



Zimbabwe Professional Hunters and Guides AGM

By Don Heath

Once again, with the onset of the rains, Zimbabwe's Professional Hunters and Guides gathered for their A.G.M., trophy awards and hunters ball. The A.G.M. itself was noticeably different in tone from previous years. There was an air of unity about that hasn't been seen since the sixties.

Hunting and tourism are under threat by government mismanagement of key areas and international lobbying by anti-conservationists such as IFAW and HSUS. Hunters and Guides, as people tend to be highly individualistic. If there are six of them in a room you will have four political parties and five religions represented. At last,

however, unity has prevailed and personalities were pushed aside in a concerted drive to protect and further the industry. Such new-found cohesion was a pleasure to see, and after such a difficult year as 1999, it is the one great success.

One thing to emerge though was that the association was receiving

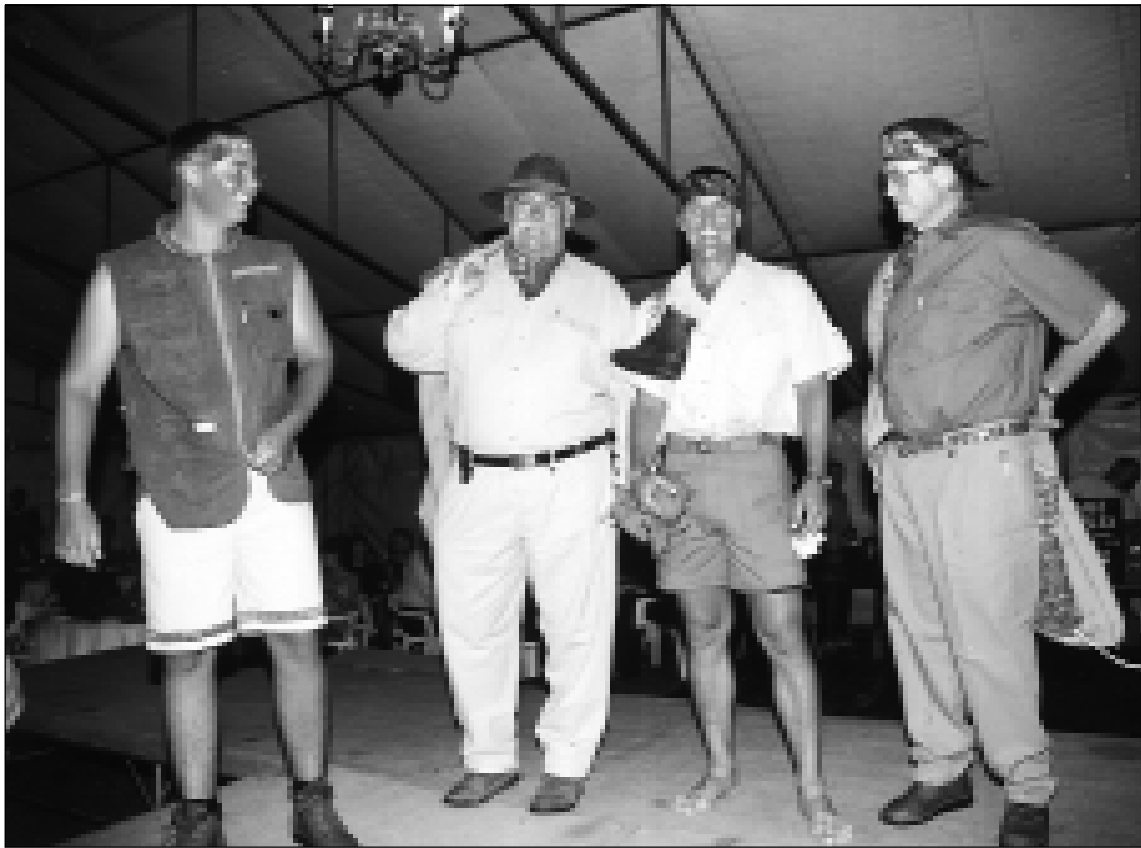
many calls from foreign visitors asking for assistance with safari operators or Professional Hunters who are not members of the association. There is very little the association can do in these instances. If the operator/PH is not a member, he/she is either barred from membership or is not interested enough in conservation/ethics to join.

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How to relax at the end of the season! Take part in a fashion parade, (Left to Right) Martin Peters, John Rosenfels, Rusty Labuschagne and Peter Johnstone get ready.

Visitors to Zimbabwe are reminded to check that their outfitter is a current member of ZATSO (Zimbabwe Association of Tour and Safari Outfitters), and that your PH is a Member of Z.P.H.G.A.

You can check by phoning the association on (263-4) 708878 / 9 or emailing them on Pangeti@zct.co.zw (*Whatever country you hunt in check that your outfitter/PH is a registered member of the appropriate association:- ED*).

The trophy awards and Ball went off brilliantly. Carole Johnstone organised a fashion display of appropriate safari wear for clients, and bullied several of the better known personalities in the safari industry to be the models. Definitely a great show.

This was followed by the awards presented by Elias Nyakunu, Chief Executive Officer of the Zimbabwe Council for Tourism. In spite of many difficulties 1999 was a good year for Zimbabwe, with many impressive records taken, including a new SCI world record Reedbuck by Willy Mills and a tie first (SCI scoring) lion taken in the Rifa by Rusty Labuschagne. Once again, the gallantry award went to one of those unsung heroes of the safari industry, a tracker. To Mr Mutasa, who rescued his PH from under a wounded leopard,

very well done. Courage is certainly something that is not lacking in the safari industry, but to take on a leopard, unarmed is certainly worthy of reward.

And to round the evening off, a party. A party of some note, since at least half of those present had spent at least the last six months in the bush working. 🐾

Summary of Awards

Gallantry Award	Mutasa
Best worker of 1999	Lionel Reynolds <i>(for the second year running)</i>
Best Hunter overall 1999	Billy Lemon
Best Hunter from Proficiency	Anton Coetzee
Best Guide from Proficiency	Doug Kew
Best Antelope (a new world record reedbuck 34 1/4)	Willy Mills
Best Lion (27 3/8)	Rusty Labuschagne
Best Buffalo (125 1/2)	Len Taylor
Best Sable (112 3/8)	Pete Shore
Best Leopard (179/16)	C. Jenkinson
Best Elephant (69.5kg)	Gregg Butler
Best elephant out of three	Penny de Vries
Best Publicity Brochure	River Lodges of Africa
Zambezi-Kavira Conservation Award	Anton Coetzee/ Marius Maertens