



Black rhino cow and calf

This incident is yet another challenge to world conservation movements, all the more so because reliable sources indicate that Tanzania's Wildlife Division had no knowledge of and played no part in the operation.

AERSG Secretariat

Nairobi National Park: a new importance and value

A census carried out in January this year puts the number of rhinos in Nairobi National Park at a surprising 51. This makes it the single largest population of rhinos in any government sanctuary. Whereas before it was only a model sanctuary, it is now the most important government sanctuary in the country. What is most encouraging about its success is that in the absence of management the numbers have increased steadily from the 17 successful reintroductions in the early 1960s to the 51 today.

One of the organizations that has been interested in this park as a sanctuary is Wildlife Conservation International. In 1988, WCI started to replace the old derelict fence to the north of the park with an electric fence, which is now complete. It has also provided a four-wheel drive vehicle, which will be fitted with a radio and other equipment necessary for surveillance and monitoring of the rhinos on a daily basis.

The need for increased protection and management becomes paramount with such high rhino numbers. The vehicle will be used for ecological monitoring to help identify individual rhinos, as well as for studying their behavioural ecology. Coupled with other vegetation and utilization studies in the park, a badly needed management policy will also be put together.

Helen Gichohi

UK for ban on trade in ivory

The British government has called for a total international ban on trade in new ivory, because of the threat of impending extinction facing the world's elephants.

Environment Minister, Lord Caithness, said he would call for concerted European support for the total ban at the next meeting of European Community environment Ministers in Luxembourg on June 8. He was speaking on his return from an official visit to Kenya, where he saw the situation for himself and discussed with the Government Minister, the problem of poaching and the decimation. He said: "The British government shares the concern that has been expressed about the illegal poaching of African elephants. We and those in the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) who have carried out surveys throughout Africa, now believe there is a clear case for banning all trade in new elephant tusks at the earliest possible opportunity."

Effective action could only be taken internationally. An opportunity to secure this would be at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, in October.

There are now about 100 parties to Cites, whose aim is to conserve listed species by controlling or prohibiting trade in them. The United Kingdom applies these controls strictly.

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