

SAVE OUR RHINOS

an Amdec Group Project

15th September 2016

Dear fellow conservationist

When David Rogers, the well-known professional photographer, invited my wife Astra & me to join him on his next photographic safari to the South Luangwa Valley, the second largest national park in Zambia, we jumped at the chance. After all, I needed new material for our 2017 calendar and the thought of some good rhino pics in really wild habitat excited me.

How disappointing, therefore, was the realisation that there are no rhinos left in South Luangwa! Some 40 years ago Zambia had one of the highest rhino populations in Africa, some 12,000, of which 4,000 were found in the beautiful Luangwa Valley. Reports vary but by 1998, at the latest, rhinos were declared extinct in Zambia as a result of rampant poaching.

In 2003, a National Rhino Conservation Programme was established and black rhinos were re-introduced into the North Luangwa Valley under the strict surveillance of an anti-poaching unit; North Luangwa is more remote than its southern neighbour so none of the rhinos has been poached to date. Some have died, 2011 being the worst year with six deaths from natural causes – it was one of the driest years on record and the rhinos suffered. The population expanded to 34 with the birth of six calves but the predicted growth in population will require additional resources for the anti-poaching unit with little additional funding available; currently there are 250 anti-poaching officers who make 60 four-man patrols every month. Patrolling will inevitably become less intense as rhino numbers grow and the scourge of poaching may start once again.

I should add that, despite the absence of rhinos, South Luangwa National Park teems with wildlife: elephants, lions, leopards, wild dogs, hippos and crocodiles are in abundance so perhaps I should apologise in advance that, should I choose South Luangwa, my 2017 calendar will not feature any rhino. How sad!

South Africa's rhino population has been decimated but with more intensive anti-poaching patrols perhaps we can stem the flow with your continued support towards the rhino initiative.

For those of you who have already donated towards the "Save our Rhinos" initiative, thank you. For those who are still considering making a donation, however small, please see the banking details for the Amdec Group Rhino Project trust account below. Let's make 2016 a bumper year with donations exceeding the R125,000 donated by you in 2015. The Amdec Group matched this last year and a cheque for R250,000 was handed over to the SANParks Honorary Rangers; once again Amdec will match every donation made.

Regards

John Wilson
Chairman, The Amdec Group

With thanks to Zambian Tourism, the Zambian Wildlife Authority and Newsweek for the published facts used above.

Bank:	First National Bank
Account Name:	Amdec Investments (Pty) Ltd Trust Account
Account No:	5016 118 0035
Branch:	RMB Corporate Banking Cape Town
Branch Code:	250 655
Reference:	Rhinos & Name of Donor