



## For the sustainable use of wildlife

**Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier**  
**Internationaler Rat zur Erhaltung des Wildes und der Jagd**  
**International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation**  
**Международный Совет по Охоте и Охране Животного Мира**

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Contents Volume 11 Issue 3

EDITORIAL: South Africa May Trade Rhino Horn Legally.....	1
Rethinking the Ivory Trade.....	3
Maasai "Evictions" in Loliondo/Tanzania: A Land-Use Conflict or Human Rights' Violations? .....	4
Wildlife Poaching Southern Africa.....	6
Combating Crime with Commerce? .....	8
STOP PRESS: Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade ...	9
NEWS FROM AFRICA.....	9
Wildlife Crime Poses Unique Challenges to Protected Areas.....	9
Conservation official denies legal ivory trade to blame for poaching.....	10
First Black Rhino Import Permit Granted.....	10
Kenya: Ishaqbini's Hrola Sanctuary.....	11
Tanzania: Selous Game Reserve.....	12
Tanzania: World Heritage Committee discusses Selous Game Reserve.....	12
Tanzania: Dr. Richard Leakey proposes elevated highway over Serengeti.....	13
Importation of trophies from Africa into EU.....	13
Central African Republic: CITES Secretary-General calls for urgent action to protect elephants in the Dzanga-Sanga National Park.....	14
Central African Republic: A week with the Ba'aka Hunter-Gatherers.....	15
Zimbabwe: Rifa Conservation Education Camp – The Power of Place .....	18
South Africa: Questionnaire on international hunters.....	20
Genetic contamination.....	21
Obituary: Dr Vivian J. Wilson 1932-2012.....	22
Obituary: Anthony King dies in an air crash.....	22
BOOK REVIEW: The Serengeti in Watercolours .	22

## EDITORIAL: South Africa May Trade Rhino Horn Legally

Rolf D. Baldus

South Africa's rhinos are in peril. Since 2009, over 2000 rhinos have been poached with over 300 killed this year alone. CITES, as useful as it has been for endangered species since its inception, has clearly been ineffective in this case. Some say now that the strict rules of CITES must be applied even stricter. However, what is stricter than strict? Some say that the legal hunting of rhinos should now be banned. But why forbid the only legal way for private rhino owners to earn some money from and for their rhinos?

Under the current strategy there is an imminent danger that many rhino farmers can no longer afford the costs of protecting rhinos. The consequences of this strategy are obvious.

So, if an unsuccessful strategy has been followed for 30 years, it is probably a good idea to change it. Many experts are therefore proposing to follow a market-oriented strategy. There is a demand for horn in China and Vietnam, and there is a stock available in South Africa that can be replenished on a sustainable basis. Every economist would see an opportunity for trade here. If the demand can be met legally and at the same time the producers earn revenues to look after the natural resource on which they depend, the net result for conservation is likely to be positive.

The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) has therefore adopted a pro-trade-resolution at its recent general assembly in Budapest. The CIC

1. Proposes to replace the ineffective ban of trading rhino horn with an effective legal trading system for rhino horn under the auspices of CITES;
2. Calls on the Parties of CITES, governments of rhino range states, owners of stockpiled rhino horn and private rhino owners in Africa, as well as the governments of Asian countries where rhino horn products are consumed, and relevant national organizations for the integrity of traditional oriental medicines, to cooperate in creating the management framework for legal trading of rhino horn.

(see: [http://www.cic-wildlife.org/uploads/media/04b\\_Recommendation\\_Rhino\\_Trade\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cic-wildlife.org/uploads/media/04b_Recommendation_Rhino_Trade_EN.pdf))

During the budget debates in parliament at the end of May, the South African government announced that they indeed intend to follow this route. They will propose to the next CITES Conference of Parties (COP), which will take place in South Africa in 2016, to lift the ban and to allow trade in rhino horn. I am not sure whether we have the time to wait for another three years. However I predict that there will be no two-thirds majority for South Africa's proposal. At the COP there will be too many delegates with an anti-use-bias and not enough governments with the stamina to take rational pro-conservation decisions against media-supported emotional campaigns.

However, the Convention itself offers a short-cut. My personal interpretation of the CITES text is that South Africa is allowed to start legal trade without the need to seek a decision from the next CITES COP. The reason is that the South African square lipped rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) is listed under CITES Appendix II as far as hunting for trophies and trading live animals are concerned. All other parts or products of these rhinos fall under Appendix I. The basis for the marketing of horn from captive rhinos is to be found in Article VII(4), where it is said: "*Specimens of an animal species included in Appendix I bred in captivity for commercial purposes... shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix II.*" A definition of "breeding" according to CITES is specified in Resolution Conf. 10.16. A number of conditions are provided there which apply to the case of the rhinos. They must for example be born in a controlled environment.

In terms of these CITES sanctioned rules, several operations in South Africa qualify as captive breeding operations which means that captive bred square lipped rhino products can be exported legally on the basis of a South African Appendix II export permit.

South Africa has been applying this ruling in exactly the same way in the case of captive bred cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*): between 1995 and 2012 South Africa exported altogether 857 live cheetahs for commercial purposes. Two commercial breeding enterprises have been successfully included in the register of captive breeding operations in accordance with provisions embedded in CITES Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP 15) '*Registration of operations that breed Appendix I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes*'. Therefore, registering some of the captive breeding operations for white rhinos in South Africa would be another option to facilitate the export of rhino horn without the need to seek the agreement of the CITES COP. Whatever is possible in the case of cheetahs should also be possible in the case of rhinos.

The South African authorities might hesitate to make such a decision. They attracted quite a bashing on the international scene, when they sold – completely legally - live rhinos to China a decade ago. They might not like to undergo the same political stress again, especially as the radicals are quick to call for international boycotts. This is a rather totalitarian and un-ethical approach, but many media do not hesitate to provide the needed publicity.

I do not claim that a controlled market supply with rhino can end all poaching. However, it may help. Time is running short for the rhinos. Decisions should not be shelved and the agenda should not be driven by ill-informed western animal lovers and by NGOs that make their money with emotional campaigns. Instead, the sovereign Government of South Africa should sit in the driver's seat. After all, these are South Africa's rhinos, aren't they?

*Note: This editorial appears under the sole responsibility of the author, and it does not necessarily imply that the other editors or CIC as an institution share the opinions contained. For further references and information about CITES regulations pls. consult the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of "The Evolution of CITES", written by Willem Wijnstekers and published by the CIC in English, French and Spanish. Downloads from: <http://www.cic-wildlife.org/index.php?id=723>*

## Rethinking the Ivory Trade

A recent article “ Rethinking Ivory: Why Trade in Tusks Won't Go Away” by : John Fredrick Walker (<http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/summer2013/rethinking-ivory-why-trade-in-tusks-won't-go-away>) resonates well with the editorial in this addition of African Indaba. Walker takes the reader through the events surrounding the burning of ivory stockpiles in Kenya and Gabon and the affect that these had on illegal trafficking in ivory. These high profile media events were supposed to send a strong message “...to poachers and illegal traders...” but on reflection appear to have had little impact. Illegal poaching of ivory has continued to escalate, even in Kenya where top officials in Kenya Wildlife Services and influential NGOs have been implicated. As Walker points out, elephant conservation is not simple and current strategies of burning ivory stockpiles and advocating for ivory trade bans have shown to be ineffective in stopping elephant killings.

Instead, elephant poaching has become more sophisticated and now involves criminal gangs who work in collusion with corrupt wildlife officials. And all because the demand for ivory has outstripped supply. The plight of elephants was hotly debated at the CITES conference in Bangkok, with many animal advocates laying the failure to stop poaching on CITES. On the positive side, what emerged from this CITES meeting was the grudgingly acknowledgment that if elephant conservation is to succeed, then a workable system to manage the trade in ivory has to be developed. To this end a working group of African and Asian nations has been established to investigate and propose “a process of trade in ivory” that is to be presented to member states for approval in three years time.



But, unlike with the rhino horn that involves just one country, the trade in ivory involves several African countries all with different and opposing views. Add to this the many animal groups who firmly believe that by killing off the trade permanently, the killing of elephants will stop. But this is wishful thinking since the demand for ivory is deeply embedded in many cultures.

The task of this working group will therefore be extremely challenging for not only will it have to deal with demand side of the equation but also with the fact that Africa's elephant population naturally produces sufficient ivory, an estimated 100 tons per annum, as a result of natural mortality and legitimate management actions. This ivory, termed “conservation ivory” by Walker, when combined with the existing stockpiles that exist is sufficient to meet the trade demand and thus is a legitimate source for legal trade.

The question is whether it is necessary to wait three years to get an answer. Like the rhino horn, there is no guarantee that the proposal advanced by the working group will be accepted irrespective of how sophisticated the trade agreement may be. Yet the mechanism to initiate this trade has already been put in place through a study commissioned by the CITES Secretariat in 2012 (see “*Decision-Making Mechanisms and Necessary Conditions for a Future Trade in African Elephant Ivory*”). Any delays in opening the legal trade in ivory will only serve to increase the demand and strengthen the black market which in turn means a further escalation in poaching.

As with the rhino horn, it is time to accept that a well-regulated legal trade in ivory should be re-opened sooner rather than later.



# Maasai “Evictions” in Loliondo/Tanzania: A Land-Use Conflict or Human Rights’ Violations?

African Indaba editor Dr. Rolf D. Baldus interviews Prof. Dr. Markus Borner

**Dr. Baldus:** *Over the last year Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s) have campaigned against an alleged eviction of thousands of Maasai in Loliondo, Northern Tanzania. The people would have to leave the land in order to give room for a hunting company. Tanzanian newspaper reported about protests of the Maasai. A petition website claims that they have collected nearly a million signatures against the “eviction” and the human rights violation of the Maasai. Marcus, what are the facts?*

**Prof. Borner:** The Loliondo Game Controlled Area (GCA), to the east of the Serengeti National Park, with a size of more than 4.000 km<sup>2</sup> forms an important part of the Serengeti ecosystem. It is an integral part of the migration routes. At the same time it is an important grazing area for the Maasai communities, and a productive area for tourism activities. For the past 20 years, conflict over the land between the government, investors and communities has carried on, with all sides firmly entrenched in their positions and seemingly no end in sight. Throughout this time, growing numbers of inhabitants and livestock as well as increasing climatic uncertainties including severe droughts have added to the challenges.

The proposal over the last ten years was to divest the management of the “Game Controlled Area”, which is legally an area designed for hunting and at the same time for activities like grazing, to the communities via a “Wildlife Management Area” (WMA). The latter is a special legal form of land, in which hunting and other wildlife uses are permitted under the management and for the benefit of the local communities.

A WMA would ensure that the communities would benefit from the conservation activities, that the Maasai would secure long-term land-rights, and photo-tourism and hunting could be practiced by entering into direct agreements with communities.

Unfortunately no agreement was ever reached on this land-conflict issue, despite a decade of discussions between communities, central government and NGO’s.

**Dr. Baldus:** *Some NGO’s claim that the Government wants to take away the land from the communities and hand it over to Arab hunters.*

**Prof. Borner:** The Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism explained to the local communities the value of the area for biodiversity conservation both nationally and internationally. He made it clear that this area is too important for the government of Tanzania to allow to become degraded, but he welcomed the local communities to participate in the management of the land and share the benefits. Community leaders rejected the Minister’s statement, insisting instead that the land should be used solely by the resident population without interference of overarching national or international interests. As this is against the prevailing law, the Government of Tanzania finally decided to earmark 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> of the existing Game Controlled Area for general unrestricted use to the resident population, with 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> along the Serengeti National Park boundary remaining as a GCA under central government control, mainly to conserve the diversity and the wildebeest migration of the Serengeti Ecosystem.

**Dr. Baldus:** *In a nutshell: there are no plans to evict the Maasai?*

**Prof. Borner:** Only insofar as there would be no agricultural activity and permanent settlements in the proposed new and greatly downsized GCA along the Serengeti boundary. If the Frankfurt Zoological Society can continue its role as a mediator between the communities and the central government, we will make sure that the Maasai can still graze their cattle there in droughts and can continue to use the area in their traditional lifestyle. The Government has also made it clear that revenues from photo tourism and hunting in the area should be benefiting the communities directly.

**Dr. Baldus:** *This may explain why the petition website, which collects signatures against the “evictions” and the human rights violations, has provided no proof for their allegations. How do you judge the fact that a million people sign such petitions against decisions of a sovereign African Government without informing themselves properly first?*

**Prof. Borner:** The Maasai are an interesting and handsome people that evoke all the dreams of western society for a life in harmony with nature. It is true that they are very tolerant of living together with wildlife and are consequently a good neighbour to the Serengeti National Park. Unfortunately, like the “American Indians” their lifestyle has been idealised by the western media. The truth seems to me that they are a people that are caught in the impossible situation to keep a traditional lifestyle and their obvious needs for development and integration into the modern Tanzanian Society. It is probably our own wish to dream back of when man was in harmony with nature that is colouring our pictures of the Maasai and led people to sign a petition like the ones circulating and it seems also very difficult to be able to get a balanced picture of the situation through the media and the reports from the human rights organisations.

**Dr. Baldus:** *What is the land situation in Loliondo? What are the demands of the Maasai?*

**Prof. Borner:** Land is getting scarce everywhere on the planet and land rights are key questions in Africa. In the case of Loliondo it is a question of importance and priority. There is of course the local priority of the Maasai living in that area and they insist that this should be the only concern. They reject national priorities (for example about tourism) and are unwilling to consider international priorities and agreements like the UNESCO World Heritage Declarations. Unfortunately nobody seems to consider the rights of future generations. The local priorities deal understandably mostly with the local and present needs, but biodiversity conservation and rights of future generations is seen as mainly the responsibility of the State. The conflict of these different priorities is at the heart of the present conflict. The decision of the government to release most of the old GCA to the present local demands and to keep the biodiversity and migration routes intact along the Serengeti boundary is a fair solution that takes all priorities into due consideration.

Also the Maasai are not a homogenous group. There are different interests existing and each of the many dozens of mostly foreign NGO's involved have a couple of Maasai who publicly support their positions.

**Dr. Baldus:** *Which role does the Tanzanian policy of “Community based Conservation” play?*

**Prof. Borner:** Tanzania – together with Namibia – were a leading force in developing and installing a new approach to conservation, where local communities get land and user rights for their wildlife, but in exchange have to take over responsibility for their conservation. FZS has been working with the Serengeti communities for many years to establish these locally administered Wildlife Management Areas in the Serengeti ecosystem. This was very successful in the west and the south of the park where communities now profit enormously from tourism and hunting: Unfortunately this could not be achieved in the east of the park, mainly because of the many conflicting interests, many of which are imposed from outside.

**Dr. Baldus:** *Are the Maasai the true indigenous inhabitants of the country, as some claim?*

**Prof. Borner:** The Maasai, even so labelled as indigenous by some human rights NGO's are not the original population of Tanzania. They are a Nilotic people that arrived in the Ngorongoro Area only around 1850, just a few years ahead of the German settlers. In their move from the north they displaced the indigenous local communities of the Hadzabe (a hunter and gatherer tribe like the San) and the Dorobos and Iraqw (earlier immigrants from the north).

**Dr. Baldus:** *How do you judge the policy of the Tanzanian Government in this conflict?*

**Prof. Borner:** The Government of Tanzania has not always been the most delicate when dealing with rights of local communities. Amazingly the Maasai are the one tribe in Tanzania that have been granted exclusive land rights within the country, namely in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. In Loliondo the Government has tried for a very long time to diffuse the long brewing conflict. The present proposal seems a good way forward.

The land conflict to the east of the Serengeti between local and national interests is likely to continue. It is hoped that the strong democratic processes that exist today in Tanzania will lead to an amicable resolution: A solution that supports the livelihoods of the present inhabitants of Loliondo, but also retains the unique wilderness value of the Serengeti ecosystem for the benefit of a future generation of residents and nationals alike.

***Prof. Dr. Markus Borner is now a Honorary Professor at the University of Glasgow and a member of the FZS Board. He has recently retired from his position as head of the Africa programme of FZS. For over 30 years he has worked and lived in Seronera, Serengeti National Park. Prof. Borner is regarded as one of the world's leading experts on the Serengeti ecosystem.***

## Wildlife Poaching Southern Africa

**Kevin Bewick, Head of Anti-Poaching Intelligence Group Southern Africa**

[http://wildlifepoachingsouthernafrica.blogspot.com/2013/04/wildlife-poaching-southern-africa-kevin.html?qoback=%2Egde\\_2649321\\_member\\_234529162](http://wildlifepoachingsouthernafrica.blogspot.com/2013/04/wildlife-poaching-southern-africa-kevin.html?qoback=%2Egde_2649321_member_234529162)

Many worldwide conservationists are concerned at reports of increased wildlife poaching coming out of Southern, Central and East Africa. And the seeming inability of governments to counter the daily slaughter of elephants, rhinos and many other species of antelope for the bush meat trade.

We will examine some of the reasons why current attempts are failing in many areas.

Organized Criminal Syndicates could teach many companies lessons, recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities that present themselves in Southern, Central and East Africa countries. Security and intelligence lapses by most countries in these regions gave very little prior warning that Organized Criminal Syndicates had identified massive resources available for the taking. The syndicates are well known for identifying institutional lapses in regions of instability and taking full advantage of widespread corruption in Africa.

Weak wildlife legislation in most countries is a major contributing factor to the success of organized wildlife crime, arrests of perpetrators are few, and convictions even less. As those involved have a budget to bribe Customs, Police and Security and Wildlife Enforcement officers. Consequently repeat offenders are able to continue their illicit activities relatively unhindered.

As they have proved time and time again, the intelligence gathering capability of Organized Criminal Syndicates is excellent, and they are known to identify weaknesses in security and plan their operations around those weaknesses. Operational Security in many cases has been weak or non-existent, and in the few cases where Operational Security has been practiced the syndicates have negated it, by recruiting and paying insiders huge sums to provide information on security procedures or impending wildlife enforcement operations. In a few cases when these "insiders" or "moles" have been uncovered, there has been much public criticism of Wildlife Enforcement of "being involved" or "corrupt". Trust issues then developed amongst many enforcement units and all Intelligence was kept "in house" and not shared amongst partners organizations further stifling successful arrest rates of those involved in poaching.

There are many effective anti-poaching/enforcement units in the region and no one organization or person holds title or copyright on anti-poaching operations. When the increase in rhino poaching surged in 2010 in South Africa, many if not most, anti-poaching units were taken by surprise. Due to lack of intelligence networks, and due to the fact that many had ignored prior warnings issued in 2000 that an increase in rhino poaching was expected in South, Southern Africa.

The Organized Criminal Syndicates had very early on identified a great "resource" in the region, abject poverty and huge numbers of unemployed people; these were recruited to do "their dirty work", of the syndicates.

Widespread poverty and promises of ready cash mean a constant supply of willing recruits to undertake poaching operations. The fact that these poachers are often wounded or in many cases shot dead does not bother the Organized Criminal Syndicates who recruit them.

Illegal logging is widespread in Southern Africa countries and is controlled and run by Organized Criminal Syndicates, all types of hardwoods are in demand, and even protected species are cut down. Forestry laws where they do exist are openly flouted with undersize logs being cut, and if the cargo is intercepted, cash is carried to bribe forestry inspectors. In some countries forestry inspectors are not paid salaries and are allowed to "take" their salaries from fines paid, which only encourages and promotes corruption.

In many cases when undersize logs are intercepted, before loading on cargo ships, the shipment is confiscated by the inspectors and then placed up for auction. Often the same companies who cut the undersize or protected species bid and buy back the shipment. In each and every case we have tracked Chinese owned companies that are involved. And surprising they are allowed by African countries to continue to conduct logging operations in their countries. We have established that many of these logging companies have also being implicated in ivory smuggling and possibly elephant poaching.

Organized Crime is Transnational in nature, and transcends countries borders, so close cooperation with all Southern, Central, East African Police forces and Intelligence Agencies is urgently required. So is revised legislation on Protected Species, Organized Crime Legislation and Legislation on Asset Forfeiture, for organized criminal activities. Fines are no deterrent at all, as the profits of organised crime activities are huge, and syndicate members have demonstrated they can pay large fines with ease. Stricter sentences, longer jail time and seizure of assets of the syndicate are the key to really countering this scourge in Africa.

Many large game reserves have been turned in Intensive Protection Zones, and many units have been re-equipped and re trained up to higher operational standards to meet the daily threat of ex guerrillas recruited to poach elephants and rhinos. Most donors funding has gone into these important initiatives, but little or no funding has gone into deepening intelligence networks, as many donors do not understand the function of building and establishing informer/intelligence networks.

During the Rhodesian Bush war, a Special Forces commander equated intelligence to as valuable as a Battalion of trained soldiers. Intelligence led operations are proactive in nature and can intercept a party of poachers when they enter an area.

One thing is certain, we are in a Protracted Wildlife War, with a very real shortage of funding for training, specialized equipment, for establishing and increasing regional intelligence networks. All Southern, Central and East African countries need to urgently revise outdated wildlife legislation, pass stricter sentences with, accompanying jail time, and introduce asset forfeiture legislation where the proceeds of Organized Crime are forfeited to the respective states. Increased cooperation in the field of law enforcement and intelligence gathering and sharing is essential if any progress in the fight against organized crime syndicates can be made in the region.

If organized crime syndicates could be described as an "Octopus", then rhino poaching is just one part of a tentacle, and consequently if efforts are focused on that tentacle we will not kill that "Octopus"! What is needed is that all parts of the "Octopus" to be attacked simultaneously then we will have a chance to kill the "Octopus" that is Organized Crime. Our attacks can be carried out in the field through anti-poaching, at all Ports of Entry, on major transport routes, (Stop and search and roadblocks). Huge efforts are needed with container searches with trained sniffer dogs, as worldwide increase in container traffic and our inability to search the 420 million containers that transit the globe annually are a major problem. Increased Intelligence gathering and sharing are urgently required. The annual growth of Organized Criminal Syndicates poses a very real threat to global Security.

***Kevin Bewick is the Head of Anti-Poaching Intelligence Group Southern Africa***



## Combating Crime with Commerce?

John M. Sellar, News 24 (June 6, 2013)

<http://voices.news24.com/john-m-sellar/2013/06/combating-crime-with-commerce/>

In late 2011, I retired from the position of Chief of Enforcement with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Having served with CITES for 14 years, I know only too well the serious levels of organized and sophisticated crime that are directed at our planet's wildlife. There is no better illustration of this than the situation in South Africa, relating to rhinoceroses, in recent years. I share the frustration of many commentators that there seems no end in sight to the ever-increasing poaching of these animals and to the illegal acquisition of their horns; the latter affecting many more countries than South Africa and involving a range of crimes from fraud to burglary.

Consequently, I understand why some people imagine, and are actively arguing, that making commerce in rhino horn legal will pull the rug from under the current criminality, bring an end to the killing of these iconic animals, and potentially bring important revenue for conservation and species management. The points in favour of doing so have been relatively well-made, are relatively convincing, and it seems South Africa's government may also be leaning towards such a conclusion. However, I think some considerations have, apparently, been overlooked.

It seems that one, if not the, major driver for the current demand is the belief that the ingesting of crushed rhino horn, by sufferers of cancer, will bring them into a state of remission, halt the growth of tumours or, even, cure them. Indeed, it is this trust that organized crime groups are currently exploiting in the most dreadful manner, preying upon those struggling to cope with one of the world's most awful, and often terminal, diseases. Perhaps, on occasions, rhino horn is having some form of placebo effect. But, if it were truly the answer, would not the major pharmaceutical companies of the world be rushing to sign contracts with those who are offering to shave the horns of animals they own? Since they are not, it seems reasonable to conclude that the efficacy of rhino horn as some form of medicine remains extremely questionable. So, is the intention to replace criminal exploitation with legal mistreatment?

It also all seems to be rather one-sided at the moment. It takes two to tango. Calls for South Africa to propose that CITES authorize commercial exports of legal-origin rhino horn are utterly futile unless nations step forward and identify themselves as possible countries of import. I have yet to hear of any country, whether in Asia or elsewhere, that wishes to seek agreement for its citizens to legally acquire a substance, the use of which has no scientifically-established beneficial effect.

Since the earliest days of evolution, Man's use of animals and plants has been wide-ranging and often cyclical and fashionable in nature. This, in the case of the rhinoceros, has been demonstrated by the manner in which, in past years, its horn was sought-after for treating fevers in China or as dagger handles in Yemen. In my opinion, we will make a major mistake if we focus on species-specific responses to what our law enforcement community is currently struggling against.

It is organized and sophisticated crime that the anti-poaching parks' personnel, SARS, SAPS, South Africa's military, and the country's national and provincial prosecution authorities are facing. What sort of message does it send to these men and women, many of whom are showing very considerable bravery in the face of heavily-armed poaching gangs, if our answer is to say – "If these people thousands of miles away are stupid enough to want rhino horn, let's sell them horns"?

Difficult as they may be, violent as they may be, the poaching and smuggling incidents troubling South Africa at present are, in the wider scope of things, skirmishes in a much longer battle against international crime. Organized crime will never be defeated by legalizing the crevice into which its tentacles are today reaching. The tentacles will simply move elsewhere. They need to be amputated, if the crime networks are to be conquered.

Whilst I may empathize with those who feel that South Africa is currently fighting alone, and who may be prompted to look for options to make life easier, I cannot agree with them. Yes, other nations must do much more than they have done so far and, yes, there has to be considerably more effective transnational collaboration and coordination in bringing wildlife criminals to justice. Especially because this is not just about rhinos. South Africa is not alone and rhinos are not the only species that is suffering. Elephant populations, for example, are being decimated in parts of Africa, prompting Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to make the following comment in a report to the Security



Council last month: *"Poaching and its potential linkages to other criminal, even terrorist, activities constitute a grave menace to sustainable peace and security in Central Africa. In this regard, I urge Governments of the sub-region to consider the issue of poaching as a major national and sub regional security concern requiring their concerted and coordinated action."*

Legalizing the trade in rhino horn, albeit highly questionable, might lead to a reduction in poaching. Just as legalizing commerce in recreational narcotics might reduce drug trafficking. But neither response will, in itself, make the citizens of the world any safer in relation to organized crime. The species *Homo sapiens* has to be taken account of too in the ongoing deliberations.

Now is not the time to give the slightest indication that what Parks, Customs, Police, Military and prosecution officials are doing has anything other than our fullest support and that it is anything other than the most worthy of causes. They are not engaged in a war to protect the rhino; they are battling to preserve the rule of law.

## STOP PRESS: Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

### G8 Leaders Recognize the Urgency of Addressing Illegal Trade in Wildlife

At the G8 Summit held from 17-18 June 2013, at Lough Erne, the United Kingdom, G8 leaders noted in their communiqué that the fight against illegal trade in wildlife is as important as fighting corruption, transnational organized crime and the illicit trafficking of drugs and people. G8 leaders also recognized the benefits provided by internationally established environmental and social standards in ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources in developing countries.

The White House published an Executive Order on combating wildlife trafficking. The United States Government is greatly concerned about the poaching crisis, mainly in Africa: "The poaching of protected species and the illegal trade in wildlife and their derivative parts and products (together known as "wildlife trafficking") represent an international crisis that continues to escalate. Poaching operations have expanded beyond small-scale, opportunistic actions to coordinated slaughter commissioned by armed and organized criminal syndicates. The survival of protected wildlife species such as elephants, rhinos, great apes, tigers, sharks, tuna, and turtles has beneficial economic, social, and environmental impacts that are important to all nations. Wildlife trafficking reduces those benefits while generating billions of dollars in illicit revenues each year, contributing to the illegal economy, fueling instability, and undermining security." President Obama announced technical and financial support, a national strategy and the creation of a task force.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/01/executive-order-combating-wildlife-trafficking>

## NEWS FROM AFRICA

### Wildlife Crime Poses Unique Challenges to Protected Areas

Nigel Dudley, Sue Stolton and Wendy Elliott

Wildlife crime is the fifth largest international criminal activity worldwide. Wildlife and timber poaching is becoming increasingly organised, increasingly global and more ruthless. Protected areas are suffering most acutely from this crime wave. They frequently contain the richest biodiversity and many species valued by poachers are now virtually or completely confined to protected areas. Managers, rangers and their families are intimidated, attacked and killed. Local communities suffer threats, disturbance and loss of natural resources from community reserves. Protected areas are further exposed in many countries by weak judicial processes that fail to prosecute wildlife traders even if they are caught. These developments signal the need for long-term changes in management in protected areas containing species sought by wildlife traders; more emphasis on patrolling and enforcement along with efforts to address corruption, strengthen the judiciary and improve enforcement along the rest of the trade chain.

Many of these changes are unwelcome in institutions that have spent decades developing softer approaches to management. Addressing wildlife crime without losing the benefits of more transparent, consultative and participatory approaches is a challenge that requires concerted efforts by all those affected.

Read more: [https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/parks\\_19\\_1\\_editorial.pdf](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/parks_19_1_editorial.pdf)

## **Conservation official denies legal ivory trade to blame for poaching**

**South China Morning Post, May 21st 2013**

China's small traditional trade in carving uses ivory acquired through legal auctions and in no way encourages or worsens the problem of elephant poaching in Africa, a senior Chinese official said during a press conference on wildlife conservation in China held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing.

Demand for ivory as an ornamental item is soaring in Asia and especially in China, driven by the rising purchasing power of the region's newly affluent classes as well as growing Chinese investment in Africa and demand for its resources. That has led to an increase in the illegal slaughter of African elephants for their ivory with some wildlife groups estimating that over 90 per cent of the ivory on sale in China is illegally sourced.

But Yan Xun, chief engineer of the wildlife conservation department under the State Forestry Administration (SFA), said it was unfair to blame China for the rise in poaching. "Has China's legal ivory trade caused the poaching of wild elephants? I don't think there's necessarily a connection," he told a news briefing. "The reasons for poaching wild elephants around the world are very complex, including competition for resources between people and elephants, livelihood issues for local people, war and ... the mistaken belief ivory generates huge profit margins."

China only permits 37 companies to work with ivory and 145 to sell the finished product. They use no more than a total of 5,000 kg of legal ivory every year, he said. "I'd like to say that the Chinese ivory trade is mainly to hand down the art of exquisite carvings using ivory. This is not any ordinary trade," Yan added. "The Chinese government has been paying great attention to the protection of elephants and we legally source ivory through international auctions," he said, adding China has to date sourced some 60 tonnes of ivory this way. Convicted ivory smugglers can be jailed for life, Yan said.

While China has shown no sign of banning the ivory trade, Thailand's prime minister said earlier this year that her country would do so, promising legislation that could help the country avoid international trade sanctions after criticism by environmental groups. China is the world's largest illegal ivory market, followed by Thailand, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature.

## **First Black Rhino Import Permit Granted**

**World Conservation Force Bulletin, May 2013 (shortened)**

On April 4th, the USF&WS issued the first Endangered Species Act (ESA) import permit for a 34 year old black rhino hunting trophy that was taken in Waterberg Plateau National Park in Namibia in October, 2009. It will be the first import of a black rhino hunting trophy since the black rhino was listed as "endangered" in 1980, 33 years ago. It is the first trophy import permit for any ESA "endangered" listed species taken in the wild since the ESA was passed in 1973. The black rhino is listed on Appendix I of CITES and as "critically endangered" on IUCN's Red List. That said, both CITES and the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group support the trophy trade. Though ESA endangered listed bontebok are importable from South Africa, they have been treated as a "captive bred" exception. Like this one, the permits will be processed on a permit-by-permit basis. We expect the conservation revenue arising from

the hunting will more than double from the addition of the U.S. market, the largest market by far. The following will give readers an understanding of the positive development for rhino.

First and foremost, this is about saving the black rhino. The goal of the Namibia conservation strategy is not the hunting. The hunter's rights to his trophy are also not a factor that is considered by the USF&WS when making such a determination. The goal is the conservation of the species. This is a form of safari hunting or tourist hunting that has come to be called "conservation hunting." Conservation hunting is regulated hunting strategically designed to benefit a species in special need by generating essential conservation revenue like management revenue and stimulating local incentives to value, tolerate and support the animal. Being a game animal gives the rhino a "leg up" or extra value to authorities and locals as well as operating revenue in the struggle for survival. The permitting is about using regulated hunting as a tool or force for conservation. This is and of itself important to all interests except extremists who readily admit they would prefer that animals cease to exist rather than be sustainably used or produced when there is any use.

Namibia has the foremost black rhino conservation program and plan in the world. It is the real champion and deserves to be richly rewarded, particularly when the reward is more revenue for essential management actions.

This was a big and important step for USF&WS that is to be congratulated. That said it must be understood that this is not a blanket approval. Although it is a precedent and recognition of the benefits, each and every future application will be individually handled and will have to undergo three (3) levels of fact-finding and decision making. Be sure, this is a discretionary area for the FWS who made the right decision in this instance. Still, it did not just happen by accident. It was the right thing to do.

FWS must determine that the purpose of the import is (1) not detrimental and second, the permitted activity (2) does not jeopardize the species. These two separate determinations must be made by two separate divisions, the Division of Scientific Authority and the Division of Management Authority with Division of Scientific Authority concurrence. The third and most important determination has to be made by the Division of Management Authority that the import will actually "enhance or benefit the propagation or survival of the species" in the wild. The determinations are way beyond whether the take is within sustainable limits. This is about stepping up the program and saving and securing the species.

The hunter was literally the first American to take a rhino in Namibia since Namibia was granted its quota of five per year by CITES CoP13 in 2004. He is a very experienced dangerous game hunter who has taken all the Big Five (not black rhino) a number of times. Satisfied of the conservation value and biological necessity of the hunting, he took his chances with whether he could ever import his trophy. He says of all the Big Five it was one of his best hunts. It was a fair chase hunt and truly dangerous. Conservation Force started representing the permit applicant as pro bono legal counsel for the good of the cause, ourselves convinced of the necessity of the hunting.



See also: <http://www.globalanimal.org/2013/05/04/american-ceo-hunter-imports-rhino-trophy-kill/97305/>

## Kenya: Ishaqbini's Hirola Sanctuary

After more than two years of planning, the Ishaqbini hirola sanctuary in Kenya has now been successfully established with a founder population of 48 hirola, the world's most endangered antelope. 2,740 hectares were provided by local communities for the purpose. The hirola (*Beatragus hunteri*; Sclater, 1889) is currently classified as critically endangered by IUCN. The population suffered a 90% decline in the 1980's and is the most threatened species of monotypic antelope on earth. It is the only extant member of its genus and its extinction would be the first loss of an entire mammalian genus in Africa since the evolution of modern man. The global hirola population is estimated at only 501

individuals. These individuals exist in two subpopulations: a natural population of 434 on the Kenya-Somali border and a translocated population of 67 in Tsavo East National Park, Kenya.

Source: Gnusletter, Vol. 31, No. 1, May 2013, IUCN Antelope Specialist Group. See also <http://www.nrt-kenya.org/ishaqbini/>

## **Tanzania: Selous Game Reserve**

The Russian owned Mantra Tanzania company received its uranium mining license for the Mkuju River project issued by the Tanzanian Government. According to Russian Rosatom this is the first uranium mining license issued on the territory of the United Republic of Tanzania. Mkuju River is the first project that acquired implementation approvals in accordance with the new mining legislation of Tanzania. Completion of this process and the start of enterprise construction will become an important milestone for both Rosatom and the state government,” said Vadim Jivov, the chairman of the board of ARMZ uranium Holding Inc. and the president of Uranium One Inc.

At the same time Tanzanian newspapers voice out their astonishment why this licence were granted, while at the same time a fierce battle is fought between the Tanzanian Revenue Authority and the Russian ARMZ over more than 200 million US-\$ in outstanding taxes following the sale of the Tanzanian uranium company from Australians to the Russians.

## **Tanzania: World Heritage Committee discusses Selous Game Reserve**

During its 37th Conference of Parties in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, at the end of June, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC) discussed amongst other issues the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania that was declared a World Heritage Site in 1982. During its session in St. Petersburg last year the WHC had agreed to de-gazette ca. 400 km<sup>2</sup> in the south-east of the Reserve upon the request of the Tanzanian Government in order to facilitate uranium mining, which is not possible inside a World Heritage Site according to the Convention. In return Tanzania was expected to observe a number of conditions in respect to the uranium mine. In addition no other development projects were expected to be constructed inside the Reserve. It was regretted by the WHC that Tanzania had not provided the required information on the effects of uranium mining. It was also observed that no progress was made in adding areas to the site in compensation for the de-gazetted land, as promised by the state party before the St. Petersburg decision. Instead Tanzania has condoned the planning for a large dam at Stiegler's Gorge in the heart of the Reserve. If implemented this would completely change the sensitive ecosystem along the Rufiji river and its lakes. The committee therefore expressed its concern. The dam is to be built with Brazilian capital and expertise. The design is not known yet and an environmental impact analysis has not taken place, but will be commissioned. The head of the 21-strong State delegation reported that the former retention-scheme for the Reserve has been reintroduced thus overcoming the problem of lack of finances for the Reserve. Previously the protected area retained half of its income for management purposes and anti-poaching. An IUCN/UNESCO monitoring mission to the site will take place early next year. The delegation also reported that elephant poaching in the Selous was slowly being brought under control. Tanzania's two other World Heritage Sites, the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area were also discussed at the conference.



## Tanzania: Dr. Richard Leakey proposes elevated highway over Serengeti

The former Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, Dr. Richard Leakey, has entered the discussion on a highway through the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania with a rather unconventional idea. At a conference on poaching in the USA he proposed on May 14th to construct an elevated highway 30 miles across the Serengeti as an alternative.

*„It would be a grand spectacle, to see animals migrating by underneath, and signal Africa's commitment to wildlife,“ Leakey was quoted to have said during his keynote speech. „If I can drive over 30 miles of elevated highways in New Jersey, why not in the Serengeti?“*

According to Wolfgang Thome's blog this was “not Leakey's finest hour”. Internet users poured scorn on Dr Leakey with howls of laughter and acid comments, and conservationists in Tanzania spoke of “Leakey's Lunatic Express” or of “Lunatic Express Reloaded 2.0”.

“Save the Serengeti”, ([www.savetheserengeti.org/](http://www.savetheserengeti.org/)) an Arusha based NGO, tried to get into a serious discussion with Dr. Leakey on the issue. It earned, however, only very bitter and aggressive response with a racial undertone. (Editor's Note: *African Indaba has copies of Dr. Leakey's reactions which were, however, not cleared for publication*).

According to Thome, Leakey's responses „... can at best be described as rude, offensive and condescending... Instead of engaging with the substance of the proposals made by the Frankfurt Zoological Society for the southern route, which has received the full support of the German government, the World Bank and other development partners, including offers for soft loans and grants to carry out a full feasibility study before building the alternative road, he decided to go on the offensive... and as a result, the considerable professional respect hitherto accorded, is now dented and will, should no substantive focused response still come forth from him, evaporate completely.“

(Source: <http://wolfgangthome.wordpress.com/2013/05/21/not-leakeys-finest-hour/>).

Note: The highway through the Serengeti has been considered as an option by the Tanzanian Government. Due to its dramatic negative consequences for the migration and the whole ecosystem presently a Southern road which would not pass the national park is the more probable option. Reportedly Tanzanian President confirmed the southern bypass road in a confidential meeting with other heads of states at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

## Importation of trophies from Africa into EU

European Union has prohibited the importation of hippo trophies from Mozambique, as CITES had not received required information from the country (. Meanwhile a new CITES director has been appointed in Maputo, and it is expected that the Mozambique Government will now improve its reporting. Brussels will reconsider its decision in due course.

(Source <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:169:0001:0021:EN:PDF>)

In another development the EU Directorate General E- Environment – has commissioned the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, to assess the potential impact of trophy hunting of CITES Annex B species. The report (June 2013) provides an overview of trade in species imported by the EU for hunting purposes over the ten year period 2002-2011. Trade patterns have been analysed for individual taxa to assess whether criteria on high volume (taking into consideration the global conservation status) or increases over time are met. The information includes global IUCN Red List status, short overviews of potential impacts of trophy hunting on population status and recommendations on whether further analysis may be required.

"In terms of quantity, *Equus zebra hartmannae*, *Ursus americanus*, *Hippopotamus amphibius*, *Loxodonta africana* and *Papio ursinus* were the main trophy taxa imported by the EU for hunting purposes 2002-2011. Some of these species have been reviewed relatively recently, either for the SRG

or as part of the Review of Significant Trade Process. Five taxa (*Kobus leche*, *Hippopotamus amphibius*, *Panthera leo*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Loxodonta africana*) qualified under the high volume of trade criterion; none of the taxa which were traded for hunting purposes showed significant increases in trade for hunting purposes.

Other species that may potentially be impacted by trophy hunting, either due to their conservation status, concerns about the trophy hunting regimes or due to their population dynamics, include a number of wild sheep and antelopes. Based on the global conservation status, trade volume, concerns raised in the literature and the time since last review (see methodology section for more details), the taxa recommended for further review are: *Equus zebra hartmannae*, *Damaliscus pygargus* (incl. ssp. *pygargus*), *Ovis ammon*, *Ovis vignei*, *Kobus leche*."

## Central African Republic: CITES Secretary-General calls for urgent action to protect elephants in the Dzanga-Sanga National Park

[http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2013/2013\\_elephant\\_dzanga\\_sanga.php](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2013/2013_elephant_dzanga_sanga.php)

Geneva, 8 May 2013 – The Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), John E. Scanlon, expressed his grave concern over the recent reports of the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic. Information suggests that armed groups have entered and may have started to massacre forest elephants in a World Heritage Site located in the south-western corner of the country bordering Cameroon and the Republic of Congo.

According to the WWF and various media reports, a group of 17 armed individuals, some of them armed with heavy calibre rifles, entered the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park on 6 May 2013 and headed for the Dzanga Bai, locally known as the "village of elephants", a large clearing where between 50 and 200 elephants congregate every day to drink mineral salts present in the sands.

The Dzanga-Ndoki National Park is a site monitored through the CITES-led Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and levels of poaching have generally been below average for Central Africa. The site is remote and has been relatively well protected and there have been no major poaching incidents until now.

The CITES Secretariat urged all governments of the region and relevant United Nations and other international bodies to take urgent action to prevent the massacre of the elephant population living in the park. CITES has also informed its partners in the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) of the imminent threat and requested each one to reach out and inform their various networks.

*"This is very worrying news since recent poaching incidents of elephants has been on a massive scale, reflecting a new trend across the African continent where well-armed poachers with sophisticated weapons decimate one of our most magnificent species, often with impunity. This imminent threat to elephants in a remote and relatively well protected area is of grave concern to CITES and I call on the international community to join forces and take coordinated action to avoid a new tragedy of similar proportions to the massive killing of elephants occurred in Cameroon in 2012,"* said CITES Secretary-General, Mr. John E. Scanlon.

Last month the park allegedly suffered repeated attacks during which equipment was looted from the administration buildings and facilities were destroyed. Welcoming a recent UNESCO statement Mr Scanlon added "The alarm sounded by UNESCO's Director General, Ms Irina Bokova, further reinforces our concerns about the links between illicit wildlife trafficking and regional security in parts of Africa". "The CITES Secretariat will continue to support authorities investigating and combating the involvement of rebel militias in wildlife crime as may be required", he added.

CITES reported to the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Bangkok in March, on the increasing incidents of poaching in World Heritage sites across Africa. In August 2012, the Secretariat engaged in discussions with UNESCO to explore areas for increased collaboration between UNESCO and CITES, in particular with regard to elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade. Several conservation areas, including the Garamba National Park and Okapi Wildlife Reserve mentioned in CITES reports on illegal killing of elephants are UNESCO world heritage sites.

The strategic and operational decisions taken on enforcement matters at CITES CoP16 provide a strong basis for countries to take concrete action to put an end to the current high levels of illegal wildlife trade.

Range States are currently experiencing a serious spike in the illegal killing of African elephants and rhinos and the related illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn. Data compiled from the programme CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) suggests an ongoing increase in levels of illegal killing of elephants since 2006, with 2011 displaying the highest levels of poaching since MIKE records began in 2002. These findings are supported by information available from the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), which indicates that the amount of seized ivory has continued to escalate and is currently at its highest level in the 16-year period examined by ETIS.

The illegal killings of large numbers of elephants for their ivory are increasingly involving organised crime and in some cases well-armed rebel militias. For example, in Bouba N'Djida National Park, in northern Cameroon, up to 450 elephants were allegedly killed by rebel groups from Chad and Sudan in February 2012. The poached ivory is believed to be exchanged against money, weapons and ammunition to support conflicts in neighbouring countries. The Secretary-General expressed grave concern over this incident at the time and in response to this insurgence, the Government of Cameroon deployed up to 150 soldiers into the National Park in support of park rangers to put an end to the illegal killing. Another example of this type of poaching was the illegal killing of 22 elephants in the Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in April 2012, apparently shot from a helicopter with a high level of marksmanship and in a single raid. The ivory was taken away.

Poaching levels increased in all African sub regions, with central Africa continuing to display the highest levels of illegal killing in any sub region in Africa or Asia. Wildlife rangers who are serving in the front-line are often quite literally being outgunned, Wildlife crime has become a serious threat to the security, political stability, economy, natural resources and cultural heritage of many countries and that the extent of the response required to effectively address this threat are often beyond the sole remit of environmental or wildlife law enforcement agencies, or of one country or region alone.

This critical situation demonstrates the need of implementing the African Elephant Action Plan that was created under the auspices of CITES. An African Elephant Fund was launched last August at the 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee and has collected in these first months some 250,000 USD. Contributions were received from Germany, France and the Netherlands. Additional contributions from the United Kingdom and South Africa should be received soon.

For more information contact Juan Carlos Vasquez at [juan.vasquez@cites.org](mailto:juan.vasquez@cites.org)

## Central African Republic: A week with the Ba'aka Hunter-Gatherers

Tali Cassidy

In the village of Yandounde in the south of Central African Republic a disagreement erupted between a mother and daughter. The whole village bore witness, commenting, gesturing and joining in at the appropriate moments. In a community where survival is and always has been a team effort, privacy doesn't rank high on the priority list. Open-ended, dome-shaped homes face one another, and children play freely between them. The village, however, is not the only home a Ba'aka pygmy child knows; in fact, many would assert that the true home of a Ba'aka is in the forest, where they spend short periods of time throughout





the year, hunting, gathering and connecting with the forest spirits they have celebrated for thousands of years.

The morning of the mother-daughter dispute also was marked by the beginning of one such forest sojourn. Gradually, the departing group assembled. Hunting nets, baskets, spears and other supplies emerged from the ostensible chaos, babies were slung over shoulders and truant children were chased back to school. Perhaps a little more excitement than usual accompanied this trip, owing to six partaking foreigners. This was to be a unique experience for us, a chance for the Ba'aka to share their culture in its organic state and perhaps the start of a small-scale eco-/ethno tourism project that could bring income to the impoverished region and some security to the precarious future of these forest-dwellers.

Departure: There was no clear leader but decisive collective will seemed to launch nearly fifty individuals into the embrace of the expansive forest. Furious pace, unmatched stamina and uncanny navigation skills characterised our progress to our camp for the night. This night was to mark the transition from village to forest life through song, dance and ritual. In the temporary camp, a mere clearing in the forest, family groups laid out mats around small fires and the never-ending camp activity was soon underway. The smoke soon mingled with smells of dinner, some duiker meat from a brief afternoon hunt, cassava (the staple of the region) and leaves and nuts gathered on the way. Screeching cicadas and choruses of crickets competed with the clinking of spears being sharpened and the chopping of wood. Spirits were high; the Ba'aka were home.

Through the buzz floated occasional strains of the harp-zither, a bow-shaped, three-stringed, six-toned instrument. A whistling youth idly picked up on the tune and, from the other side of the camp, the pounding of cassava fell into beat. The simple melody was playfully bounced around and by the time most dinners were devoured, everyone seemed to have added their own variation. The growing chorus was a complex polyphony as first men, then women and young children gravitated towards a central fire. Traditional drums are used in the village but here percussion was improvised on cooking pots, containers and by bundles of leaves beat against the ground. This, we were to learn, was the Boyobe, the hunting ceremony. While the basic theme is old, repetitive and trance-like, improvisations with topical lyrics develop freely and are interspersed with energetic and impressive clapped rhythms (from the

women) and drumming (from the men). As the flames dimmed, the Bobe (bo-bay) or forest spirits emerged. Unbeknown to us, a few individuals had snuck off and decorated themselves with a phosphorescent moss, found in abundance on the forest floor. These dancing spectacles appeared as eerie specks of floating light in the thick forest darkness. Through light-hearted call and response they oscillated in and out of the ceremony, at times mockingly imitating the themes in distant, high-pitched cackles, at times encircling the group with vigorous dance movements and finally entering into



the circle for a dancing showdown. This was an exercise in group theatre and also a deeply meaningful practice. For over four thousand years the forest has been a home and life-source to Pygmies throughout Africa's tropics. Forest spirits are thus central characters in the cosmologies of all the tribes of today's quarter-million strong Pygmy population.

The next morning's journey to our permanent camp began with a Makuse (ma-koo-say) ceremony, performed before sunrise around the base of a large tree, to guarantee a fruitful sojourn. It's also a "farewell" to the village and often ends with the Ba'Aka cursing at all aspects of village life. Another fiercely paced march brought us to our site and, almost immediately, machetes and axes were at work, clearing the site and collecting the saplings and leaves from which their dome-shaped dwellings are constructed. As the camp took shape, our first hunt in this part of the forest commenced. This began



the hunting and gathering where the innate and established relationship between these people and their environment is most evident.

Not a moment is lost as every tree and termite mound is explored en route. Medicinal and ritualistic saps are tapped from trees, while coco leaves are gathered for cooking. Water-yielding vines are cut when needed and seemingly rotten fruit, discarded even by gorillas, are gathered and hacked open for a thin white sliver of Payu, a high fat substance used in cooking. A myriad of fungi species provide a few edible mushrooms for the baskets, yams are uprooted and tortoise eggs provide valuable protein. Perhaps the most impressive feat we were privileged to witness was the gathering of honey. In an elaborate team effort, smoke bundles ascend up to thirty meters on the backs of nimble, perfectly balanced climbers, often using only a vine to reach the buzzing hives. The rest is up to skill, experience and high pain thresholds, as furious bees are smoked and chopped out of holes in trees and the precious honeycombs are lowered down in makeshift baskets on vine ropes.

Hunting takes several forms, involves everyone, and is a process inseparable from the relentless and opportunistic gathering. Net hunts, involving thigh-high nets constructed of vine-strung string, are the most prolific and inclusive, while the highly ritualised, male-only, spear hunts augur great feasts when they produce the sizeable Red River Hogs. The solitary crossbow hunter demonstrates deadly accuracy against primates in the towering canopies and dogs are sometimes used on porcupine hunts.

Some of these methods are more recent additions to the Ba'aka repertoire, and all have evolved with changing external influences over the ages. The introduction of metal to Bantu communities with which they traded gave rise to metal spear- and axe-heads. The origins of the crossbow are unclear but the design is not unlike that of the Portuguese, with whom they might have come into contact a few centuries back. Dogs too are a relatively recent addition. The custom of having a Bantu village nearby each Pygmy settlement has saved the group from complete cultural isolation. Traditionally, the Bantu were more agricultural people, while the Pygmies were the more able hunters. Excess meat from successful hunts would be traded with the Bantus' surplus harvest. Accordingly, a balance was struck and maintained.

Now, that balance is being threatened by a changing economy, volatile politics and moving populations. In the worst cases, anarchy has resulted in an explosion of prejudice, superstition and human rights abuses against the Pygmies. Reports of the killing and eating of Pygmies leaked out of the DRC civil war, Rwandan Pygmies were left landless during the country's horrific nineties and in the Congo, Bantu-Pygmy tradition has deteriorated into a slave-like 'ownership' of Pygmy families by the Bantu. The Ba'aka, a relatively lucky group, have been allowed traditional hunting rights in an area of primary forest outside of reserves and logged regions.

However, with tempting short-term financial temptations of logging companies dangling before their noses, governments' promises are never guaranteed. The governments of many developing countries lack a tangible motive to protect their natural resources. In a country where nearly half the population is illiterate and life expectancy has yet to reach 44 years, big words like sustainability and conservation don't carry much weight. The life-giving rainforests of central Africa are a universal asset and the developed world needs to motivate their preservation by making them financially viable to sustain. Economic incentives in sustainable industries and development aid is needed in countries that would otherwise turn to timber for income and employment. In addition to loss of habitat, logging concessions bring population movement that is destroying the social fabric of the region. In CAR's bleak economic environment, promises of jobs in sawmills draw hordes of prospective workers to the forests. This in turn opens up roads and markets for bushmeat, tempting residents into illegal hunting in the forests. Shells litter previously unexplored paths and gunshots are heard almost nightly. Ba'aka hunting success has plummeted in poached areas. Poaching has soured many Bantu-Pygmy relations, and the signs are ominous. Unlike the traditional methods of the Pygmies, shotgun hunting is not sustainable.

This ongoing conundrum has been highlighted by recent political developments in the CAR, as a violent change of government and subsequent power vacuum has directly led to the mass slaughter of elephants in the Dzangha-Ndoki reserve. With little hope of outside intervention, poaching seems set to increase and the future of this world heritage site (tied in with that of the Ba'aka) is uncertain.

Our six days in the forest were about more than just hunting and gathering. The forest routine is where their community structure has developed and is best felt. Their music, ceremonial and jovial, is

ever-present in the high-spirited camp – Ba’aka fetuses are said to be programmed to sing from the time their pregnant mothers take part in the constant communal singing. Storytellers’ tales are based on creatures of the forest and initiation is when youths learn all the forest knowledge collected by generations past. It is unwritten culture like this that is so easily snuffed out with changing lifestyles.

But let’s not allow for a rose-tinted view of the *status quo* either. With a life expectancy of forty-years and an infant mortality rate of fifty percent, the Ba’aka situation cries out for healthcare assistance. The sustainability of indigenous lifestyle is also marred by the realities of ever-present economic incentives to the Ba’aka themselves, as well as an insecurity brought about by their dependence on others to protect their homelands.

Realistically, as they straddle the rickety fence between two vastly different worlds, there have been hopeful signs that the Ba’aka to strike a balance of adaptation and security versus preservation of their heritage. Children are getting an elementary education (though funds are erratic and conditions poor) and some healthcare facilities are available. In an effort to become more self-sufficient (thus avoiding exploitation of their labour), the Ba’aka have begun to cultivate their own cassava plantations. Perhaps, as responsible tourism in the region grows, income from this will also help to bolster local health and schooling systems. However, this too depends on the current political developments. For now, all tourism has been shut down, though Sangha Lodge plans to re-open as soon as travel becomes possible again.

Our forest sojourn ended as abruptly as the journey began. Hunting gear, some animal hides, smoked meat and a few belongings disappeared into baskets and before our light-weight tents were down, the Ba’aka seem rearing to go. As soon as our high-tech (non-degradable, anti-social) temporary homes were also packed, they were off, without a backwards glance, as if to say ‘we can always come back’. I hope they were right. In a few weeks, new shoots and undergrowth will engulf our camp and the surrounding trees will forget they ever played host to over fifty people in a truly amazing week. I won’t.

**Background:** For more details go to Sangha Lodge website at <http://www.sanghalodge.com/> or contact the author Tali Cassidy [talicassidy@gmail.com](mailto:talicassidy@gmail.com). A stay at Sangha Lodge in the Central Africa Republic (CAR) allows visitors a unique wildlife experience, viewing Western Lowland Gorilla and the incredible Sangha Bai, home to hundreds of forest elephants and other scarce species. However, perhaps the biggest draw for many is a chance to interact with the Ba’aka, a small community of hunter-gatherers. These visits are often facilitated by Louis Sarno, an American who has lived with the Ba’aka for over 30 years. Tali’s story recounts one of the first such visits.

## Zimbabwe: Rifa Conservation Education Camp – The Power of Place

This article first appeared in the Zimbabwe African Hunter Magazine (<http://www.africanhunteronline.com/>)

**Editors Note:** *We want to draw attention to this initiative that has operated for more than 30 years with the support of the Zimbabwe Hunters Association. Members of this Association have provided both monetary and voluntary support to the Rifa Conservation Education Camp that has facilitated the participation of many thousands of school children to benefit from the wildlife conservation experience. Regrettably, the membership of this Association has dwindled from over 1000 to just over 100 in recent years and although the programme receives support from various local and international donors, its future is still in jeopardy.*

Nestled amongst age old Wild Figs, Tamarinds and acacia trees lies the Zimbabwe Hunters Associations’ Rifa Education Camp. Set on the banks of the original Zambezi River, (before the construction of the dam at Kariba) which has since silted up to become a flood plain which offers the youth of Zimbabwe an unbeatable wildlife education and conservation experience. Originally located at Nymomba at the base of Kariba Gorge in 1982, the camp was moved to its current location, five

kilometres upstream from Chirundu, to facilitate ease of access for school buses. During the wet season as these buses would often get bogged down on the rough roads to the original camp.

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 1987 the new camp was officially opened by the then Minister of Education, Dr. D. Mutumbuka in the presence of ZHA Councillors, hunters, resource persons and Sanyati High School. The main purpose of the camp is to provide a unique wildlife education experience for both junior and Advanced Level students. They attend to study conservation, biology, ecology and geography of the area, around course work developed by Leslie Maasdorp and her husband Hugh. Both have exceptional energies and passion for Rifa and conservation through hunting. With its stunning landscapes and sunsets over the mighty Zambezi River, its variety of habitats – Mopani woodlands, grassy channels, large riverine trees, pebble beds in imposing cliffs and it's amazing variety of ungulates and attendant predators offers the students and their teachers the finest practical experience possible. (From the history of Rifa Conservation Education Camp by Leslie Maasdorp)

Schools and interest groups which number over 1000 individuals for the year will usually arrive mid-afternoon on a Sunday and after spending five nights in camp will depart on the Friday. Those attending are made up of both rural (15 in 2009) and urban (11 in 2009) schools and adult interest groups comprising Birdlife Zimbabwe who time their trip with the arrival of the Carmine Bee-eaters, or the ripening of the Wild Figs that shade the camp. The Zimbabwe Professional Hunters and Guides Association make use of the camp for the learner hunter and guides courses as well as the practical proficiency exam. With an archaeological site not far from the camp dating back more than 1500 years and the clear night skies make it a worthwhile visit for archaeology and astronomy groups.

The day normally starts with an early wake up, the mandatory safety lecture and a walk to one of the various interest spots in the area. These walks are guided by the ZHA's resident camp manager, Dave Winhall a professional hunter and guide in his own right, the education officer, Freedom Hlongwane, an ex National Parks Officer, a volunteer hunter, being an experienced member of the ZHA and the resident National Parks Ranger. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife have been supplying a ranger from the beginning. These four are armed and help to protect and share their expertise with the schools.

The morning papers – the 'Granite Gazette' and the 'Silicon Times', coined by Dave and his partner Elspeth Baillie, who assists in managing the camp, are read on the roads leading to and from the camp for signs of the previous night's activities. The headlines are often the proceedings of the big four, elephant, lion, leopard and buffalo. The tracks are examined and identified to reveal what may have transpired the night before. At this stage the four S's of tracking – shape, shine, sun and shadow are explained to the students, most of whom have never seen a lion or buffalo track before let alone porcupine or genet. The walks will at times take the students within close proximity to the dangerous game abundant in the area, often unseen as walks through the Jesse are common to gain access to a particular area and to date no nasty incidents have occurred although a few years back a family member of one of the staff was dispatched by lion whilst walking to camp from Chirundu in the dark no more than 500 meters from the camp gate. These interest areas include the Chipandaura River with its towering cliffs littered with bee-eater nests and pebbles, long pan – as the name suggests, a long narrow pan in a natural depression carved out by nature's pan builders and a walk up Shumba Hill, so called because of the likely hood of bumping into lion. At the top of the hill the students are able to see the vast panorama of the Rifa area before them and visualize the difference between a controlled National Parks area and an uncontrolled area on the opposite bank of the Zambezi – Zambia, with its river bank agriculture and deforestation sticking out in vast contrast.

Other walks include the natural hot springs with their sulphur stench, time for a mud bath!!! and Sunset Point at the edge of the Zambezi with its stunning view of the setting sun over the escarpment in Zambia. Here the students study the effects of river bank erosion, which has been accelerated recently by the opening of flood gates at Kariba Dam. The effects of this have been devastating for the long established trees on the river bank that have now collapsed into the river and the camp itself that has lost a couple of water pumps due to the flooding. Near to Sunset Point is the 'Golf Course', an area of scattered trees and short grass mowed every evening by the resident 'green keeper' hippos. On occasion schools will be lead to Arinatus Pan within the heart of the area, should the elephant cow and buffalo herds allow, experiencing the comings and goings of life at this secluded pan. An impala is hunted during the week and dissected to show students the inner workings of a ruminant's digestive

system. The heart and lungs are also dissected for their perusal. Lungs are blown up to show students how much they can expand if they are still intact. The meat is often used by the school as the majority of the students have never tasted venison and to show them that meat comes from animals and not the butcher! The remains are laid out on the flood plain in front of the camp and attract hooded, white backed and lappet faced vultures, sometimes numbering over one hundred, as well as hyena and on occasion lion. During the heat of the day the students undertake research projects making use of the camp's extensive library, laboratory and museum facilities. Each school compiles a project on their return to school which are well researched, entertaining and often humorous. Early evening walks are conducted at times to further tire out the students, keeping noise levels down so that they can appreciate the night noises that only Africa can provide. On the last night in camp the students will usually provide entertainment in the form of short plays, poems, song and dance much to the amusement of those present, particularly the mimicking of their teachers and guides!

Students are housed in three separate dormitories accommodating up to 30 individuals as well as 4 rooms for school staff and attending parents. Meals are supplied by the schools and prepared by volunteers, normally parents and school staff in the main kitchen and eaten in the dining room which doubles as a lecture room.

The main water supply at Rifa is pumped from the Zambezi one kilometre away to storage tanks at the camp. These pumps have been in operation from the beginning and are in desperate need of replacement. Thanks to the efforts of camp staff and members these pumps have been kept running by the typical Zimbabwean 'make a plan' system. Rifa Education Camp is old and needs serious repair work to the roofing, damaged by baboons that roost in the fig trees, ablutions need repair and updating, fencing needs replacing. The roads to the camp are also in a bad state. The camp's vehicles are old and worn out and need to be replaced. As you all know the camp needs money to operate, and although the schools are charged for the use of the camp, the true cost is not passed on as this would make it unaffordable for parents. The majority of schools attending are from disadvantaged backgrounds. It has been the aim of the ZHA since its inception to provide a unique experience to those who would otherwise not be able to afford it. Mention must be made of SCI Houston and Sacramento Chapters who have funded a number of schools, The British Embassy in Harare, Autoworld/General Motors and Sandvik Tamrock Zimbabwe for their support as well as the countless other companies and individuals who have contributed funds, time and effort to the Rifa programme.

The Rifa camp and programme works hand in hand with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority who assist by donating a portion of the National Parks quota as well as supplying a resident Game Scout.

The future – As is well known, the future lies in our hands to educate the next generation on the importance of wildlife and environment protection. The Zimbabwe Hunters' Association, through its Rifa Education Camp, has been providing this education for the past 30 years and with the help of the hunting community worldwide can continue to do so for generations to come.

**Please contact the Zimbabwe Hunters Association at [zha@mweb.co.zw](mailto:zha@mweb.co.zw) with any ideas or contributions you may have, visit the website - [www.zimbabwehuntersassociation.com](http://www.zimbabwehuntersassociation.com) or write to P. O Box HG 548, Highlands, Harare, Zimbabwe (Harare Office is located in 16 Walter Hill Avenue, Eastlea)**

## South Africa: Questionnaire on international hunters

South Africa is known for its wildlife tourism products, of which hunting is a major activity. The largest portion of wildlife tourism in South Africa takes place on private game ranches and reserves in rural areas. Hunting is therefore a tool in the fight against poaching. Hunting in South Africa is based on basically two pillars, trophy hunting (mostly international market) and biltong/meat hunters (mostly local hunters). The research emanates from the lack of knowledge of international hunters and in order to take informed decisions this research is of paramount importance. It is therefore important for us that you as an international guest (hunter) to South Africa complete the questionnaire and assist us in



improving services and in growing the international hunters market and its associated niche. The link is as follows: <https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=yFv8oT2K6KdVqrCsFIQIXA>

Your information is therefore important in getting a greater understanding since we have been conducting research on the local hunters (South African hunters) for several years, which has been instrumental in taking decisions to improve and enhance local hunting conditions. We therefore want to thank you in advance for your assistance and support. For further information, you can contact us via: Email: [Peet.vanderMerwe@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Peet.vanderMerwe@nwu.ac.za) Website: [www.facebook.com/TREESNWU](http://www.facebook.com/TREESNWU) Fax: +27 18 299 4140 Mail: Tourism Research in Economic Environs & Society, Private Bag X 6001 North-West University Potchefstroom 2520.

## Genetic contamination

### Letter from N.F. Alberts, South Africa

I am very concerned about the current developments in the wildlife industry in South Africa. There are two main areas of concern namely the selective breeding of trophy animals and secondly the breeding of colour variations.

The breeding of trophy animals for the game farm industry seems to have the noble cause of protecting the species at stake. More and more advertisements are seeing the light where the horn length is the key attribute of the animal, as if that has anything to do with preserving the genetics of said species. These animals are sold at crazy prices and then relocated to areas outside their endemic borders. Even if it is the same species it does not mean that the genetics of the East African and West African Buffalo are the same. Yet you see the advertisements stating very proudly indeed that the bloodline of their buffalo has both lines and has been bred in isolation for a long time. Now that statement is as far removed from a conservation viewpoint as you can get. Yet no one seems to think it matters? They are protecting buffalo aren't they? Not only that, they are ensuring that it is the buffalo with the biggest set of horns as if that is important for the long term survival of the species. The stone cold fact is the habitat of these animals is shrinking and there are less and less trophy animals because of that. By artificially creating these trophy monsters the industry is cooking up a pot that will boil over in time. Eventually the canned hunting that has plagued lion hunting will become a major problem with the antelope as well.

What is the owner of the largest buffalo or sable going to do with his multi-million rand asset at the end of its life of petting and feeding? The animal will not roam free because the risk of losing it is simply too great. No, to recoup some of the investment this animal can go to the highest bidder that will shoot it in a small enclosure. Or maybe in a larger enclosure as the animal blankly stares at the very familiar people it has grown accustomed to. Surely a trophy obtained in such fashion cannot be compared to harvesting a naturally wild specimen? It should not be allowed in the trophy books. Big trouble is on the horizon.

Secondly and in the same vein as the first argument is the artificial animals created for human ego. These mutations are natural weaklings that are now grouped together and sold as superior animals. In fact we are perpetuating the weaker gene of a certain phenotype at the cost of ALL the other genetic traits. Once again this has nothing to do with conservation. In fact, if allowed it should be very strictly monitored because of the possibility of genetic contamination that can occur because of these animals being kept under artificial conditions close to natural populations. And the long term future of such an animal? Once again the owner who invested in the golden wildebeest and paid hundreds of thousands of Rands for the animal will seek some form of return before the animal expires of age. Will this animal be released on thousands of hectares? No, it will be kept in small areas and if the willing hunter pays the right price, he will shoot it there and post his name in the book as if this animal was "hunted". We need to have a very serious look at these issues and mobilise against the blatant commercial genetic contamination that is driven by greed and human ego under the false pretence of conservation.

## Obituary: Dr Vivian J. Wilson 1932-2012

Viv Wilson had many experiences and qualifications: one of Africa's great self-taught field zoologists, a game ranger in Umfolozi Game Reserve and later a professional in the Rhodesian Dept. of National Parks & Wildlife Management; zoologist and director of the Natural History Museum, Zimbabwe; founder and manager of the Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage in 1973; author of over 100 scientific papers and several books. His major work was his 800 page book "Duikers of Africa: Masters of the African forest floor" in which he presented the results of twelve years of duiker research in the whole of Africa. Nobody knew more about Duikers than Viv Wilson. He died at his Bulawayo home in September 2012.

## Obituary: Anthony King dies in an air crash

Well known Kenyan conservationist Anthony King (44) has died on February 24th, when the light aircraft, which he was piloting, crashed during takeoff near Mount Kenya. For over 20 years Anthony had worked for different conservation agencies in Kenya, including UNEP. From 2005 to 2011 he was the Executive Director of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum. Kenyan born Anthony King was convinced that wildlife has a great potential for the country and that the declines were mainly a result of long term policy failure. He believed in incentive based and locally-driven wildlife strategies and worked with great energy for a better enabling institutional environment for conservation in his home country. See his article "No reason to conserve: Exploring the drivers and performance of wildlife conservation in Kenya."

in: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/symposium\\_proceedings.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/symposium_proceedings.pdf)

## BOOK REVIEW: The Serengeti in Watercolours

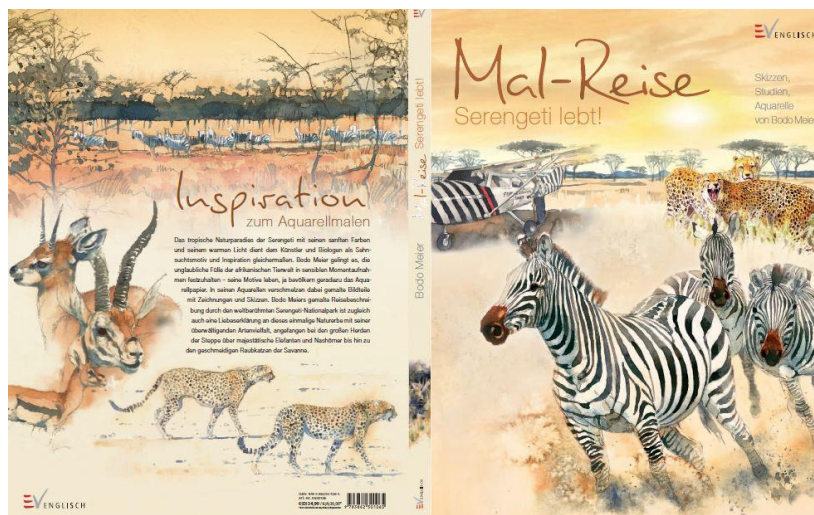
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The endless plains of the Serengeti with its warm colours and the multitude of animals were inspiring and exhilarating to the artist Bodo Meier. He succeeded to keep the richness of the African wildlife in watercolour paintings, sketches and drawings. Here the

watercolours coalesce with drawings. His experiences collected on many safaris resulted in five sketchbooks of the northern national parks of Tanzania. This collection was published now in two magnificent coffee table books, the first of which is "Painting Safari to the Serengeti", the second "Painting Safari – Serengeti lives". The text is in German language, however, the books live from the watercolour paintings anyway.

The books are – above all – proof of the artist's love affair with the Serengeti ecosystem and its unparalleled biodiversity, the large herds of wildebeest, zebras and gazelles, buffalos and the hippos in their watery resort, the majestic elephants and the almost extinct rhinos. But there are also the carnivores like the elusive big cats and a rich birdlife that allures birders from all over the world and the typical plants like the baobab and the umbrella thorn.

The first volume starts in the Arusha National Park, a blissful landscape with giraffes and buffalos roaming the soft undulating grassland, the black-and-white colobus monkeys, framed by the high peaks of Kilimanjaro and



Mount Meru. From Arusha Bodo Meier brings the reader to Tarangire National Park, which could be called "elephant kingdom". Here like nowhere else one can see big herds of these giants and the scenery of Tarangire is filled with its botanic equivalent: the baobab. Next he shows the wildlife and the Rift Valley with Lake Manyara. This volume is completed with the Ngorongoro Crater, one of the marvels of the world and the Crater Highland. He also shows the pastoral people of the Maasai tribe and fetches the reader to a hike to Empaakai Crater and to the lonely but active volcano Ol Doinyo Lengai.

In the second volume the artist takes the reader into the Serengeti, fills up the pages with the landscapes of this vast park: the Serengeti Plain, the Kopjes, Seronera Valley, Kirawira in the west, Lobo and Mara in the north. In addition to the multitude of animals that populate the books there are also the unmatched flights in the "Zebra" over the plains together with Marcus Börner, at that time Africa director of Frankfurt Zoological Society. Bodo Meier, born 1949, lives in Bonn, Germany as a painter and illustrator of books and hunting magazines: [www.bodo-meier.de](http://www.bodo-meier.de)

## The New African Indaba

Now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, African Indaba will undergo a major revamp in order to making the eNewsletter more user-friendly and easier to access. We will also redesign our Website; this will include up-to-date links for subscribing and unsubscribing, a streamlined distribution system, ensuring that all our subscribers receive the newest issue of African Indaba without delay, and an easily accessible archive of articles from past issues. We encourage our readers to inform their colleagues and friends of African Indaba, the only free and non-commercial eNewsletter on African hunting and conservation matters.

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