



FOREWORD

What a pleasure to do this Foreword for such a remarkable book. Paddy Hagelthorn's passion and enthusiasm for Africa's extraordinary celebration of diversity of fauna and flora has been encapsulated in the text (written by Molly Buchanan and Paddy) and in the quite spectacular photographs on nearly every page, many of which were taken by Paddy himself and others by Richard du Toit. Paddy undoubtedly loves the Bushveld and enjoys sharing every moment he spends there with his guests, but this is far more than an account of the experiences of one of the continent's best safari guides.

Just a Blade of Grass is a deceptive title for what a first glance could be perceived as yet another romantic view of wildlife roaming free in nature independent of humans. This of course is a fantasy, and although Paddy stresses the fascination of working in an environment where "life can never be dull when every day is a day of discovery", he has the courage to call attention to what is increasingly becoming a seriously depauperated landscape. Unlike many other similar books of this genre, this one recognizes that the continent's rapidly expanding human population living in poverty is transforming vast areas of land and reducing wildlife habitats.

How should we address such a dominating concern? From his almost daily contact with visitors to the Bushveld, Paddy has come to appreciate a growing donor fatigue at a time when more money is needed than ever before to safeguard our wildlife heritage. *Just a Blade of Grass* bravely tackles emotively charged issues such as elephant culling, the legal sale of rhino horn when not a single rhino needs to be killed, and the role of a responsible hunting industry, all of which could provide substantial and sustainable much needed revenue.

Charles Darwin once said: "The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man". Surely nobody can doubt that Darwin would have immediately recognized Paddy as being an exemplary candidate for such an attribute. But with this unquestioned love comes realism of life in Africa today, a message so powerful because it is so simple, which this book succeeds admirably in conveying.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue rectangular background. The signature appears to read "John Hanks".

John Hanks



Left: A lion frightens the daylight out of all of us as he races towards us.
Above: Jackal buzzards.