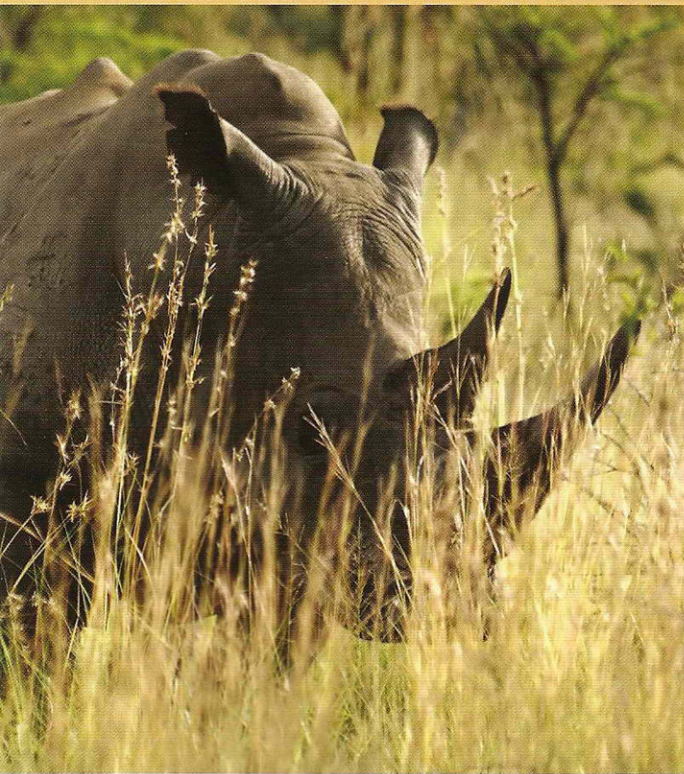


SAVING the rhino



Five rhino in the North West have been fitted with GPS devices and alarms, so far, in the first such project in the world, whereby the animals' movements are tracked 24/7, writes **Tilly Smith**.

More than 200 rhino have been slaughtered countrywide since the start of 2010 and in the North West Province alone, more than 40, including pregnant cows, have been killed. However, authorities hope the use of GPS technology will turn the tide as syndicates are becoming more sophisticated, comprising the basic poacher, the controller who organizes the poaching gangs, the purchaser, the shipping coordinator and the international buyers, said Rusty Hustler of the North West Tourism Board. Tau Game Lodge (SATSA Member 1084) has maintained and improved its five-star facilities over the years to ensure local as well as international visitors return time and again. Not only did the lodge launch its eco-friendly Tau Spa Oasis two years ago, but the lodge has also maintained as well as improved its eco-tourism operations.

Historical birders' paradise

The Madikwe Game Reserve comprises 720 square kilometres, where a summer two-day bird watching safari could result in between 190 and 210 bird species out of the known 313 species being recorded here to date. Special bird species include: Kori Bustard, White Stork, Doublebanded Courser, Burchell's Courser, Pied Babbler and plenty more.

The region is also of great cultural and historical interest, with the old school building, where Herman Charles Bosman taught, in the reserve and the outline of Abjaterskop looming just beyond the western boundary of this Groot Marico bushveld.

Tau is recognised for its contribution to developing eco-friendly safaris whilst also being involved in community development as well as the education and wellbeing of its people. Guests seem particularly keen on the tree-planting programme in place, which is a further commitment to conservation for future generations. The endangered African wild dog numbers have remained constant in the region.

