

Wanted alive — the black rhino

The Rhino and Elephant Foundation (REF) was founded in 1986/7 by Dr. Anthony Hall-Martin, Mr. Peter Hitchins and Mr. Clive Walker, each an authority in conservation circles in Southern Africa.

The African black rhino hovers on the brink of extinction. The figures paint a grim picture — of the 15 000 black rhino which survived on the African continent in 1980 a mere 3 700 were left in 1987. The North African white rhino is all but extinct. Only 18 individuals still survive in national parks and game reserves. The picture seems a little brighter for the southern white rhino population which numbers 4 000.

The African elephant is not considered endangered, yet its numbers show a constant decline because it is subject to severe poaching by ivory hunters.

The dire plight of the black rhino has forced the REF to convene an international meeting in association with the Game Rangers Association of Africa in Skukuza from 31 August to 3 September 1988. Delegates consisted primarily of people who are in almost daily contact with black rhino, in other words, field personnel. Their presence at a meeting of this nature underlined the situation in which the black rhino has been placed. These people will in future form the front line in order to save whatever there still is to save. The meeting also aimed at creating greater co-operation between conservation bodies. Monitoring and management practices regarding the black rhino will be standardised and a proposed South African national plan given effect.

Some 130 people attended the meeting, and 23 papers were delivered. The subjects covered can be summarised into the following categories.

1. Trade

Illegal trade in rhino horn is a complex matter and is to a certain extent the most serious reason why the black rhino faces extinction.

2. Poaching

The methods used by poachers and ways in which poaching can be combatted were discussed.

3. Future strategy

Practical conservation measures to ensure genetic diversity were given close attention.

4. Capturing procedures and translocation

Capturing techniques and translocation to "safer" areas were discussed in detail.

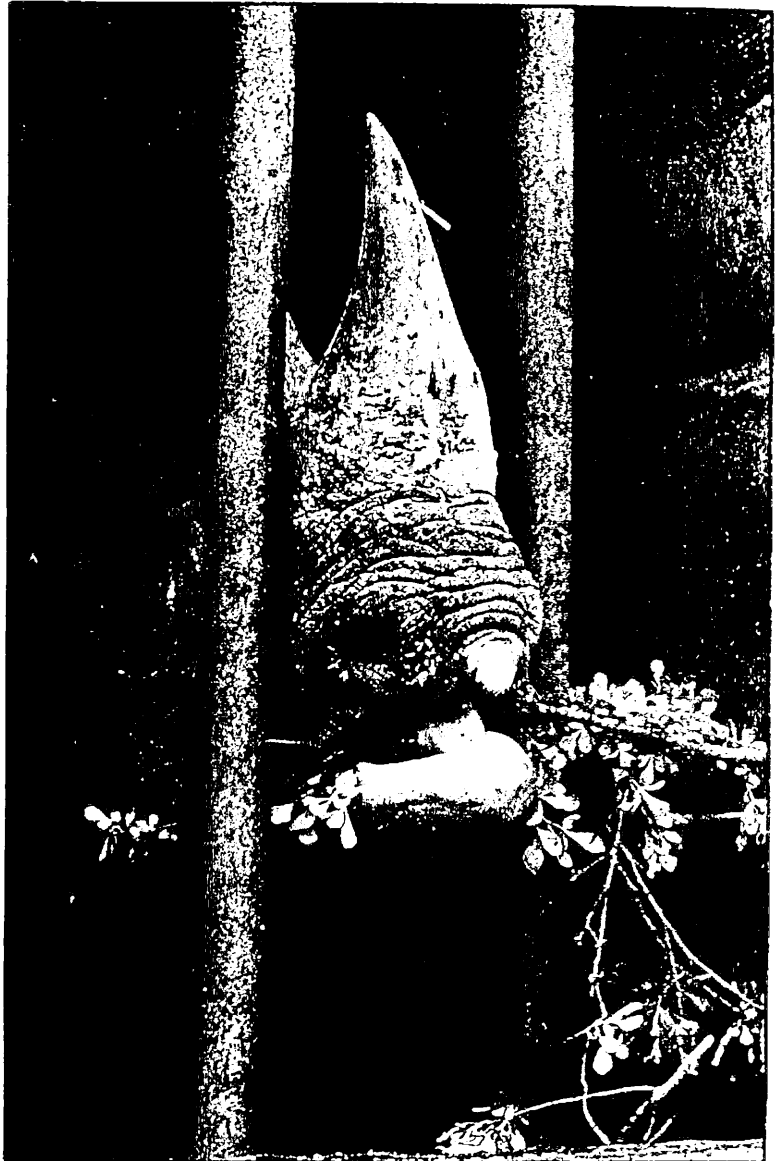
5. Monitoring populations

This process entails identifying individual animals, and regular additions to the data on record concerning all black rhino populations.

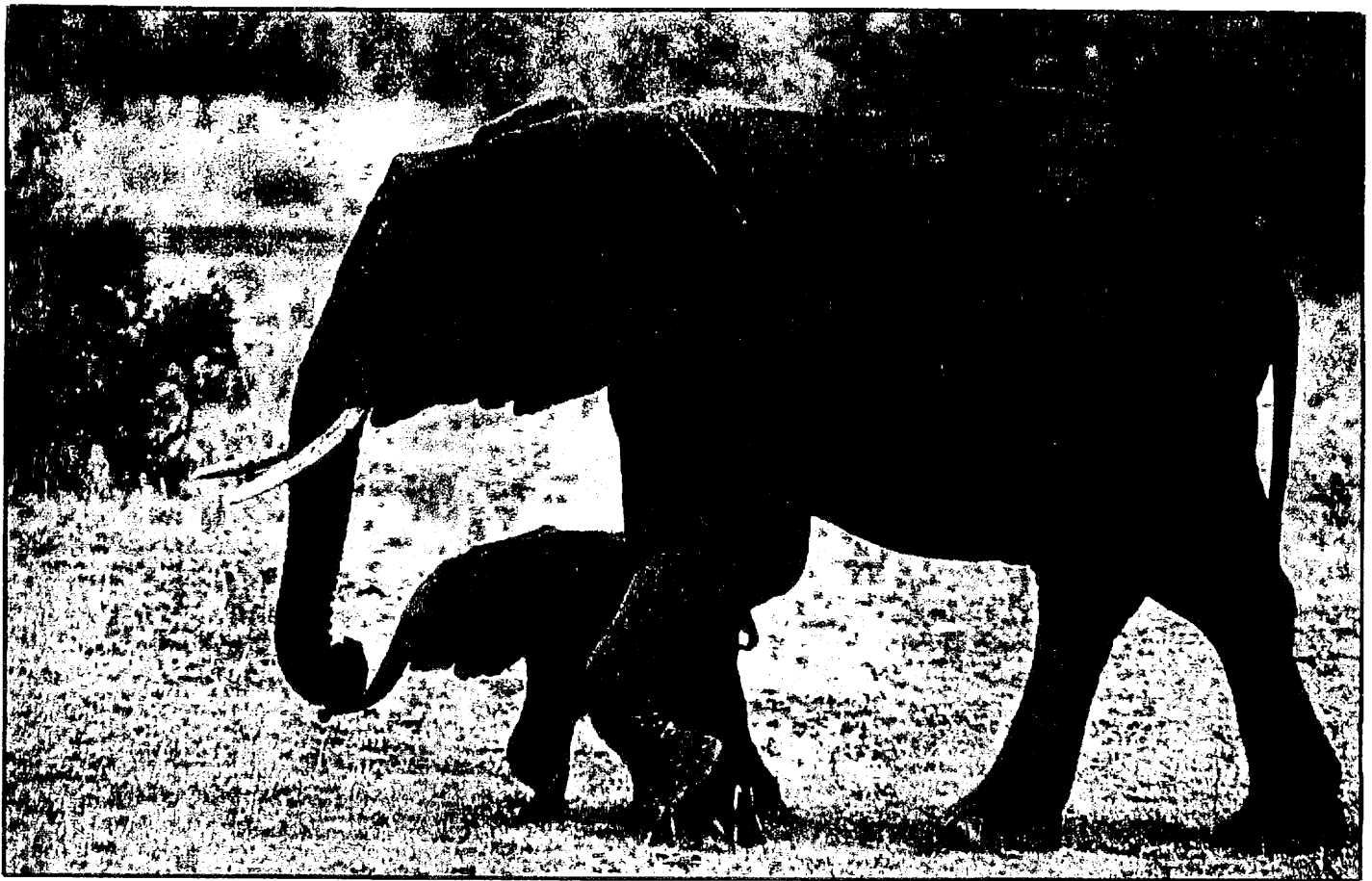
It may be apt to quote Aldo Leopold's famous words here: "There are two kinds of people: those who can live without wild things and those who cannot."

Isn't it about time you made your choice?

— Dr. G. de Graaff



Die Afrika-olifant (links bo) word nog nie as 'n bedreigde spesie beskou nie, maar hul getalle daal ook konstant. Hoewel verskeie bewaringsinstansies betrokke is by projekte om die swartrenoster (bo) te red, en talle diere die afgelope paar jaar na nasionale parke oorgeplaas is, bly dié spesie in 'n jammerlike situasie. • The African elephant, (top left) is not yet an endangered species, but their numbers are showing a constant decline. Despite conservation projects to save the black rhino (above) the species is hovering on the brink of extinction.



Swartrenoster se posisie bekryk

Dr. G. de Graaff

Die Rhino and Elephant Foundation is in 1986/7 tot stand gebring deur dr. Anthony Hall-Martin, mnr. Peter Hitchins en mnr. Clive Walker, elkeen in eie reg 'n bekende figuur in natuurbe-
waringskringe in Suider-Afrika. Die swartrenoster van Afrika word vandag met totale uitwissing bedreig en sedert 1980 het die wêreldbevolking gedaal van bykans 15 000 diere tot 'n skamele 3 700 in 1987. Dit is welbekend dat swartrenosters vir hulle horings gejag word. Die bevolkings van die noordelike witrenoster lyk ewe bedroewend en daar bestaan vandag hoogstens 18 diere in nasionale parke of wildreser-
vate. Die bevolkings van die suidelike witrenoster is 'n raps beter daaraan toe met 'n getalsterkte van 'n bietjie meer as 4 000 individue.

Ofskoon die Afrika-olifant nog nie as 'n bedreigde spesie beskou word nie, toon die getalle van die spesie ook 'n konstante dalende tendens omdat daar oral op die diere jag gemaak word vir hulivoor.

Dit is veral die sorgwekkende situasie waarin die swartrenoster hom bevind want die REF gedwing het om 'n internasionale vergadering in samewerking met die Game Rangers Association of Africa vanaf 31 Augustus tot 3 September 1988 in Skukuza te belê.

Persone wat hierheen uitgenooi was,

het hoofsaaklik bestaan uit diegene wat byna daaglik met swartrenosters in die veld in aanraking kom, dus veral veldpersoneel (veldwagters en ekwivalente poste). Hulle teenwoordigheid by so 'n vergadering sou die jammerlike situasie van swartrenosterbevolkings onderling weer eens beklemtoon omdat dit veral veldwagters en ander bestuurspersoneel is wat die frontlinie in die toekoms moet vorm om te red wat daar nog te redde is. Die byeenkoms sou ook probeer om groter samewerking te bewerkstellig tussen sodanige owerheidsinstansies wat nog swartrenosters onder hulle beheer het.

Die vergadering sou verder ook ten doel hê om monitorings- en bestuurspraktyke te standaardiseer om daardeur verdere beslag te gee aan 'n voorgestelde Suid-Afrikaanse nasionale plan vir swartrenosters. Die belangstelling in en bywoning van die vergadering was groot — en ongeveer 130 persone het die gehoor uitgemaak, wat beurtelings toegesprek is deur sowat 23 uitgenooide sprekers. Die onderwerpe wat behandel is, kan opsommend in die volgende kategorieë geplaas word:

1. Handel

Die onwettige handel in renosterhooring is 'n komplekse aangeleentheid

en is bykans uitsluitlik die oorsaak van die bedreiging van uitwissing wat die swartrenoster in die gesig staar.

2. Stropery

Maniere waarop swartrenosters gestroop word en hoe die proses bekamp kan word, is aangespreek.

3. Toekomstige strategie

Die toekoms van die swartrenoster veral ten opsigte van praktiese bewaringsmaatreëls en wat ook die behoud van genetiese diversiteit verseker, is in oënskou geneem.

4. Vangprosedures en hervestiging

Tegniese om swartrenosters te vang en indien nodig oor te plaas na ander "veiliger" gebiede, is deurtastend bespreek.

5. Monitering van bevolkings

Hierdie proses behels die identifisering van individuele diere en die gereelde byvoeging of verwydering van gewens rakende alle swartrenosterbevolkings.

Miskien sou dit gepas wees om die woorde van Aldo Leopold ten slotte aan te haal: "There are two kinds of people: those who can live without wild things and those who cannot."

Het u al gekies?

