



*Black rhinoceros of speed.  
tail curved over back  
CW.*

wardens and rangers dealing with these species in their professional lives. REF is assured of their support. It now needs financial resources to effectively channel expertise into viable and successful projects for the conservation of rhinos and elephants.

## WHITE RHINO SURVEYS

### White rhino survey: Private land

REF concerns itself not only with the broad protection and research issues which have been addressed by other bodies, but also with practical management issues. Among these are the monitoring of vulnerable populations, the utilisation of these species by the hunting and game-ranching industry, law enforcement and intelligence monitoring as regards the trade in rhino and elephant products and contributions to a national strategy for the conservation of these species. REF is international and will have representatives of the wildlife agencies of several African countries among its advisors. REF will gladly assist other organisations, nationally and internationally, with rhino and elephant conservation projects. To this end, it has established close links with several of the leading conservation bodies in southern Africa.

The first project undertaken by REF, with the help of generous sponsors, was a survey of white rhino on private South African game farms and ranches. The resulting information will now be used to improve the management and distribution of white rhino on private land. Later this year, REF, in collaboration with the Game Rangers Association, will stage an important Rhino Conservation Workshop in the Kruger National Park for field men and decision-makers which will focus in particular on countering the threat to black rhino.

Nissan and R J Reynolds (Camel) generously sponsored the use of a vehicle and funds for the survey of white rhino on private land in South Africa during 1987. The results of the survey are very significant and valuable from a white rhino conservation/management viewpoint, and give some cause for concern.

A summary of the findings of the survey will be made public in July 1988 and we thank both Nissan and Camel for their considerable assistance in making this survey possible.

### White rhino survey: Kruger National Park

To complement the above survey, the Rhino & Elephant Foundation is supporting a survey of white rhino in the Kruger National Park.

The Kruger National Park has a population of white rhino (1 164 - 1986) which will soon equal that of the area from which they originated, the Umfolozi/Ilhluwe/Corridor complex in Zululand (1 700 - 1987). Because of the huge size of the park, it has the potential to significantly increase its white rhino population, and it could become the most viable safe haven for this species in the world. The white rhino which were translocated to parks in neighbouring southern African countries are already being poached. This indicates that their long-term survival may depend largely on their status in South Africa.



White rhino survey on private land – 1987

Because of its concern for the future well-being of the rhino species generally, the Rhino & Elephant Foundation is supporting a survey in the Kruger National Park to gauge the following:

1. The status of the current white rhino population in the Kruger National Park;
2. The habitat preferences of white rhino in the Kruger National Park;
3. The ecological constraints on this species;
4. The ultimate carrying capacity of white rhino in the Kruger National Park;
5. The future management options for this species in the park and elsewhere in South Africa.

This information will provide management guidelines for white rhino populations in the future. Current conservation theories place great emphasis on the importance of large animal populations where genetic diversity can be

maintained. Furthermore, a large population of white rhino in the Kruger National Park could act as a 'buffer' should the poaching threat to the black rhino ever become a reality in South Africa (rhino horn poachers do not discriminate between the two species).

The re-establishment of white rhino in the Kruger National Park is a success story of which both the National Parks Board and Natal Parks Board can be justifiably proud. Once this survey has been completed, an overall picture of the white rhino situation in South Africa, on both state and privately-owned land, will have emerged.

The researcher undertaking this survey is Danie Pienaar, a BSc Honours student in Wildlife Management who is working on his MSc.

Once again, we wish to thank R J Reynolds (Camel) for their support of this project.