



*Current utilization of rhinoceroses
in South Africa*
J. G. du Toit

CHAPTER 3

Current utilization of rhinoceroses in South Africa – J.G. du Toit

Game auctions determine the prices of wild animals in South Africa. The first game auction in South Africa was held in the Hoedspruit district on 7 May 1975. At this auction a total of 128 animals were sold to the value of ZAR 20 362. In 1986, the first six white rhinoceroses were sold at a Natal Parks Board auction and fetched an average price of ZAR 10 167 per animal. **Table 3.1** reflects the total number of white rhinoceroses, average annual prices and the monetary turnover at auctions in South Africa.

The highest number of white rhinoceroses sold at game auctions was 255 animals during 2001. Over the past 26 years a total of 3226 animals were sold at a total value of ZAR 497 642 814. During this period the rhinoceroses were less than one percent of the number of animals sold at auctions, but contributed more than 20% to the turnover at the auctions. These data also showed that between 1–2% of the population of white rhinoceroses were traded per year. This is important to illustrate that the population can sustain this value.

Fluctuations in the prices were determined by different factors. From 1990 to 1996, the prices stayed constant for political reasons, while prices increased from 1997 to 2004 because the rand weakened against the dollar. During the period 2005 to 2010, the price gradually increased as a result of medicinal hunts taking place. Currently there is a decline in the price due to the increasing risk of the incidence of poaching.

The income of surplus white rhinoceroses sold by the government to the private sector forms an important part of the revenue used for conservation projects. This income is the small wheel that turns the big conservation wheel in government. This results in the fact that the rhinoceros pays its way in conservation but also subsidises other rare or threatened species. **Table 3.2** shows that for the period 2005–2012 the Government sold 1365 white rhinoceroses to the private sector at a total value of R 262 341 503. **Table 3.3** shows that the private sector traded 624 animals on game auctions during the same period, with a total value of ZAR 131 184 620. During the period 2005–2012 the white rhinoceros industry traded in a minimum of 2000 white rhinoceroses with a value of ZAR 393 million.

The question can be asked: what happens to these animals? These rhinoceroses find their way to new game ranches as breeding material, old game ranches that expand their boundaries, young animals are exported or adult animals end up in the hunting industry. During 2005, there were 318 ranches in the private sector with white rhinoceroses; by 2008, the number of ranches had increased to 395.

Table 3.4 is a reflection of the hunting industry that is driven by the private sector. The first white rhinoceros trophy hunt was done by Norman Dean in 1972. To date a minimum

of 2153 animals have been hunted. It is important to mention that the hunting industry never utilized more than 1% of the white rhinoceros population. The maximum sales on auctions were 2% of the population: hunting accounted for 1% and 1% ended up in breeding programs.

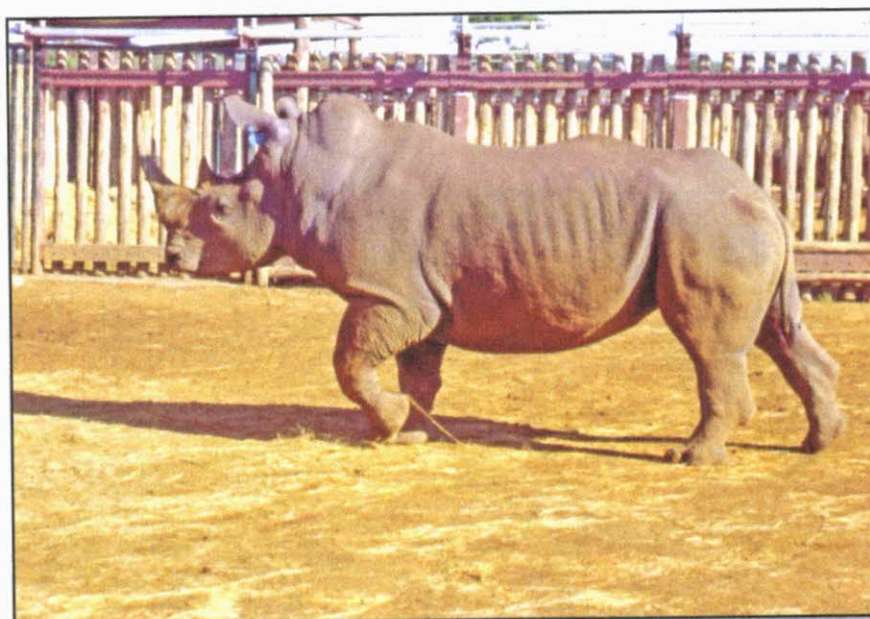
Poaching was always less than 0.1% of the population. Currently 2,9% of the population is poached per annum. To minimize this effect, the government should not issue permits to hunt breeding cows until the situation returns to normal at 0.1% of the population. Refer to Table 4.3.

Table 3.1: Average auction prices and the number of white rhinoceroses sold on game auctions in South Africa

YEAR	AVERAGE PRICE (ZAR)	PRICE (ZAR)	TOTAL SOLD	POPULATION SIZE	POPULATION SOLD (%)	TURNOVER (ZAR)
	Direct sale Natal Parks					
1979	R800					
1982	R1,100			3389		
1983	R2 300			3612		
1984	R3 500			3850		
1985	R4 300			4103		
1986	R4 000	R10 167	6	4373	0.14	R61 002
1987	R5 500	R14 780	10	4661	0.21	R 147 800
1988	R10 000	R34 714	14	4967	0.28	R 485 996
1989	R25 000	R48 732	41	5294	0.77	R1 998 012
1990	Direct sales stopped	R48 524	42	5642	0.74	R2 038 008
1991		R44 188	32	6013	0.53	R1 414 016
1992		R29 230	64	6409	0.99	R1 870 720
1993		R28 350	56	6830	0.82	R1 587 600
1994		R32 770	30	7279	0.42	R983 100
1995		R40 667	70	7758	0.9	R2 846 690
1996		R44 491	161	8268	1.95	R7 163 051
1997		R69 333	88	8812	0.99	R6 101 304
1998		R98 813	110	9392	1.17	R10 869 430
1999		R127 130	104	10010	1.04	R13 221 520
2000		R176 801	178	10668	1.67	R31 470 578
2001		R169 300	255	11370	2.24	R43 171 500
2002		R192 383	123	12118	1.02	R23 663 109
2003		R148 133	235	12915	1.82	R34 811 255
2004		R128 130	120	13764	0.87	R15 375 600
2005		R95 281	137	14669	0.93	R13 053 497

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2006		R140 000	228	15634	1.46	R31 920 000
2007		R221 230	221	16662	1.33	R48 891 830
2008		R274 712	235	17758	1.32	R64 557 320
2009		R220 064	233	18926	1.23	R51 274 912
2010		R212 240	207	20171	1.03	R43 933 860
2011		R192 386	185	21498	0.86	R35 588 104
2012		R223 659	41	22911	0.18	R9 170 000
TOTAL			3 226			R497 642 814



Rhinoceros bull at a game auction in KwaZulu-Natal.

Table 3.2: Numbers and monetary value of white rhinoceroses sold by the SA Government during the period 2005 – 2012

YEAR	SA NATIONAL PARKS		KWAZULU-NATAL		NORTH WEST PARKS	
	NUMBER	TOTAL (ZAR)	NUMBER	TOTAL (ZAR)	NUMBER	TOTAL (ZAR)
2005	59	R 5 985 432	50	R 5 095 350	8	R 784 000
2006	96	R 11 392 800	33	R 4 405 005	39	R 5 167 500
2007	81	R 15 481 297	24	R 4 420 008	20	R 2 960 000
2008	96	R 23 304 960	32	R 6 268 000	43	R 13 120 000
2009	252	R 51 132 875	81	R 15 790 000	0	0
2010	137	R 32 509 574	67	R 12 700 000	4	R 880 000
2011	107	R 23 531 937	69	R 12 412 000	27	R 5 265 765
2012	No data available		40	R 9 735 000	No data available	
TOTAL	828	ZAR 163 338 875	396	ZAR 70 825 363	141	ZAR 28 177 265

Table 3.3: Numbers and monetary value of white rhinoceroses sold by private game auctions in SA during the period 2005 – 2012

YEAR	NUMBER ANIMALS	AVERAGE PRICE (ZAR)	TOTAL (ZAR)
2005	20	R 95 281	R 1 905 620
2006	60	R 128 897	R 7 733 820
2007	96	R 221 230	R 21 238 080
2008	64	R 274 712	R 17 581 568
2009	87	R 220 064	R 19 145 568
2010	140	R 223 099	R 31 233 860
2011	116	R 199 794	R 23 176 104
2012	41	R223 659	R9 170 000
TOTAL	624		ZAR 131 184 620

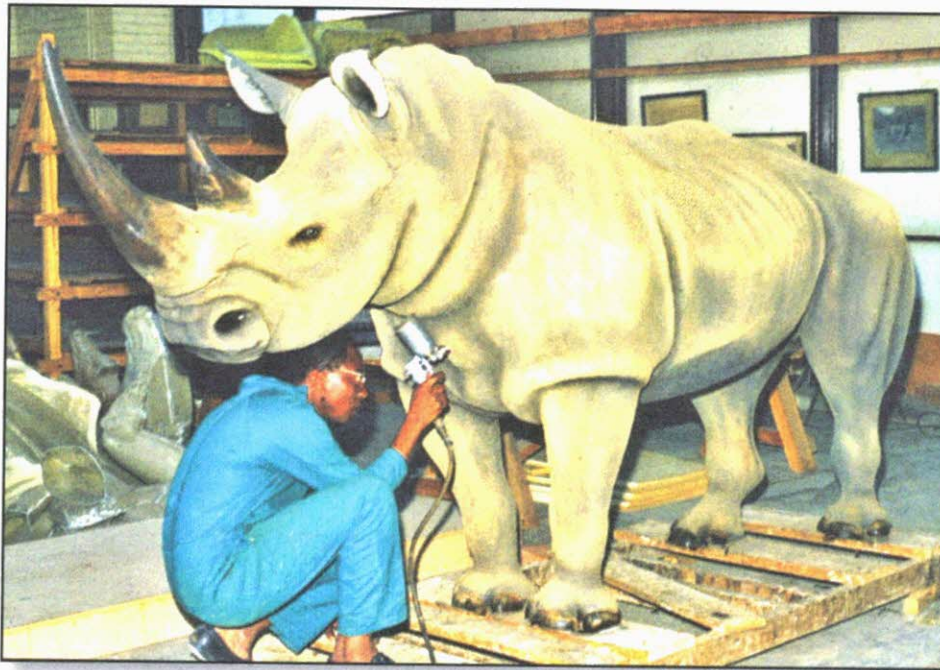


Table 3.4: Hunting as a percentage of the total white rhinoceros population

YEAR	CALCULATED NUMBERS	CENSUS NUMBERS	NUMBERS HUNTED	CALCULATED % HUNTED
1972	1 793		40	2.2
1973	1 910		1	0.05
1974	2 036		44	2.2
1975	2 170		26	1.2
1976	2 312		13	0.56
1977	2 464		1	0.04
1978	2 627		3	0.11
1979	2 800		28	1.00
1980	2 984		32	

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1981	3 180		37	1.16
1982	3 389		32	
1983	3 612		32	
1984	3 850		32	
1985	4 103		32	
1986	4 373		32	
1987	4 661	4126	42	0.90
1988	4 967		42	0.85
1989	5 294		39	0.74
1990	5 642		34	0.6
1991	6 013		34	0.56
1992	6 409		42	0.65
1993	6 830		39	0.57
1994	7 279		69	0.94
1995	7 758	6 670	32	
1996	8 268		32	
1997	8 812	7 292	32	
1998	9 392		32	0.34
1999	10 010	7 913	43	0.43
2000	10 668		48	0.45
2001	11 370	10 988	60	0.53
2002	12 118		38	0.31
2003	12 915		45	0.35
2004	13 764		60	0.43
2005	14 669	13 521	78	0.53
2006	15 634		92	0.59
2007	16 662		124	0.74
2008	17 758		94	0.53
2009	18 926		107	
2010	20 171		150	0.79
2011	21 497		160	0.74
2012	22 911		200*	0.87
TOTAL			2153	

*Estimated number