

Monitor

The Black Rhino Conservation Potential in Tanzania

During the first quarter of this year I visited those National Parks in Tanzania which have been ear-marked for the establishment of black rhino sanctuaries. The purpose of the visit was to carry out preliminary surveys on the rhino status, gather baseline information on the areas and rank them according to habitat suitability. The potential sanctuaries in Tanzania are the Arusha, Lake Manyara, Tarangire and Rubondo Island National Parks; and the Ngorongoro Crater. The latter, although not a National Park, is the only place in Tanzania where one can easily see a rhino.

Using the criteria adopted during the IUCN African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG) meeting of September 1989 held in Nairobi, the potential rhino sanctuaries were ranked according to their habitat suitability. The results were:

National Park	Proposed sanctuary	Rank	Present rhino no
Arusha:	Ngurdoto Crater	1	0
Lake Manyara:	whole area	2	0
Tarangire:	Sirale area	3	5*
Rubondo Is land:	whole area	4	6*

*Number unreliable.

The Ngurdoto Crater in Arusha National Park ranked highest due to its natural barrier/security, small size, former high rhino density and diversity of rhino browse plants. This Crater should be used as a breeding ground for rhinos. Lake Manyara National Park can be considered as an ideal area for re-introduction once rhinos are available. A small area in the Sirale region of Tarangire Park can be developed into a sanctuary like Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary in Tsavo West National Park in Kenya.

Rubondo Island National Park was ruled out as a potential rhino sanctuary because: -

- The Park never had rhinos prior to 1965.
- To date, the rhinos introduced in 1965 have not successfully bred and the causes for this failure have not been established.
- There is lack of security due to the closeness of the Park to inhabited areas and easy access for poachers from all sides by boat.
- The vegetation type and terrain makes proper monitoring of the introduced rhinos impossible and maintenance of security very difficult.

Ten rhinos were observed on the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater. However, the total population for the whole of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is estimated as being 10 to 30. No rhinos were sighted during the visits to potential sanctuaries although on Rubondo Island rhino dung piles and foot prints were seen. The Warden of Tarangire National Park said that five rhinos

were sighted in Sirale region late last year. The earmarked Parks have no rhinos which can be used for re-introduction and the Tanzania Government will have to acquire animals to establish a breeding stock from wherever they can.

Fred Waweru



An employee of a traditional medicine shop in Johannesburg holds up two rhino horns: Zulu men sometimes put rhino horn ash on their eyebrows to allure women.

Further Notes on Pygmy and Forest Elephantss

I would like to add some short notes that may be of interest complementary to the article by David Western, 'The Pygmy Elephant: A Myth and a Mystery', *Pachyderm*, No 7, December 1986.

The elephant population of Garamba National Park appears to be an inter-grade between the savanna (*Loxodonta africana africana*) and the forest (*L. a. cyclotis*) types. Some groups show the predominately forest type characteristics of small size, small round ears and narrow straight tusks, while others are of the savanna type, larger, with thicker curved tusks, bigger ears and different body shape. The *cyclotis* type predominates although the Park is mainly long grass, open savanna in the guinea savanna belt, and the surrounding woodland is not forest but small mixed deciduous trees dominated by *Combretum* species.

Since 1927 the Elephant Domestication Centre of the previous Belgian Congo has been based here and the Belgians recognized the two types of elephants as separate sub-species: *L. a. cyclotis* and *L. a. oxyotis*. The *cyclotis* type was reputed to be much more tractable and favoured for domestication.

Offerman (1951) also talks of the small form of elephant which the Azande people called 'Abele' meaning 'those of the forest'. During extensive capture operations, Offerman observed that the small type was almost always found in dense stands of *Raphia* or swamp of difficult access. They captured a small male at Ango in 1925. He was then 1.30 m in height with tusks 0.65 m long. Thirteen years later, when estimated to be 25 years old, he was still only 1.60 metres tall with tusks of 11 m length. Normal *cyclotis* males of this age averaged 2.35 metres in height. A female captured in 1912 had also remained much smaller than her peers throughout life. The small type of 'pygmy' elephant may therefore not be exclusively juveniles of the forest type with premature tusk development, although this