trust in 1977 and was registered as a Private Voluntary Organisation in the same year (No. 38/77).

Besides caring for orphaned, abandoned, confiscated, sick and injured wild animals which could not be returned to the wild immediately, if at all, the Chipangali Wildlife Trust has two other main objectives. These are a Children's Conservation Education Centre and a Wildlife Research Unit. The Research Unit has undertaken work on the captive animals in its care as well as carrying out wildlife surveys throughout Zimbabwe and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Since 1985 field surveys and research have concentrated on the antelopes of Africa culminating in a seminal study on the duikers of Africa. This 800 page volume was published in 2002 and covered all 16 species of duikers that occur in Africa and involved work in more than 20 African countries. The Trust has now shifted its attention to the mammalian carnivores of Zimbabwe and to that end have set up the Institute now described in this document.

Justification for the Carnivore Research Institute

As already indicated, detailed knowledge of many of the species of the Carnivores occurring in Zimbabwe is fragmentary. This makes management of many species and natural ecosystems of which they are part, difficult, although top predators at the pinnacle of the food web are often particularly useful indicators of the conservation status of the system. This is obviously important within the ecological reserves created to conserve biological diversity, but also outside in the vast areas of Africa suffering from degradation due to poor agricultural and pastoral practices. Furthermore, this importance is growing as wildlife becomes recognized and more generally used as the single best land use for conserving biological productivity, generating income and alleviating poverty in the arid and semi-arid savannas that extend over about three quarters of Africa south of the Sahara.

Africa's spectacular indigenous megafauna has a comparative economic advantage over that anywhere else in the world. Furthermore, recent studies have demonstrated that it is often the single highest generator of income where rainfall is less than about 760mm, yielding up to five times the sustainable return from, say, livestock. Also, the ecological and economic hazards of crop and livestock production on agriculturally marginal land have been accentuated since the 1970s by the declining global terms of trade for many ubiquitous agricultural commodities, cereals and red meat. These are now more readily available at lower real prices on world markets than they have been for the past 30 to 40 years. Under such circumstances, it is often not possible to produce the commodities sustainably and profitably and this accounts for much of the widespread desertification visible throughout the drier regions of Zimbabwe. Landholders are left with the alternative of raping and then leaving the depleted land or of introducing more productive forms of sustainable production. It is here that wildlife has its highest potential and the large carnivores in particular.

A diversified wild fauna with its area of specific uniqueness and highly marketable charismatic species is very valuable if used correctly. The fauna can be used to add significant economic tiers to an animal production system, while the flora can yield plants with specific properties. In the case of animals it is often the species composition and diversity of the fauna of an area, that contributes to this high value and the large predators in particular, add disproportionately to the overall value of a spectrum of animals. Understanding the underlying economic and ecological relationships is basic to sound land use and its adaptation to policies governing land use on a given property, especially the different goals inside and outside special conservation areas.

Collaboration with Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and Other Research and Conservation Organizations

The CRI will work closely with the field staff and research ecologists of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. All data collected by the CRI will be given to that Authority for their records and data base and ownership of all data will be by the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

All projects undertaken by the CRI in the Hwange National Park will automatically fall directly under the auspices of the Hwange Carnivore Research Unit and the ecologist in charge of that Unit. To this end Mr. V.J. Wilson, Director of the CRI, already has the necessary research permits to undertake carnivore studies in that Park. In addition, research permits are also available for carnivore and biodiversity studies in the Matobo National Park and other protected areas in Matabeleland. A Memorandum of Understanding between the CRI and the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority is also in place.

The CRI will liaise closely with the staff of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, the Rhodes Matopos Estate, the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site Management Committee, the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo and the Department of Forest Resources and Wildlife Management at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and all other carnivore projects already established in the country.

Guiding the Institute

The CRI will be administered as an autonomous entity by the Chipangali Wildlife Trust under its Chairman, Mr. Peter Rollason. The Trustees have entrusted supervision of the research programme and its activities to a Scientific Advisory Board of 10 eminent local scientists under the Chairmanship of Prof. Samson Sibanda. The Director and Secretary of the Institute is Mr. Vivian Wilson, the founder and moving spirit behind the whole Chipangali venture since its inception in 1973.

The research programme will be undertaken as a series of nine individual projects and that individual scientists, counterparts of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and volunteers will be responsible for bringing these projects to conclusion by due date and for publishing the outcomes. In the tradition of Chipangali, a piece of research will not be accepted as finished until it has been written up, reviewed and published.

Carnivore and African Python Surveys and Captive Breeding Programme

The carnivore surveys to be undertaken in the field and the captive breeding projects listed below give details of the work to be undertaken by the research staff of the

Carnivore Research Institute, research volunteers and attachment University students of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo, and counterparts of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

1. The distribution and numerical status of leopard, cheetah, brown hyaena, spotted hyaena, lion and wilddog in Matabeleland. Special attention will be paid to the Matobo, Hwange, Kazuma Pan, Zambezi and Chizirira National Parks and to the Matetzi, Tuli Circle, Chete and Chirisa hunting safari areas;
2. Check list and atlas of all Carnivores occurring in Matabeleland;
3. Detailed study of the home range and movement, ecology and behaviour of radio-collared leopard and brown hyaena in the Matobo National Park;
4. The movement patterns of radio-collared leopard, cheetah and brown hyaena released into the Hwange National Park and their inter-specific competition with naturally occurring large predators;
5. The food and feeding habits of the leopard, as determined by scat analysis, in the Matobo National Park;
6. The inter-action and prey selection of the six (6) large carnivores in the Hwange National Park;
7. Survey of the distribution and status of the Southern African Python throughout Zimbabwe;
8. The development of a small carnivore and African Python Research and Captive Breeding Centre at the Carnivore Research Institute's facilities at 5 Kelvedon Road, Matsheumhlope, Bulawayo.
9. A detailed bio-diversity survey of all animal species occurring in the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site with special emphasis on carnivores, other mammals, reptiles and amphibians, fish, birds and selected invertebrate groups

4th September, 2004

VIVIAN J. WILSON
Research Director
Carnivore Research Institute

Elephants Call Long Distance After Hours

From Mark & Janette Brightman

African elephants have perfected the art of calling long-distance. They make the most of their calls at night, when it is cooler and sound travels farthest. Close to 70 different sounds or "messages" used by elephants have been identified.

Michael Garstang, a meteorologist at the University of Virginia, says that many of the rumbling calls occur at the level of infrasound (roughly between 1 and 20 Hz), which travel long distance. Humans can hear the upper harmonics, although it is more like feeling the vibrations in your diaphragm. Atmospheric conditions can severely limit the distance.

Garstang and his team collected and analysed more than 1300 calls made by elephants on the Namibian savanna, where daytime temperatures frequently reach 49°C, and winds blow at up to 32 km/h.

Calls made when atmospheric conditions are optimum can be heard over at least 285 km², according to Garstang. Wind gusts and heat waves reduce that distance to less than 2.6 km².

Garstang found that 96% of the infrasound calls designed to travel long-distance occurred during the hours of dusk and dawn, when ideal atmospheric conditions occur. At this time temperatures drop and the winds are quiet. Calls made during these optimum times could be heard up to 10 km away.

The ability to be heard over long distances is crucial to elephant survival. From an evolutionary point of view, one of the most important long-distance calls signals a female's readiness to mate. A female wants to secure the best male. If her call went less than 1.6 km, the chance of her finding a really good male would be very small.

Maintaining contact with other groups within their home range is also essential. According to Joyce Poole, scientific director of the Savanna Elephant Vocalisation Project in Amboseli, elephants live in a fission-fusion society, which means close relatives frequently come together and split up again. "Members of a family and bond-group maintain contact with one another over distance by using contact calls. These powerful low-frequency calls are clearly

meant to travel long distance." Long-distance communication allows groups to maintain a certain amount of separation from one another in times of food stress.

Garstang speculates that an evolutionary imperative might have led elephants to communicate during the best environmental conditions. Poole, who has been listening to elephants for several decades, is not so sure. Although elephants vocalise more in the early mornings and in the evenings, this also happens to be a time of day (in Amboseli at least) when they are interacting more, she said. The increase in communication at these times of day isn't necessarily because they want to communicate long-distance; many of the calls are meant for close-distance communication.

Poole notes that as habitats and social circumstances change, so too do the reasons for communicating. In different populations, the frequency of call types varies. The extreme conditions in Namibia may explain the differences Garstang and she have observed, Poole said.

Understanding what elephants hear and communicate has implications for conservation. According to Garstang there is a tremendous amount of sound being transmitted in nature. And the noise created by humans could have a huge impact.

In Amboseli, elephants must contend with four diesel generators and scores of minibuses, all of which interfere with their ability to communicate, Poole said. "One musth male expressed his displeasure by musth-rumbling every time a minibus departed from the lodge two kilometres away."

Garstang said it is believed that elephants can hear thunderstorms as far as 160 to 240 km away. When culling was being done in some of the parks, the elephants could clearly detect and identify the thumping sound of the helicopter blades from 130 to 140 kilometres away, identify it as danger, and take off in the opposite direction.

Poole said, "Elephants' 'vision' - through low-frequency communication - is larger than ours. We need to take this larger vision into consideration when setting boundaries for parks, establishing corridors between protected areas, and in considering cross-border movements and protection."

REFERENCE:

National Geographic News, March 3, 2004 - Hillary Mayell

The Elephant Problem in Kruger

Unfortunately limitations pertaining to e-mails/ attachments have again precluded my reproducing the four articles received pertaining to the Nelspruit Elephant Debate which was chaired by Tony Ferrar.

I will gladly forward all the attachments to interested parties.

Conclusions from the Nelspruit Elephant Debate - Tony Ferrar

The WESSA elephant debate in Nelspruit on 6th August 2004 highlighted many of the important issues involved. Most were presented and discussed by panellists, others were raised via discussion from the floor. Shortage of time robbed the debate of real depth and many statements were allowed to go unchallenged. There were other matters that were not raised at the meeting but have since been discussed with colleagues and participants. The synthesis below is offered after some reflection on the issues and on the up-coming decision that faces SANParks officials.

First, some observations on the public debate. Only one of the half dozen panellists advocated culling. All the others opposed it or accepted it only as the mechanism of last resort. Only the HSUS statement flatly stated that elephants should not be killed. I felt that if there was a consensus among those who spoke, including from the floor, it was that culling might ultimately and unfortunately be necessary (and therefore acceptable?) but that the scientists had made a poor case for it.

There were fundamental contradictions in the scientific evidence presented, either supporting some form of elephant control or the opposite. Bruce Page stated clearly, he had changed his mind in the last five years, presumably based on weight of scientific evidence. At the meeting, scientific evidence was brutally summarised but there were also cases of narrow and even biased interpretations of the information gathered. On the one hand there was

mention of “mature trees declining by 93%” (this was a misrepresentation of what was measured) and another of recent analysis of remote sensing images (or aerial photos) showing that culling has had no significant impact on tree cover (or something similar). Even an experienced scientist would be baffled by such apparent contradictions that in fact are only remotely connected (if true).

Then we had Bruce Page stating that, “animals cannot exceed their carrying capacity” – which appeared to be a bit of circular reasoning based on his complex definition of how ‘carrying capacity’ should be defined. That was topped by Michelle Hofmeyer, who cheerfully stated that, “mature trees are pretty capable of looking after themselves.” I had brief visions of baobab workshops developing elephant avoidance behaviour among senior citizens in excess of 30 metres girth; and ground hornbills going on strike for improved housing conditions.

There appear to be two scientific ‘camps’. First there’s the conventional view, typically held by the more experienced ‘management scientists’ employed by conservation agencies. This was exemplified by Willem Gertenbach’s presentation. These ecologists tend to see real and potentially irreversible loss of biodiversity or habitat in their parks and believe there is no practical alternative to culling to control elephant numbers. The second camp, mostly NGO- or university-based researchers, tend to interpret ecological changes as ‘natural fluctuations’ and management interventions such as culling as misguided fiddling with the system. They emphasise the more complex causes and effects, thereby increasing uncertainty and the need for more research. The weakness in these arguments is not so much in the science as in their self-serving conclusions (more research) and that as outsiders they can’t be held accountable for the management consequences if they are wrong.

Scientists are letting us down here. Most lay people can’t separate good science from bad – useful from misleading. Scientific results are often biased due to the “strings attached” to the sources of funding. Douw Grobler advocated immuno-suppression as the option of choice. His objectivity is influenced by the fact that he makes a good living out of applying this technology. Because ecology is such an imprecise science the unknowns always vastly outnumber the known facts and assumptions dominate results. Researchers are frequently poor interpreters or communicators of their own work.

The interested public, the shareholders of SANParks, deserve a better return for the public money that is spent on science and research. This applies as much to government funded research as it does to NGO- or university-funded work. It is all public money. One way to strive for clarity is for scientists to engage in more robust and critical debate. The complex issues, misunderstandings and subsequent decisions, cut to the very heart of our practice of conservation in South Africa. An issue of this importance must be treated in the same way as a full Environmental Impact Assessment for an issue of highest sensitivity. Somehow the debate must include representatives of all Interested and Affected Parties. **There must be more clarity and understanding** (assuming there will never be consensus!) around the conclusions and recommendations that our scientists come to.

Key scientific and technical issues raised in Nelspruit:

1. There is a long history of information gathering in Kruger NP. Primarily this comes from staff involved in research, monitoring and management over the last 40 years. Conventional wisdom derived from this body of experience indicates that vegetation changes in the Park are unsustainable and undesirable. High elephant numbers, although not being the only cause, are a key factor in widespread and rapid reduction of large trees and in simplifying ecosystems towards an unattractive uniform scrubby vegetation structure. There is evidence that this process is reducing biodiversity and heterogeneity of habitat.
2. There are contradictory results from specific research projects, mainly conducted by independent researchers that dispute the conclusions drawn from this large body of experience. These results do not dispute the obvious changes that are taking place but highlight alternative causes such as fire and other herbivores. Although the evidence for impacts on biodiversity was not reviewed in any way at Nelspruit, what

was discussed does reflect the wider picture. There is evidence of biodiversity loss in eastern and southern Africa where elephants have been left unchecked. Prominent local extinctions have occurred and habitats have been simplified. There are contrary research results, I think from Chobe, that record increasing biodiversity in elephant disturbed ecosystems. Is the seduction of 'remarkable new findings' playing a role here?

3. Alternatives to culling do not exist for the purpose of significantly reducing Kruger's present elephant density. The range extension option, presented by the creation of the Greater Limpopo TFCA, has very limited chances of providing the effective extra space within an acceptable time frame. If and when it does provide space, it will only postpone the problem, not solve it.
4. Promising contraceptive technologies such as immuno-suppression do exist. These have demonstrated an ability to slow population growth-rates without any apparent side effects, but only among small, contained populations, this technology has some way to go before all important/potential side effects have been tested. It also appears to have very limited potential for free-ranging or large populations the size of Kruger's. The most vociferous promoters of the application of this technology to Kruger's elephants are those who one way or another stand to benefit from the huge amounts of funding that would have to be raised to apply it.
5. Kruger is unique in Africa as the only really large Protected Area that is fenced. Although the fences are coming down, it remains for all practical purposes an enclosed PA. No matter what plans there are to remove the border fence, it seems likely to remain effectively fenced, if not by wire then either by people or by politics. The fact of enclosure has consequences for management. Kruger's elephants have lost not only their main predator and agent of disturbance: man, but have also lost their ability to move out, a highly developed and important survival mechanism in Africa's dynamic ecosystems. 'Solutions' to the similar problem in Chobe or Tsavo do not necessarily apply to Kruger.
6. The enclosed Kruger Park also carries a major tourism industry with huge investments in infrastructure, both within and outside the Park. This reality means that management options probably do not include, "letting nature take its course" if that course were to threaten local tourism. This in turn, means that the management objectives for the Park include an aesthetic (or commercial) component, whether this is stated as such or not. This means there is a de facto dictum, "What visitors want to see must be protected". [It is interesting that in other African countries where conservation capacity is low, justifying the privatisation/commercialisation of PAs is quite easy to argue on the basis that it provides improved biodiversity for the discerning visitor, i.e. that a successful economic objective is better than a failing biodiversity objective.]

This last point heads into distinctly non-scientific territory. The high level of Park use by visitors has created a deepening dependence on tourism to finance park management. This raises a key question: To what extent has SANParks translated this reality into appropriate management objectives? If they haven't, how do they intend to handle these fundamentally "aesthetic" or "economic" aspects that are fundamental to the main use of the Park and its economic sustainability.

Issues of a more non-scientific nature:

In addition to these scientific issues, the Nelspruit debate highlighted that there are other important perspectives on the management of elephants in Kruger. I won't dwell on these matters in depth as others are better equipped to do so. They could mostly be considered under headings such as "Social", "Ethical" or "Aesthetic" issues. They include the legal, administrative and political forces that are brought to bear. These vary from being internal (local laws and regulations and local party politics) to the international conventions and good neighbour agreements to which South Africa subscribes. Examples include:

- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)
- SADC Wildlife Management Protocols
- IUCN - various species-specific Working Group management plans
- Greater Limpopo TFCA agreement.

Some of these are statutory and legally binding, while others are co-operative and advisory by nature. Not all of these administrative instruments are workable, and those that are don't necessarily achieve their stated objectives. Such failures have diverse causes. For some it may be market forces (ivory trade) for others, a lack of capacity or resources to implement the arrangements effectively (dysfunctional conservation or policing agencies).

The advent of a community orientation in conservation two to three decades ago has added a further dimension to the political economy of "wise use". (This synonym for conservation is now replaced by the politically correct but almost meaningless catch-all "sustainable development"). The problem with a community orientation is that the beneficiary communities are mostly minorities with very small political influence. The two Nelspruit presentations from such communities also illustrated that there is a strong protectionist ethic behind the attitudes and cultures of local people. This is similar to the typically "western protectionism" in its effect, but is refreshingly devoid of what I see as "affluence-and-TV-driven sentimentality".

I feel that the scientific rationale behind the need to manage elephants will always be used as the primary reason for taking action or not doing so. However it will generally be the other, less tangible issues that are the real and often unstated reasons for a course of action. Here it is worth noting that when the major changes occurred in Kruger's management plans, five to ten years ago, the fire and water management changes were readily implemented but the elephant recommendations were not, despite the whole plan being accepted by the 'decision makers'. The decision not to resume culling in terms of the plan was a blatantly political one.

If science is to be used as the main basis for making decisions then I am reminded by colleagues, of certain principles of decision-making that apply in complex arenas with deficient information. One is the well-known 'precautionary principle', which is also used in the EIA process. This states in effect that the course of action taken should always be that of least regret – the decision that holds least risk of irreversible failure – the one that forecloses least on future options. In the management of natural resources this does not necessarily mean laissez-faire. In Kruger, where culling was an established practice for 26 years we still have future options that are possibly not available to the ecosystems of Amboseli or Chobe. Although commentators reflect on those 26 years almost with horror, there is little evidence of any negative impact on the elephant population or on the human/elephant interaction, which incidentally is naturally one of predator and prey. A thorough debate on the application of the precautionary principle to Kruger's elephant problem is merited.

The principle of 'Management by Objectives' is well established in Kruger; in the last ten years probably more clearly, energetically and 'correctly' than in any other large reserve in Africa. In a shrinking world of spiralling human pressure and global climate change it is difficult to argue for any alternative paradigm of management. To stand by and let nature take its course into the unknown, when the human impact on these no longer pristine systems far outweighs that of elephants, is not defensible. MBO implies learning as much from ones mistakes as from ones successes. It applies equally well to situations of uncertainty as in highly informed circumstances. It requires correct identification of vital signs, continuous monitoring, record taking, archiving and analysis. It requires careful reflection in the light of all this accumulated wisdom and then the boldness to make tough decisions in line with clearly stated objectives. South Africa is a world leader in conservation management. We have learned and experienced a great deal from noteworthy successes and failures in the past. We have a world-class solid foundation to build on, without fear or favour.

There is a growing branch of science and applied mathematics that deals with decision making in complex and uncertain environments. These instruments and other sources of scientific rules (have you heard of Occam's Razor?) that might apply to Kruger's looming elephant crisis, need to be brought to the table. Scientists owe it to society to enhance the value and clarity of the important contribution they have to make. This in particular is a leadership function for which SANParks must take responsibility.

In conclusion, I expect that elephant culling will be justified in due course, at least for the population reduction component of the elephant management plan. Later options, for holding the population within whatever limits are decided on, may be able to benefit from other

technologies. Because of the present political and moral environment in SA, and in the light of western-influenced public sentiment, this decision will be very difficult to take. The Minister, or whoever takes it, will be damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. However, it should happen sooner rather than later as the problem increases in direct proportion to our growing elephant numbers. And surely, when the day comes, more appropriate techniques need to be developed to handle the large numbers involved.

The 2004 Hwange Game Count

The annual 24 hour game count was held on the 27th and 28th of September. Although figures are not to hand at this point in time indications are that it is doubtful whether the results will be any more than of interest value only!

Reflections

The following snippets have been taken from the "Report of the "Game Section" – Department of Research & Specialist Services for the period ended 31st December 1953"

1. Introduction:

The Game Section was created on the 1st February, 1952, under the Entomological Branch of the Division of Agriculture and Lands. For administrative reasons it was transferred to the office of the Director of Research and Specialist Services on the 1st of April, 1953.

Administration

4. Staff:

The establishment of the Section consists of a Game Officer, a Game Clerk and a Vermin Ranger, the Ranger's post remaining vacant throughout the period. The Game Clerk was transferred on promotion and his place taken by a temporary official, who resigned on the 31st December 1953. Expansion is obviously necessary if any attempt is to be made to manage the wild fauna and fish of the Colony on a proper basis.

Policy & Legislation

5. The administration of the Game and Fish Preservation Act (Chapter 187) as amended, based broadly on the policy adopted by the Department of Forestry, has been continued.

10. It is apparent that existing legislation is outdated, inadequate and difficult of enforcement, and that new legislation designed to meet present day conditions is urgently required.

Any new legislation should, however, incorporate the principle contained in the International Convention for the Preservation of the Fauna and Flora of Africa.

15. Enforcement of the Game laws

It is evident that contraventions of the Game Laws are common occurrences, and from the figures given in regard to licences*, by no means all or nearly all of the offenders, are apprehended. Many of the European cases are tried in district courts, and comparatively few reports appear in the press

*Hunting game without Licences

Year	No of Cases		Race of Accused			Employed	Unemployed
	Reported	Cleared	European	Native	Other		
1950	334	334	34	283	-	114	201
1951	183	179	38	143	1	92	90
1952	206	205	40	163	2	106	98

Elephant Control

16. Control of elephants causing damage to crops and in Tsetse Fly Areas continues to be a major problem which can be solved only by the creation of a unit properly trained and equipped.

The method of issuing permits to Native Commissioners and Civil Commissioners or deputies appointed by them, to shoot a limited number of elephant, and the sale of Royal Game Licences, has been continued as an interim measure.

The destruction of elephant in Tsetse Fly Areas rests largely in the hands of those members of the public who seek permits to hunt them. In the Mtoko Area in particular, and to a lesser extent in other Fly Areas, the elephants are becoming aggressive, and very often take offensive action against the hunter. It is with regret that the death of Mr Victor Strobel is recorded while hunting elephant in the Mtoko district. Other hunters have reported narrow escapes.

Survey of the Game Distribution of the Colony

19. The development of the plateau for farming and the lowveld for ranching is having the effect of pushing the wild animals into the Zambezi Valley in the North and the Limpopo basin in the south and south east. Tsetse fly operations account for some 20,000 head each year, and now cover an area extending from the Sebungwe district through the Urungwe, North Lomagundi, Darwin and Mtoko districts almost without a break. In addition, the south eastern corner of the Colony, including part of the Gona-re-Zhou Game Reserve, is being shot out for Tsetse Fly Control.

That part of the Gona-re-Zhou Game Reserve lying between the Lundi and Nuanetsi Rivers has been allocated to Native Purchase Area and the abundance of big game animals, including elephant, buffalo and lions in large numbers, will in time be eliminated to permit native settlement.

International Convention for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa

20. Southern Rhodesia is a signatory to the International Convention for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa through the government of the United Kingdom. By virtue of full membership of the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara (C.C.T.A) Southern Rhodesia was represented in her own right, by the game Officer, at the Third International Conference held in Bukavu, Belgian Congo, during the period 26th-31st October 1953.

The work of the conference consisted of an examination of the 1933 Convention and the London Meeting of 1938, in the light of experience gained, the amendment of the Convention to meet present day conditions, and suggestions to Governments on matters of principle which should be kept in mind when elaborating or enforcing general policy in matters of exploitation or protection of the Africa fauna and flora. In addition, signatory Governments were called upon to state what measures had been taken by them to implement the Convention

Future Policy

22. As yet no attempt has been made to define the future policy on the wild fauna of Southern Rhodesia for consideration by Government.....

Since the creation of the Game Section efforts have been made to determine the views of the various departments concerned on matters of game management and control....It is quite apparent that opinions differ(from one extreme to another) and that little or nothing will be achieved if each time a matter of policy is to be decided the views of every interested party have to be obtained by correspondence. The formation of a "Game Committee" or Game Advisory Board" composed of representatives of departments and the public (Wild Life Protection Society, Southern Rhodesia National Anglers' Union, Southern Rhodesia National Hunters' and Game Preservation Association) would be of tremendous assistance, not only in regard to policy, but also in dealing with contentious problems of an administrative nature.

Southern Rhodesia has possessed an abundance of wild fauna, but stocks have been sadly depleted, largely in an attempt to control and eradicate the Tsetse Fly. Apart from the creation of National Parks which serve a purpose of their own very little has been done to utilize and exploit the wild life fauna for food, for profit or for recreation, and it is plain fact that in many respects this Colony is far behind other African territories.

Comparisons are odious, but in making the statement contained in the preceding paragraph a comparison of the strengths of various organizations entrusted with the administration of wild fauna , serves useful purposes and illustrates the extent to which the Colony is lagging:-

	Transvaal	Tanganyika	Kenya	Southern Rhodesia
European	27	17	15	3
Africans	35	352	220	-

Honorary Staff	200 +/-	32	106	-
Asiatic	-	12	-	-

Northern Rhodesia has been excluded from the above because the Game and Tsetse Control Departments are combined. Staff consists of 20 Europeans, 2 Euro-Africans and 320 Africans, of which, it is understood, less than 20 Africans are engaged on game extermination.

Now is the time to pause and take stock of the situation in Southern Rhodesia. Wild animal life is credited with wonderful powers of rehabilitation, provided the original stock is not reduced below a certain level, in which case there is no recovery.

Control is an essential aspect of conservation, and the destruction of wild animals causing damage to crops or jeopardising agricultural interests, or unwanted for any other reason must be planned and executed on a sound basis.

In conclusion, the liberty is taken in quoting from the published policy of the Transvaal Provincial Administration:-

“The recreational value of wild life is being brought to the fore by the pace of modern life, which drains the mental and physical capacities of man to the utmost. It is well known that the efficiency of human activities is closely related to suitable recreation and that weariness can be shaken off nowhere more easily than in the open. No wonder, therefore, that nature in most of the highly industrialised countries of the world is specifically protected on account of her recreational value. For the beneficial use of the Leisure of old and young there is nothing better than an acquaintance with the secrets of plant and animal life. Captain RF Scott, the indefatigable explorer wrote in his last letter to his wife “ Make the boy interested in natural history if you can, it is better than games.”

The economic value of the fauna and flora of a country, like that of its other natural resources, is incalculable. No country can do without it and the richest land in the world will go to rack and ruin unless reckless and short-sighted exploitation of its surface is guarded against. It is the duty of every individual, but in the first instance that of the state, to ensure that these sources are not exploited to personal advantage, or even to the advantage of a single generation. In this connection Dr WT Hornaday wrote as follows almost half a century ago: “The wild animal life of today is not ours to do with as we please. The original stock is given to us in trust for the benefit of both the present and the future. We must tender an accounting of this trust to those who come after us.”

In Conclusion

I found the contents of the “Future Policy” of the Game section to be very thought provoking. I could ramble on about “Our Department” its achievements etc but to what point, we were politically incorrect, the values of a new generation and agency now hold sway.

A question in closing – has the state, through it’s ineptitude, permitted the exploitation of a resource to effect both personal and political advantage? The decimation of wild life across the country suggests this to be so. So there we have it – I would suggest it’s action not only contradicts the mission statement above but also that of the present custodians and that of the state as well. Where do we go to from here?