

- ◆ To establish a long-term viable population of at least 2000 black rhino in suitable habitat and similarly, 500 white rhino.
- ◆ To institute a utilisation scheme for black and white rhino to achieve and justify the above mentioned goal in accordance with CITES regulations.
- ◆ To investigate and institute a National Rhino Conservation Plan, an annual Action Plan and research projects to cover actions such as de-horning, vaccination, translocation and sale of live animals; in co-operation with regional and international organisations as far as possible.

Active rhino management in Namibia has been underway since 1966, with the black rhino population being consolidated in Etosha. Up until 1985 this subspecies of black rhino occurred in only two populations in Namibia. Since then rhino have been re-introduced into their former range in South Africa and into conservation areas and private land in Namibia. In Namibia 10 new populations have been established since 1989, when a national rhino plan was developed for both black and white rhino, with the establishment of the Wildlife Protection Service in 1989. Dehorning of selected rhino populations was undertaken to combat a flare-up of poaching around Independence in 1990. Translocations have been undertaken within or into Etosha (57 black rhino, 26 white rhino) and out of Etosha (99 black rhino).

The black rhino population in Etosha National Park currently represents the largest black rhino population in a single conservation area and 70% of all *Diceros bicornis bicornis*. Censusing and monitoring this large population effectively is a challenge. 12,360km² of Etosha seem to be good black rhino habitat with a very conservative estimated carrying capacity of 0.05 rhinos/km² (618 on 12,360 km²). Sub-population density reaches 0.2 rhinos/km².

A national Rhino Advisory Committee includes representatives from different rhino areas and MET top management, meeting every three months.

3.11.6 South Africa (R. Emslie and A. Hall-Martin)

This talk briefly described the historical successes of rhino conservation in South Africa, mentioning the overall increase in white rhino numbers up to 7,913 in 1997 (from only 20 in 1895) and black rhino numbers up to 1,043 by 1997 (from only 115 in 1930). In 1997, South Africa conserved 976 south- central black rhino, 34 or south-western black rhino and 33 out of range eastern black rhino. All white rhino in the country are southern white rhino.

Most of the details of this talk can be found in pp 51 to 55 on the IUCN African rhino status survey and conservation action plan handed out to all delegates at the meeting.

Conservation in South Africa is complicated with nine provincial conservation agencies and SA National Parks having responsibility for conservation on State-owned and -run Parks and Game Reserves. The private sector also plays an important conservation role with both black and white rhinos being owned and traded. Sales of surplus rhinos from State-run reserves generate substantial revenue that helps subsidise the high costs of successful rhino conservation.

Issues addressed in the talk included a brief overview of the rhino conservation measures being taken (concentrated law enforcement, use of intelligence networks, routine ongoing rhino monitoring and translocation with a view to increasing metapopulation growth rates, community conservation programmes, generation of revenue from conservation, plus recent heavy sentencing of convicted rhino offenders with up to ten-year jail terms).

The important role of the Rhino Management Group (RMG) and its revised Conservation Plan for the Black Rhinoceros in South Africa was discussed. It was mentioned that recent RMG data seemed to be indicating that metapopulation performance is beginning to decline, and that some populations may need increased removals to return them to higher levels of productivity. The recent translocation of some of the out of range eastern black rhino from Addo National Park back to East Africa was mentioned, as was the consolidation and increase in size of Addo with a view to creating a park with a carrying capacity for over 100 south-western black rhino. The export of a sizeable founder herd of south-central black rhino to Malilangwe in Zimbabwe in 1998 was mentioned.

The new draft strategy for the conservation and sustainable use the wild populations of southern white rhino in South Africa was outlined. Key components of this strategy involve biological management, security, protection and law enforcement, sustainable use, animal welfare, community involvement and co-ordination. The important role of the private sector in rhino conservation in South Africa was discussed. Results of the most recent survey of white rhinos on private land in October 1999 by Daan Buijs revealed that numbers of white rhinos continued to increase on private land with over 1,920 rhinos in 164 different populations.

Problems outlined included how to maintain conservation standards in State-run protected areas in the face of declining government grants, and how to maintain economic incentives for the private sector and communities to encourage them to buy and conserve white rhino and other game, and in so doing increase in the country's carrying capacity for white rhino.

3.11.7 Swaziland (R. C. Boycott)

The situation in Swaziland is unique in that Swaziland's rhino populations are in private game reserves. Swaziland's rhino populations are small with approximately 10 black rhino (*Diceros bicornis minor*) and 50 white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*). The private game reserves are land-locked within Swaziland and do not abut any international borders of either South Africa or Mozambique. The situation seems to have made these populations safe from poachers from other countries. No recent illegal operations have been reported, the last incident being in 1992 at Big Bend.

In 1995 the last 3 white rhino in Mlawula Nature Reserve (a reserve managed by the Swaziland National Trust Commission) were translocated to one of the private game reserves as a precautionary measure. The location of Mlawula on the border of Mozambique had enabled poaching to take place. The move of the rhino into a land-locked private game reserve has enabled Mlawula Nature Reserve to improve its security. Mlawula is being game-fenced and the fence electrified and once the area again becomes safe for rhino the rhino will be returned. Mlawula Nature Reserve borders Mozambique and there are opportunities under regional initiatives such as the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) and the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI).

Mololatja Nature Reserve in north-western Swaziland shares common border with Songimvelo Game Reserve in South Africa which has an important rhino population. Through joint management programmes Mololatja forms an important buffer zone for Songimvelo. While Malolatja does not suitable rhino habitat the reserve has received two elephants from the Songimvelo herd that moved down the Nkomati valley into Malolatja in 1992. The elephant are faring well and future management of these elephants is under review. Similar to the situation in eastern Swaziland and Mozambique, there are new opportunities for Mololatja Nature Reserve becoming an important part of a Transfrontier Conservation Area with Songimvelo Game Reserve.