

# Botswana Opens New Sanctuary, Relocates Four White Rhinos

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In mid-February, officials of the Natal Parks Board captured and relocated four white rhinos from Chobe National Park to the newly-established Khama Rhino Sanctuary in Serowe, but one of the rhinos died from bullet wounds sustained prior to its capture.

The three remaining rhinos are one mature cow, her nine-month-old calf, and one 30-year-old bull. The dead rhino was a three-year-old bull.

The relocation to the sanctuary may have come just in time for the surviving rhinos. Recent reports from Botswana indicate that in addition to the rhino that later died at the sanctuary, two other white rhinos were poached in Chobe National Park during February 1993. A total of 12 rhinos have reportedly been killed in the area since November 1992.

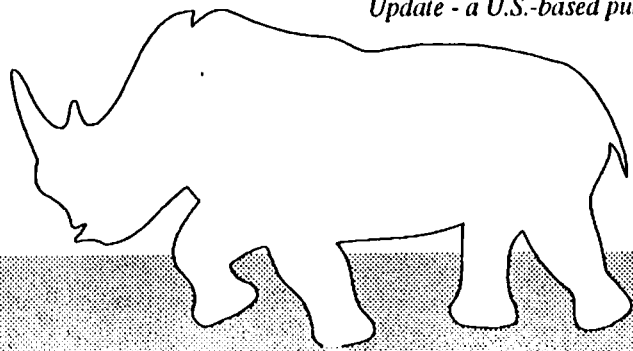
During the 1960s and 1970s, the Natal Parks Board helped to reintroduce white rhinos into Chobe, where they had not been seen since 1890. More than 50 white rhinos were released

into the park during that time. By 1981, scientists estimated a population of nearly 100 in the park, but a 1991 survey revealed that only 20-30 remained. With the recent killings, some conservationists estimate that fewer than ten white rhinos remain throughout the country.

Sanctuaries for rhinos now exist in at least five countries with rhino populations, including Kenya and Zimbabwe. The idea of a rhino sanctuary in Botswana was first suggested in 1989 by the Chobe Wildlife Trust, a private organization. The new sanctuary is located approximately seven miles from Serowe and will be run by locally elected officials.

There are plans to house both white and black rhinos at the Khama Sanctuary, although it is unclear where Botswana would find the black rhinos to move there. The 1991 survey in Chobe did not locate a single black rhino.

Given the ongoing crisis, funds are currently being sought to expand the sanctuary. *(With acknowledgement to African Wildlife Update - a U.S.-based publication)*



# How it was Memories of the first 25 years of OWLS

## Chapter 2

Late in 1968, we received a letter from a Mr Smith of the FCS (Fauna Conservation Society of Ngamiland, the body in charge of the Moremi) reminding us that the Moremi has been created to establish an undisturbed breeding ground for game "on which the economy of the country increasingly depended" and not primarily for tourists. A concept that has altered somewhat over the years.

Nevertheless, FCS was planning to improve roads, establish viewing sites and train the Game Guards.

They planned to have the Moremi subdivided into several sections, each with its own Game Guard. During discussion on these matters, the possibility of incorporating Chiefs' Island into the Moremi was mooted for the first time. They wanted us to help with conservation education, particularly by way of films. They wanted us to organise equipment for showing the films in the bush, to the indigenous people. (An excellent idea, but not easy - or inexpensive - to organise).

They also wanted us to get someone to make a really good map of the Moremi. (We're still working on it).

At the AGM in May 1969 our Five Year Plan was reaffirmed - to produce a first class film on the Moremi, to establish an ecologist in the Moremi and to publish a small brochure on the Moremi. It was at this meeting that someone raised the question of the use of water from the Swamps for the diamond mine at Orapa.

It was a couple of years before we were reassured, as a result of investigations by the late Peter Mostert, that Anglo were being very cautious about this and doing their best to avoid

harming the Swamps.

Later that year, Jack Ramsden (poacher turned conservationist, who had been in particular contact with the FCS) came back from an ecology course, where he had been for a year. He informed us that he had not been there to deal with the things we had sent up - the signboards, the aluminium foil and the badges for the Game Guards that we had lovingly collected - all stayed in their little boxes the whole year. One of the snags about "remote control"

In his letter he added that we would like tent like the one we had sent Morotse, Senior Game Guard - and could we please send some uniforms for the Game Guards? So we did.

Early in 1970 there was a bit of a sleeping sickness scare. A FAO ecologist had been flown down to Johannesburg with sleeping sickness, and we were advised to warn visitors to take all possible precautions - and to check on their return home, if necessary.

Towards the end of the year we became more active in the search for an ecologist and eventually, with the help of a grant of R2,000 from Total Oil, and the loan of a Land Rover from Barbara Jeppe, we put Jeremy David, an ecologist from Cape Town, in the field.

Regrettably, he resigned after only four months, for "personal reasons."

Looking back, it doesn't seem as if we had achieved much during those couple of years.

Nevertheless, all the time, we kept plugging away. We made a couple of trips to Gaborone to talk to the Game Department. We showed Wild Life films. And membership gradually increased.