



### **PUT YOUR SWING BEHIND ZIMBABWE'S WILDLIFE**

THE field may be full, but there is still room for sponsors to put their swing behind Zimbabwe's wildlife at the fun filled annual Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit (VFAPU) Golf Day, to be held at Borrowdale Brooke Golf Club on Friday.

A total of 144 players, making up 36 teams, will take part in VFAPU Golf Day, one of the most enjoyable and best organised events on the golf fundraising calendar, which will also include lunch, entertainment, an exciting array of prizes donated by many sponsors and a charity auction.

A silver cuff by renowned Zimbabwean jeweller Patrick Mavros, designed for VFAPU in conjunction with wildlife advocate Candy Adams, to be launched at the fundraiser, hosted by hospitality group Africa Albida Tourism (AAT), will be auctioned. Six cricket souvenirs signed by top international players donated by SAVE: African Rhino Foundation will also go under the hammer.

In a last ditch plea to sponsors, AAT chief executive Ross Kennedy said: "The plight of our wildlife is in our hands ... you and me, and every one of us in Zimbabwe, the region and continent.

"The speed of destruction of habitat and species is truly shocking and we all need to play a small part in first stopping that destruction, and then regenerating and protecting the future," Mr Kennedy said.

Options to assist included sponsoring a VFAPU scout at \$307 a month, vehicle maintenance costs, scouts uniforms – which may be branded with a sponsor's logo - or donating equipment, such as flashlights, sleeping bags and backpacks, Mr Kennedy said.

"At AAT, we make significant and regular contributions in cash and resources to these incredible Zimbabweans, led by Charles Brightman, who operate 24/7 around Victoria Falls. Their work in the last 15 years has made a significant positive contribution to conservation and wildlife in the region, and we ask you all to help in small or large ways as you can," Mr Kennedy said.

VFAPU has arrested nearly 700 hardened poachers since it was established in 1999 by Mr Brightman, a local safari operator and conservationist, and Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, AAT's flagship property.

The unit, which works closely with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Zimbabwe Republic Police, has also removed more than 22 000 wire snares from its operational area.

In addition, 179 mammals, including buffalo, kudu, eland and impala, injured by snares have been treated and released back into the wild, Mr Brightman said.

AAT covers the costs of the charity golf tournament, so every cent raised goes directly to VFAPU. The event, which is integral to the survival of VFAPU raised a record \$14,750 last year. The Unit is also supported by other tourism operators and members of Victoria Falls community.

VFAPU, which was established in an effort to fight the alarming levels of poaching, operates in a 50kmsq area around Victoria Falls, and has 17 scouts patrolling seven days/nights a week. The unit tackles all forms of poaching, including wood, bush meat and ivory.

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