



**March 2013**

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### **FUNDS RAISED FOR WILDLIFE'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE**

The annual African Wildlife Heritage Gala Dinner, held on 14 March at Montecasino, Johannesburg, raised in excess of R 1.1 million. Launched in 2007 by the Professional Hunters' Association (PHASA), this fundraising initiative plays a vital role in supporting the training of field guides, field rangers and protected area managers across the SADC region — our first line of defence.

The total raised since the event's inception seven years ago has now reached the R9-million mark, which not only underscores PHASA's commitment to the conservation and ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources, but has ensured that the men and women in our national parks and wildlife reserves receive the necessary training.

The funds are raised by acquiring and auctioning exclusive donations of hunting and accommodation packages, luxury weekend retreats, hunting equipment and wildlife art, donated by various conservation organisations, outfitters and businesses.

'With the funds raised since the launch of the event, we have been able to train over 800 people already employed in the field of conservation,' says Theresa Sowry, CEO of the Southern African Wildlife College. 'More recently, because of the scourge of rhino-poaching, much of this funding has been channelled into anti-poaching training, supported by our Wildlife Guardian Programme. If we want to ensure that more arrests are made in the fight against poaching, leading players and organisations in the conservation industry need to continue working together to equip people on the ground with the necessary skills,' adds Sowry.

'The Wildlife College provides the ideal vehicle for PHASA to help build the capacity of the custodians of our natural resources. The hunting fraternity and advocates of the college continue to support this annual initiative and, in so doing, contribute to training,' says Adri Kitshoff, CEO of PHASA.



From Left: Adri Kitshoff, CEO PHASA, Dries v Coller, Fund Chairman, Theresa Sowry, SAWC CEO, Hans Vermaak, PHASA President