

It won't do what it says on the tin

Canned hunting opponent Chris has seen the light: it's the animal at fault, not the hunter. Things would be so much easier if rhinos were more co-operative when it came to being shot.

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IN GEORGE ORWELL'S novel, 1984, society embraces the opposite of the truth as reality. Orwellian logic applies in South Africa today, for this is a land where canned hunting is a humane and ethical activity.

South Africa's version of 1984 features a rhino cow being, in Orwellian Newspeak, 'non-consumptively utilised' as a tourist attraction in Kuruman Game Park. Sentimental, urbanised people might erroneously, or maliciously, describe the game park as a small piece of fenced land across the road from an industrial estate. Real conservationists would know that this was in fact an 'extended wildlife system' as defined in new regulations.

The 'active management' of the rhino began at 9am, when she was approached by licensed hunters on foot, in accordance with good hunting practices. She was shot humanely with a .458 Winchester in a manner which inflicted no more than minimal suffering, and which did not distress any other animals in the vicinity.

She enjoyed further humane treatment during the course of the day. At 4.30pm she was observed bleeding from her flanks, forequarters and hindquarters, but could not have been suffering any real discomfort because the ethical hunter was using an approved weapon of the correct calibre.

She must also have been pleased to know that the ethical hunter had a permit issued by Kimberley Nature Conservation authorities to introduce her to the doctrine of sustainable use. The trouble was that, mindless of her duty to be sustainably utilised for the benefit of conservation, she had retreated into a thicket. The ethical

hunter was by now shooting from his safari vehicle, in accordance with good hunting practices, because she was wounded, though not badly.

Meanwhile, not because he was afraid that his vehicle would get a puncture in the thicket, or because he was tired from all that pulling on a heavy trigger, the ethical hunter called up a helicopter from the adjacent industrial estate.

The helicopter descended upon the thicket in order to flush the rhino cow out. When she emerged, she received more humane treatment from the ethical hunter's .458 Winchester, which caused her to retreat back

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into the thicket. Her lack of co-operation meant the process was repeated again and again. This was the rhino's fault, because she had exhibited a marked aversion to the humane treatment she was getting.

THE HELICOPTER PILOT, who for some reason was upset by what he had seen (he was clearly not a true conservationist), alleged that she received humane treatment in this manner no fewer than 10 times in 40 minutes before she finally conformed to requirements and fell to her knees. At this stage the hunting party were observed to break open beer cans and to take photographs in order to celebrate the success



of their ethical hunt.

The rhino didn't actually expire until later that evening, but not too much should not be made of this, because every true conservationist knows that animals cannot reason and, therefore, cannot suffer pain as we do. There really is no ethical difference between killing a rhino and killing bacteria.

Unfortunately, spoilsports exist, and the circumstances of this hunt were leaked to a group of radical, extremist bunny huggers. They were so unreasonable that they reported the matter to the police, with the aim of harming conservation in South Africa. The response of both the hunting party and the conservation authorities was, quite properly, to point out that the hunt had been conducted in accordance with good hunting practices: the hunter was licensed by Kimberley Conservation Authority; he was a qualified marksman; he was a member of a recognised hunting association that was supervising the hunt; he initially approached the animal on foot; and he used a rifle of the approved calibre. The rhino cow was deemed to be wild, because the enclosure in which she roamed fell within the definition of an extended wildlife system, where active management was required.

The Kimberley prosecutor, an avid hunter, and so, by definition, a true conservationist, accepted these defences and declined to prosecute. It was impossible to prove, he said, under these circumstances that the rhino had suffered more than minimally.