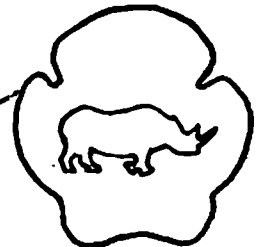


SPECIAL REPORT by Karl-Peter Erb

NAMIBIA WILDLIFE TRUST

March 1983.

Karl-Peter Erb



BABY RHINO / RHINO POACHING INCIDENT

On information received from the security police that spoor of two unknown persons were seen on Palm (a farm on the way to Sesfontein). A two day patrol was then undertaken in the Palm/Juriedraai area on Thursday and Friday, 3rd and 4th of March by KPE. During the time spent walking and driving through the area it became evident that something was amiss with regard to the rhino. No fresh spoor of rhino were found in that area, an area known to be used by at least 3 rhino. A second patrol was done into the area together with Garth Owen-Smith on Saturday 5th March.

On Sunday morning while following the spoor of a rhino cow and calf the calf was found alone being followed by jackals. After a period during which GOS watched the calf and KPE looked for the mother, it was decided that the cow was probably dead and that the calf should be captured to save it from being killed by the jackals or hyena. KPE then returned to the Wêreldsend camp to fetch assistants F. Nuab and T. Mumbura plus the required equipment. A radioed message for SNC Chris Eyre (Dept of Nature Conservation, - Damaraland) was left with the Khorixas police telling him that this was a suspected poaching case.

The calf was successfully captured and taken back to the Wêreldsend camp during the afternoon. Since SNC C. Eyre was not able to be contacted (he was busy with another court case of poaching) the SNC of the Skeleton Coast Park was contacted and the following morning Rudi Loutit, John Paterson and Filimon Nuab accompanied KPE and GOS to the spot where the calf was found and eventually the carcass was found camouflaged under branches. Later in the evening a suspect was taken to Khorixas for questioning accompanied by GOS and RL. The following day a search for bullets was carried out and the now putrifying carcass was cut up and searched.

On Wednesday RL and GOS were back from Khorixas and the Nature Conservation staff left for consultations with heads of the Department. In the meantime the spoor of the killer was picked up by GOS and followed by F. Nuab and GOS towards the veterinary fence to the north, KPE returned to camp to find June Owen-Smith returned from Swakopmund and attending the calf which was fed by bottle and taken for walks.

Thursday Rudi Loutit was joined by Alisdair McDonald and Johan Voller from the law-enforcement section of Nature Conservation during that afternoon the spoor was again picked up and followed to the Anvo Safari Camp. At this stage KPE was detailed to follow up a new report of a lame rhino observed in the southern area near the Ugab river and at the Goldfields camp and Slythe Loutit took over the care of the rhino calf while GOS Owen-Smith reported the proceedings to Windhoek which kept them away for five days. The report of the lame rhino proved to be a false alarm.

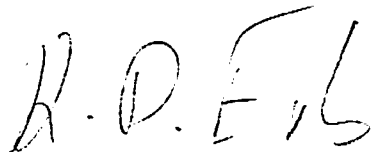
On the following Thursday the Dept of Nature Conservation Game Capture staff Louis Geldenhuys and Louis Scheepers loaded and transported the rhino calf to Etosha, no reason was given for the removal of the rhino from Damaraland. KPE accompanied the rhino in transit and it travelled well it was delivered to the care of Dr Ian Hofmeyer, veterinary officer of the Dept. of Nature Conservation.

From Thursday to, the following Wednesday A McD, RL and JV were kept busy working day and night on the follow-up of the suspects. A Herero by the name of Johannes Kasaona of Khowarib confessed to shooting the rhino in the company of another man who worked for the Roads Department team busy in that area, the second man was also arrested. The court case shall be held on the 15th of May.

N.B. During the week of the 21st John Paterson, ^{E. Hambo} ~~June Owen-Smith~~ and K P Erb found 2 bullets in the dried out stomach contents of the dead cow. These were sent to the Dept of Nature Conservation for examination by the police.

Publicity

A press release was drawn up by Garth Owen-Smith and released to Radio and Newspapers. On the day of the transportation of the calf to Etosha a two man television team was flown to Wêreldsend to film the rhino, which then resulted in a 15min television programme which was shown on SWATV and SATV



Karl-Peter Erb
Field Officer - NWT

Hanning inspired thousands
of young ~~South African~~ people
to the understanding of
the awareness of wilderness
& wildlife.