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Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier
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Dear Reader,

The northeastern corner of Africa is one focal areas of this issue: Peter Flack's first hand report from a recent trip to Ethiopia (Article 2) makes grim reading and Fred Pearce's account on the agribusiness boom in Ethiopia does not provide comfort either (Article 10). The emerging nation of South Sudan faces serious challenges (Article 6). Tanzania's President Kikwete has now signaled that instead of the controversial Trans-Serengeti Highway, some unpaved roads will connect villages to the national road network and a southern bypass of the park is envisaged (News from Africa). Northern white rhinos, a distinct species and not a subspecies according to newest research may have received a new life-line (Article 5).

Mike Norton-Griffiths of Kenya produced a spellbinding account of the machinations of IFAW and allied non-governmental organizations in Kenya (Article 11). It's a lengthy piece, but well worth-while reading. When will the Kenyans finally take their conservation destiny into their own hands and stop being stooges bending to the utopian, emotional and unrealistic view of some arm-chair do-gooders from North America and Europe?

South Africa has a number of issues to solve. Still figuring highest on the agenda is the ongoing rhino poaching crisis. The country lost at least 193 rhino to poaching in the first 6 months of 2011 leading to 123 arrests with 6 convictions (2010: 165 arrests and four convictions). Whilst the arrest rate appears increasing, the conviction rate is appalling! A new threat looms for leopards with their spotted coats being in high demand for ceremonial purposes by members of a church (Article 12) Worrying news came from SANParks with the projected hotel developments in the southern part of Kruger National Park. I understand that KNP must be run as a profitable business venture, especially in view of ever diminishing government subsidies and should not depend on taxpayer handouts. Hotels are one potential solution but come with an enormous ecological footprint and high capital and running costs. Strictly regulated conservation hunting operations, if conducted in restricted wilderness/remote zones of suitable parks, would probably far surpass the monetary profits of hotels, have negligible ecological footprints and most of all would be sustainable through the years without incurring any significant

capital expenditure. David Mabunda, CEO of SANParks said not so long ago that "SANParks needs to find sustainable methods to fund the operations and protection of the entire national parks system and hence SANParks views responsible tourism as a conservation strategy." Maybe it is time to evaluate conservation hunting as one more option. SANParks could produce sustainable NET PROFITS in the region of 40 to 50 million Rand annually from very limited and strictly controlled hunting without compromising the SANParks Conservation Strategy. The National Treasury could apply the subsidies paid to SANParks in the past to service delivery on many fronts. My proposal will be challenged with all kind of moralistic assertions that hunting simply cannot take place in National Park; but those who argue against should please consider that successful and sustainable conservation strategies rest on THREE pillars: Ecology, Economy and Social Politics.

Sincerely
Gerhard R Damm

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Warthogs In Africa

range to ca. 265 km northwest of Mkokoni, the nearest locality mentioned by d'Huart & Grubb (2001).

In 2007, JC, J. Feely, and S. Bell-Cross visited Tsavo East National Park south of the Voi River. Although they encountered no common warthogs during this trip, they did observe two sounders of desert warthogs in low bush on the edge of the Dika Plains, ca 13 km north and northwest of Buchuma Gate. Photographs were taken and sent to experts for confirmation. Some of these photographs are available on an [online digital map](#).

These observations considerably extend the known geographical range for the desert warthog (ca. 310 km south from the nearest Garissa sighting and ca. 320 km southwest from Mkokoni). JC made two further visits to the Tsavos in 2007. He found both species of warthog in Tsavo West National Park and desert warthog north of the Voi River in Tsavo East National Park. In 2008, TMB and YdJ visited Tsavo West National Park and observed several sounders both of common warthogs and desert warthogs. In the northwest of the Park, in low bush on the edge of riverine forest, they found a sounder of six common warthogs only 150 m from a sounder of four desert warthogs. This locality represents not only the south western-most site in the range for desert warthog (ca. 390 km from Mkokoni, the southern-most point of d'Huart & Grubb 2001), but it also provided the first evidence that common warthog and desert warthog are at least narrowly sympatric over this part of their geographic ranges. Although we have yet to find the common warthog in Tsavo East National Park, it would be surprising if this species were not present there. If not present, however, the common warthog would need to be deleted from the list of large mammals known for Tsavo East National Park. As concerns the desert warthog, Tsavo East National Park and Tsavo West National Park can now add one more species to their already impressive list of large mammals.

Northern White Rhino: Now *Ceratotherium cottoni*?

Using genetic data and re-assessing physical evidence, scientists write that they have uncovered a new species of rhino (*Ceratotherium cottoni*), long considered by biologists as merely a subspecies (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*). Researchers write in an open access PLoS ONE paper published last year that evidence has shown the northern white rhino is in fact a distinct species from the more commonly known—and far more common—southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*, formerly *Ceratotherium simum simum*). If the scientific community accepts the paper's argument it could impact northern white rhino

conservation, as the species would overnight become the world's most endangered rhino species with likely less than ten surviving.



The researchers found that the skull of the northern and the southern white rhino are 'readily distinguished' and that the animals can be differentiated simply by looking at them. In addition, the genetic study found that the northern and southern white rhino diverged around a million years ago. "Its taxonomic distinctiveness argues strongly for its conservation, as its demise will mean the permanent loss of a unique taxon that is irreplaceable," write the authors.

Currently 8 northern white rhinos are confirmed to survive, however four of these though are no longer able to breed. The last four northern white rhinos capable of saving the species were transferred from Dvur Králové Zoo (Czech Republic) in 2009 to Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia/Kenya where they are guarded around the clock (the photo shows Suni, a male northern rhino, arriving in Africa).

While dire, the situation may not be utterly hopeless. "The admirable success of the conservation histories of the Southern white rhino and the Indian rhino, both of which were brought back from the brink of extinction by successful conservation efforts, does, however, hold out hope that the northern white may yet be saved for posterity," write the authors.

Conservationists hope that by providing the four rhinos—two males and two females—with their natural habitat will provide a better chance for breeding. Rhinos are notoriously difficult to breed in captivity.

CITATION: Groves CP, Fernando P, Robovský J (2010), The Sixth Rhino: A Taxonomic Re-Assessment of the Critically Endangered Northern White Rhinoceros. PLoS ONE 5(4): e9703. Download complete article: <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0009703>

