

The Rhino & Lion Wildlife Conservation NPO gets launched with the release of rehabilitated vultures

Friday 16 March 2007 sees the launch of the Rhino & Lion Wildlife Conservation NPO. In the words of Ed Hern, Founder of the Rhino & Lion Nature Reserve and avid conservationist, "We need to make a difference in our world if we want to leave an ongoing legacy of animal and bird species for our children and grandchildren to enjoy; everyone needs to get involved and be more informed about what is happening in the world around them."

The surviving six poisoned African white-backed vultures were released after having been treated by Kerri Wolter and Dr Paul Bartels for poisoning from the preventable disaster that took place in Delareyville three weeks ago. This heralds the successful beginning of the flagship Vulture Programme, "Impacting Society."

Professor Gerry Swan, the Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria at Onderstepoort and Director of the Vulture Conservation programme as the events guest speaker comments: "Wildlife is more often than none the victim of environmental degradation and human persecution with

many known examples of disasters that have affected their livelihood. As scientific and conservation communities, we need to understand the risk imposed on our wildlife and to respond appropriately. The response of these communities to the Asian vulture crisis is a good example how scientists and conservationists from all over the world have worked together in resolving the crisis."

Together with project partners, Rhino & Lion Wildlife conservation Vulture Programme lead by Kerri Wolter, University of Pretoria, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences by Dr Vinny Naidoo, BioBank SA/NZG by Dr Paul Bartels and Gauteng Directorate of Nature Conservation,

much work is being done on the research of Vultures, their flight patterns, breeding habits, foraging ranges to name but a few areas being addressed. Kerri Wolter, Manager of the Vulture Programme feels that Vultures are just very misunderstood birds that need to be studied and helped. "Just because they are not cute and cuddly, doesn't mean they don't need our assistance."

The Rhino & Lion Wildlife Conservation Vulture Programme is grateful to our new project partners in vulture conservation, namely: Rand Merchant Bank, Computer Facilities; E Oppenheimer and Son

(Continued on page 4)



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Release of Rehabilitated Vultures

(Continued from page 1)

(Pty) Ltd, the Tony & Lisette Lewis Foundation and Natural Encounters.

Vultures are currently facing threats such as this poisoning, habitat destruction, drowning in farm reservoirs, lethal electrification on power lines, illegal capture for the making of traditional medicines and more recently, for the predicting of the winning lotto numbers!

In closing Hern comments that the Vulture project is the flagship of the research and rehabilitation programme, but that it is the first of many invaluable

new projects to take place in the Wildlife NPO pipeline. Look forward to the next initiative involving White Lions. Watch this space ...

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