



## NDUMU RHINO CAPTURE

Ten black rhino have been successfully translocated from Ndumu Game Reserve to the Kruger National Park in a joint operation between the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources, the National Parks Board and the Rhino and Elephant Foundation. The operation lasted nine days with the capture team working in some of the thickest vegetation in the reserve.

"The ten rhino we have given to the National Parks Board represent the natural increment of the black rhino population in Ndumu Game Reserve", said Mr Nick Steele, Director of the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources.

"The animals are part of a breeding-loan system. We will, in due course, get back the natural increment of these rhino which will be five animals. They will be put into one of our new reserves which we are developing in central KwaZulu."

In total, five bulls and five cows were given to the National Parks Board. Three of the rhino were calves aged between 18 months and three years.

"We are most satisfied with the rhino we have received", said Mr Johan Kloppers, who headed the National Parks' capture team.

"Having caught five bulls and five cows gives us a good sex-ratio. We are also pleased with the fact that two of the younger animals are cows as this will give us a number of breeding cycles", he added.

One of the older cows is thought to be pregnant. Mr Steele also pointed out that the capture and

translocation of the rhino was in keeping with the policy of the Rhino Management Group.

"All organizations which have rhino are signatories to the Rhino Management Group which, because of the animals' status, has laid down guidelines for the management of this endangered species," explained Mr Steele.

The capture team operated from a camp set up in the Polwe region of the Ndumu Game Reserve. Once a rhino had been darted from a helicopter, the ground team moved in, guided through the thick bush to the tranquillized animal by the helicopter.

"Although the rhino could remain unconscious for up to an hour-and-a-half, we like to get it on its feet and into the crate as quickly as possible", said Dr V de Vos, Chief Veterinary Officer of the capture team. "In one case it took only 25 minutes from the moment we darted the rhino until it was in the crate."

Once the rhino was in the crate it was loaded onto a truck and taken by road to the Kruger National Park.

"We only keep the rhino in the boma overnight and release them at first light the next morning. This way, there is as little trauma as possible," explained Mr Kloppers.

The ten new residents of the Kruger National Park were all released at the same spot at Tshokwane, 30 kilometres north-east of Skukuza. "Members of our staff have already seen some of the rhino in the area. They all seem to have settled into their new home very well," reported Mr Kloppers.

"Full credit for the success of the capture and translocation must go to the National Parks Board," said Mr Steele, "and the success of the exercise is indicative of the good relationship which is developing between the National Parks Board, the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources and the Rhino and Elephant Foundation."

The capture and translocation was funded by Elliott International via the Rhino and Elephant Foundation as part of Elliott's substantial commitment towards the conservation and protection of the black rhinoceros.

There are still 32 black rhino in Ndumu Game Reserve.

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