

# IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group

2020 Report



Michael Knight

## Chair

Michael Knight (1)

## Red List Authority Coordinator

Richard Emslie (2)

## Location/Affiliation

(1) KAZA TFCA Leader, WWF in Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia

(2) IUCN, Gland, Switzerland

## Number of members

51

## Social networks

Website:

<https://rhinos.org/research-publications/iucn-african-rhino-specialist-group/>



## Mission statement

The AfrSG guides and facilitates the conservation of viable African rhino populations across their natural range.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

The African Rhino Specialist Group (AfrSG) wants: (1) secure, viable and valued rhino populations in their natural habitat; (2) rapidly growing and genetically diverse rhino populations facilitated through adaptive biological management; (3) a reduction in the threat to rhinos from poaching, driven primarily by the high illegal demand for rhino horn; and (4) an incentivised communal and private sector investing in rhino conservation through continued range expansion and numbers.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Red List: update Red List assessments for Black Rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*) and White Rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*).

### Plan

Planning: (1) review the South Africa Biodiversity Management Plan for Black Rhinos; (2) contribute to delivery of national plans; (3) assist with implementation of the Rhino Range State Plan; (4) provide official support for the Rhino Management Plan for Chad.

Policy: (1) compile joint IUCN/TRAFFIC report for the 18th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18); (2) review Range State proposals for IUCN/TRAFFIC analyses; (3) attend and play a technical role at CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP); (4) attend and play a technical role at CITES Standing Committee (SC) and Working Group (WG) meetings.

## Act

Conservation actions: engage in the Rhino Impact Investment Project (RIIP).

Technical advice: (1) participate in the Black Rhino Range Expansion Project (BRREP); (2) participate on the Rhino DNA Indexing System (RhODIS) Advisory Board; (3) review hunting applications; (4) engage with ex situ conservation (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), etc.); (5) provide expert advice to range states and conservation authorities; (6) provide expert advice to MyPlanet Rhino Fund; (7) improve efficiency of the AfrSG.

## Network

Capacity building: (1) East African Rhino Management Group capacity building; (2) conduct biological management workshop.

Documents review: conduct scientific peer review of rhino papers.

Membership: diversify the AfrSG.

Proposal development and funding: (1) submit donor applications; (2) complete funding reports.

Synergy: (1) participate in Rhino and Elephant Security Group/INTERPOL Environmental Crime Working Group (ECWG) meetings; (2) establish a new management partner for AfrSG.

Technical advice: attend workshops/government meetings as invited or give presentations.

## Communicate

Communication: (1) Southern African Development Community Rhino Management Group and Chairing; (2) publish the *Pachyderm* Chair Report; (3) respond to media requests; (4) improve communication of rhino issues to members, state and private sectors.

Scientific meetings: hold biennial AfrSG meetings.



Critically Endangered Black Rhino, *Diceros bicornis*, young bull  
Credit: Mike H Knight

## Activities and results 2020

### Assess

#### Red List

**i.** Black and White Rhino assessments were prepared for publication in March 2020. We have proposed novel methods of using the Red List criteria in assessing the status of long-lived species such as rhinos. (KSR #1)

### Plan

#### Planning

**i.** We are waiting on the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DEFF) to commence the review process of the South Africa Biodiversity Management Plan for Black Rhinos. (KSR #16)

**ii.** We engaged the Zimbabwe Government to finalise their national rhino action plan. It is expected to be finalised in 2020, though is not signed despite numerous requests. (KSR #27)

**iii.** Implementation of the Rhino Range state plan needs to be followed up. (KSR #27)

### Act

#### Conservation actions

**i.** For the Rhino Impact Investment Project (RIIP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) agreed to be an outcome payer via the World Bank. A Wildlife Conservation Bond has been created. (KSR #11)

#### Technical advice

**i.** The Black Rhino Range Expansion Project meeting was postponed until March 2021. The project is successfully continuing onto its seventh cycle. (KSR #18)

**ii.** We recommended that an AfrSG member (Dr F von Houwald) sit on the CITES Working Group on 'appropriate and acceptable destinations'. (KSR #27)

**iii.** Expert advice was provided to six African states on potential rhino introductions. Included Benin and Mozambique. (KSR #27)

**iv.** Nine task forces were established within the AfrSG to discuss the Benin introduction, US Fish and Wildlife Service indicators, population prioritisation, sustainable financing for rhino conservation, and review of Zakouma losses to name a number. (KSR #27)

### Network

#### Documents review

**i.** Seven papers were reviewed by the Secretariat for scientific journals.

#### Proposal development and funding

**i.** Two funding reports were completed. (KSR #9)

#### Synergy

**i.** The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) offered to manage finances of the AfrSG without charging a management fee.

#### Technical advice

**i.** We attended seven workshops/government meetings as invited or gave presentations: one with South African National Parks (SANParks)/DEFF, one with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Namibia), several with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, one with the Rhino and

Elephant Security Group (RESG), with the High Level Panel to develop the Policy Position on the Conservation and Ecologically Sustainable Use of Elephant, Lion, Leopard and Rhinoceros. (KSR #27)

### Communicate

#### Communication

**i.** The *Pachyderm* Chair report for 2020 was completed. (KSR #28)

**ii.** Responses to the media: The Secretariat (Chair and Scientific Officer) provided responses for numerous researchers/media outlets (Smithsonian, Namibia's Radio Kosmos, BBC Inside Science, BBC World Service, The Art Newspaper, CBS News, IUCN communications, Tony Carnie, Edinburgh Napier University, Project Earth Films, Bonne de Bod), AFP and Tony Grogan's documentary series, The Guardian, New Scientist, BuzzFeed and free-lance. (KSR #28)

**iii.** A minimum of 100 communications were exchanged with AfrSG members. (KSR #28)

## Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	1	
Plan	3	
Act	5	
Network	4	
Communicate	3	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 9, 11, 16, 18, 27, 28

KSR: Key Species Result



# Species

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## 2020 Report

of the Species Survival Commission  
and the Global Species and  
Key Biodiversity Area Programme

