

ZIMBABWE CONSERVATION TASK FORCE



*Only after the last tree has been cut down.
Only after the last river has been poisoned.
Only after the last fish has been caught.
Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten.*

Cree Indian Prophecy

12th January 2012

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We hope all our readers had a very happy Christmas and we wish you a prosperous New Year. We sincerely hope we will see an improvement in the poaching situation in 2012.

BABY ELEPHANT RESCUED

A baby elephant was found wandering alone down the Kario/Makuti stretch of road recently with no sign of any other elephants in sight. It is believed that his family may have been frightened off by something as their tracks lead far off into the bush.

After spending the whole day with him, Andries Scholtz along with Bryce and Lara Clemence and others organised with National Parks to have him taken to Kariba for the night and the following day, he was taken to Mwanga Lodge just outside Harare where he is being cared for by Gordon and Debbie Putterill. The baby elephant has been named Kunda and Gordon and Debbie desperately need financial assistance to pay for his upkeep. Although he is only 3 weeks old, he will need 30 litres of special milk per day. If anyone is in a position to help, please contact us.

Yesterday the ZCTF donated 50kg of milk formula to Kunda and I took a trip out to Mwanga Lodge to deliver the donation.





KUNDA CAVORTING WITH DEBBIE PUTTERILL

We would like to thank all those involved in the rescue of Kunda.

ANIMALS DYING IN MANA POOLS

88 hippos, 45 buffaloes, 30 elephants and 2 kudus were found dead in Mana Pools National Park. Tests confirm that the hippos died of anthrax but the cause of death of the other animals has not yet been confirmed. The carcasses of the dead animals are being burnt to prevent the spread of the disease.

RHINO LOSSES IN 2011

Zimbabwe lost 23 rhinos to poachers last year which was a slight improvement on the 30 that were killed in 2010. Whilst the improved figures are encouraging, it is still completely unacceptable for even one rhino to be killed in view of the fact that they are an endangered species. 37 poachers and illegal horn dealers were arrested and a total of 100 rhino were immobilized for ear notching and horn implanting to facilitate individual identification and monitoring in the field. In addition to this, a US based animal protection group, the International Rhino Foundation launched "Operation Stop Poaching Now" to raise funds to equip rangers in Zimbabwe and South Africa with kits to help them track rhino poachers.

South Africa suffered much higher losses last year. 440 rhino were killed by poachers which is tragic.

MINING ACTIVITY IN AND NEAR HWANGE NATIONAL PARK

A fly over Hwange National Park has revealed that there are 3 coal mining developments, 2 adjoining the park and one actually inside the park.

The associated building of roads and increased human activity is bound to lead to an increase in poaching as the area is opened up, access becomes easier and there are more people in the area to carry out the poaching and to buy the poached meat.

Of even greater concern is the total devastation of large tracts of land in what was previously a wilderness area. It may not be possible to restore the wildlife once the habitat has been destroyed.

According to the Park and Wildlife Act, nobody may mine within a national park unless they have a written agreement from the Minister of Environment and Tourism and to date, it has not been established whether and of the 3 mines has such an agreement. In addition to this, before any development takes place, an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. The Provincial Environmental Manager for Matabeleland North and Bulawayo Provinces was not aware of the mining activities taking place, nor was she able to find any record of Environmental Impact Assessments being done.

ONGOING DESTRUCTION IN CHIREDDZI RIVER CONSERVANCY

Further to our September 2011 report, the destruction being caused in Chiredzi River Conservancy by land invaders continues unabated. They are cutting down huge riverine hardwood trees at the junction of the Chitora and Mungwezi Rivers. They are cutting everything right down to the river bed and the damage they are causing is permanent. Piles of wood for sale can be seen along the tar road.

Poaching is on the increase in all areas remaining with wildlife and the wild elephants are still being threatened. Livestock and people are putting pressure on the remaining wildlife areas. Game fencing is being stolen to make wire snares and as fast as the fences are replaced, they are stolen again.

Game guards and workers employed to try and control the situation are being threatened with violence if the poachers' dogs get shot while they are hunting.

THANK YOU

A very big thank you to the following people who have assisted us with funds recently:

**Carol Wales Smith
Chris Noon
John & Helen Buckle
Hugh Atkinson
Dorian Richardson
Casey Schadie
Teddy Fowles
Marja Kuiper
Liz Grainger**

We would like to make a special mention of a donation we received from Sarah McGarghan. Sarah has an srmphotography business and recently had a photo session called Buds and Buddies in which she invited the participants (children aged 5 - 19) to decide which organisation to donate a portion of events proceeds. One was a local food shelf, one was a local disaster relief fund and the third was the ZCTF. They chose the ZCTF and we would like to offer our heartfelt gratitude to these children for assisting in the preservation of wildlife in Zimbabwe.

Johnny Rodrigues

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Temporary website: www.zctfofficialsite.org.

The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force relies solely on public donations. Your donation can help to preserve the wildlife in Zimbabwe. If you would like to assist, please contact us.