



Photos: Natal Parks Board

Rhino horn are sold on the black market for a phenomenal price of eight to nine hundred US dollars a kilogram. • Renosterhoring word op die swartmark verkoop teen agt tot nege Amerikaanse dollar per kilogram.

Ninety percent of Africa's

5254

A foot in a British museum, a head in Copenhagen, a small fragment in Prague, a few bones and some Dutch still life paintings are all that remain of a bird which was sentenced to death because it had no fear of man. The last dodo, with its flightless wings, perished round about 1681. The last solitary survivor of the quagga died in a Dutch zoo on 12 August 1883. Never again will their numbers roam the South African veld. Never again will they be hunted by the Cape lion which drew its last breath in about 1865.

August 5, 1999 — The last black rhino in the world died. She did not die honourably defending her young baby, neither did she die of old age. The last of these great animals, which roamed the earth for 60 million years, was mutilated, deprived of her horn, and the rest of her left to rot.

Poachers have slaughtered 90 percent of the black rhino population in Africa within 15 years. And the mindless destruction of one of the world's largest

Anette Wait

land animals continues mercilessly. Black rhino were abundant in the early 19th century and numbered millions. In 1970 there were approximately 65 000 black rhino in Africa. Today only about 3 800 black rhino remain. But for how long? Uganda has already lost its last five black rhino to unscrupulous poachers. In Kenya alone, the black rhino population, which numbered perhaps 18 000 in 1970, is down to some 500 today. They are now being put in camps behind high voltage electric fences. Zimbabwe lost over 100 rhinos in 1985

to poachers in the Zambezi valley.

Today a war exists between poachers, who kill rhino for their horn, and Zimbabwean government troops who shoot poachers on sight in a desperate attempt to save the remaining rhino populations.

One may wonder what makes the rhino horn (an average rhino carries 3 kilograms of horn) which is nothing but a dense mass of compacted hair, such a viable proposition for poachers and dealers. On the black market rhino horns are sold for a phenomenal US \$800 900 a kg. About 50 percent of the rhino horns which are being hacked off dead, and sometimes mortally wounded animals, are illegally exported to North Yemen where they are shaped into dagger handles for young men. The other half is used in Eastern Asia for medicinal purposes, mainly to reduce fever, and as an aphrodisiac. Thousands and thousands of rhino have thus become in the first instance victims of men's whims, and, secondly, are slaughtered in vain.



Poachers have slaughtered 90 percent of the black rhino population in Africa within the past 15 years. • Wilddiewe het 90 per-sent van Afrika se swartrenosterbevolking binne 15 jaar uitgewis.

black rhino slaughtered

since scientists have determined that ingesting doses of the horn has exactly the same pharmaceutical value as chewing fingernails!

There is one ray of light, however, in the gloomy future of the black rhino. During the period when the overall numbers of black rhino declined in Africa, their numbers actually increased in South Africa. In 1930 there were about 150 black rhino left in South Africa. Thanks to conservation efforts there are now about 600 black rhino. Over the years the Natal Parks Board has captured and translocated more than 50 rhino from the Zululand populations to the Kruger National Park, 19 to Pilanesberg, 33 to Itala and 4 to Weenen. The largest black rhino population in South Africa is to be found in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi complex where there are about 220 animals. The black rhino population at Ndumu Game Reserve has now reached its carrying capacity while Eastern Shores has a small but growing nucleus of 10 black rhino intro-

duced in 1984 with a further 4 added in 1987. Although there are 9 populations of the original South African black rhino, and one population of the East African and South West African subspecies respectively, at present in South Africa (and the numbers are increasing), we cannot afford to be complacent about the situation. If Zimbabwe fails to contain rhino poaching, South Africa's rhino population will be the next target. Poachers are already active in this country as a white rhino was recently shot on a game ranch in the Eastern Transvaal and only the horns removed.

Conservation bodies throughout the world are concerned about the status of the black rhino and numerous international projects to save this species from extinction have been launched. At a meeting held in Kenya, the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) African Rhino and Elephant Specialist Group emphasized that one of the pri-

orities for the long-term survival of rhinos is to control and stop trade in rhino products and that projects with this aim must receive priority for funding. The WWF (World Wildlife Fund) has launched an international fund-raising campaign — "Save The Rhino!" — to finance a programme of rhino conservation projects developed by the IUCN in Africa and Asia. Its objective is to save the two African and three Asian rhino species which are the only survivors of the 34 species which once existed. The funds raised are being used for anti-poaching operations, the creation of new reserves, the strengthening of national parks counter-poaching measures, research projects and public educational projects. Field conservation measures alone are insufficient, and efforts must still be made to curtail the rhino horn trade. Dr. Esmond Bradley-Martin, a consultant for the WWF and IUCN, investigated the international trade in rhino products and made several recommendations which were re-



Foto: Naudke Parkrand

Conservation bodies worldwide are concerned about the status of the black rhino and numerous international projects to save this species from extinction have been launched. • Internasionale bewaringsorganisasies is bekommerd oor die status van die swartrenoster en talle projekte is geloods om dié spesie van uitwissing te red.

viewed by IUCN, WWF and CITES (Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). These organizations have decided on a new strategy in order to encourage the interest of producing, consuming and trading countries to join CITES. The aim is also to make CITES more effective and to halt trade in rhino products. Fortunately most countries, e.g. Singapore, have now joined CITES and have agreed to stop the trade in rhino horn. Particular attention is being given to Burundi which acts as an entrepôt and to the United Arab Emirates which remain a major problem as far as the importation of horn is concerned.

Pressure is also being put on some countries, and traders are being encouraged to use substitutes for rhino horn, such as saiga antelope horn and water buffalo horn. Dealers in countries such as Hong Kong are using these substitutes. Particular attention has been paid to directing the attention of the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the consequences of their demand for rhino horn for dagger hilts. The Government of North Yemen has now embarked upon a six-point plan to stop the carving of rhino horn for daggers. The hunting of black rhino has been prohibited in most countries, but the possibility of funds being raised

through trophy hunting in special cases to protect this species cannot be ruled out. It would, however, be necessary to institute proper control of hunting and the disposal of products and trophies.

The southern white or square-lipped rhino was hunted to the very verge of extinction by the end of the 19th century. Thanks to sound conservation efforts by the Natal Parks Board, it has been possible to remove the name of this animal from the IUCN's Red Data Book. Will we be able to do the same for the black rhino? Will our conscience allow us to see the black rhino species joining the ranks of the dodo, the quagga and the Cape lion?

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Thanks to sound conservation efforts by the Natal Parks Board, the southern white or square-lipped rhino's name has been taken from the IUCN's Red Data Book. Can Africa do the same for the black rhino?



Danksy die werk van veral die Nattale Parkeraad kon die witrenoster uit die IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) se Rooi Databoek verwyder word. Kan Afrika dieselfde vir die swartrenoster doen?

Renosterslagting nie gestuit

In 'n kwessie van 15 jaar is 90 persent swartrenosters deur wilddiewe doodgemaak en die uitwissing gaan onverpoos voort. In die vroeë 19de eeu was swartrenosters volop. In 1970 nog was daar sowat 65 000 swartrenosters in Afrika. Daarvan is 'n skamele 3 800 vandag oor. Indien daar nie daadwerklike pogings aangewend word om die swartrenoster te red nie, sal hierdie groot diere eersdaags uitgewis wees.

Oeganda se laaste vyf swartrenosters is reeds deur stropers doodgemaak. In Kenia waar daar in 1970 ongeveer 18 000 swartrenosters was, is daar vandag net 500 oor. Hulle word in kampe agter geëlektrifiseerde heinings aangehou. In 1985 is meer as 100 swartrenosters in die Zambezi-vallei deur wilddiewe doodgemaak. Vandag heers daar oorlog tussen die stropers en die Zimbabwiese owerhede wat op wilddiewe skiet in 'n desperate poging om die oorblywende renosterbevolkings van uitwissing te red.

Renosterhoring bestaan bloot uit 'n massa saamgepakte hare en 'n renoster dra gemiddeld sowat drie kilogram horing. Tog verkoop renosterhoring vir \$800/900 per kilogram op die swartmark. Omtrent 50 persent van die horings wat uit dooie of swaar gewonde renosters geslag word, word onwettig na Noord-Jemen uitgevoer waar meshewwe daarvan gemaak word. Die ander helfte word in Oos-Asië verkoop as medisyne om koors te verlig en as 'n ge-

slagsprikkel. Daar is egter bewys dat renosterhoring dieselfde geneeswaarde het as naels kou. Dit laat 'n mens sidder om te dink dat 'n spesie soos die swartrenoster op die randjie van uitwissing staan om mense se ydele grille te bevredig.

Daar is tog 'n sprankie hoop vir swartrenosters in Suid-Afrika, omdat hulle getalle hier toeneem. In 1930 was daar maar 150 swartrenosters in Suid-Afrika oor, maar volgehoue bewaringspogings deur bewaringsliggame was so suksesvol dat 50 renosters van die Zoelolandse bevolking reeds na die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin uitgevoer is, 19 na Pilanesberg, 33 na Itala en 4 na Weenen. Die grootste swartrenosterbevolking in Suid-Afrika vandag is in die Hluhluwe-Umfolozi-kompleks waar daar sowat 220 diere is. Daar is 9 bevolkings van die oorspronklike Suid-Afrikaanse swartrenoster en een bevolking elk van die Suidwes-Afrikaanse en Oos-Afrikaanse bevolking in Suid-Afrika, maar dit is geen rede om op ons louere te rus nie. As Zimbabwe se pogings om die slagting onder die swartrenoster hok te slaan, nie slaag nie, is Suid-Afrika se swartrenosters die volgende teiken. Daar is reeds bewyse dat renosterslagters in die Transvaal bedrywig is.

Bewaringsliggame die wêreld oor is besorg oor die status van die swartrenoster en verskeie internasionale projekte om hierdie spesie van uitwissing te

red, is tans in volle gang. Een van die prioriteite vir die langtermyn-oorelewing van die swartrenoster is om die handel in produkte van renosterhoring te beheer of, beter nog, stop te sit. Die World Wildlife Fund het 'n internasionale geldinsamelingsveldtog geloods om 'n program van renosterbewaringsprojekte wat deur die IUCN in Afrika en Asië ontwikkel is, te finansier. Die doel daarvan is die bewaring van die twee Afrika- en die een Asiatiese renosterspesies, die enigste oorblyfsels van die oorspronklike 34 spesies.

Die geld word aangewend om stropery hok te slaan, nuwe reservate daar te stel, asook vir navorsingsprojekte en ander projekte om die publiek in te lig. Maatreëls teen stropers is egter nie genoeg nie. Die handel in ware van renosterhoring moet stopgesit word. Singapoer het reeds ingestem om die handel in renosterhoring te staak. Mense word ook aangemoedig om plaasvervangers vir renosterhoring te gebruik, en handelaars in Hong Kong doen dit reeds. Ook in Jemen waar meshewwe van renosterhoring besonder gewild is, is 'n sespuntplan in werking gestel om die kerf van renosterhoring vir meshewwe te verbied.

Dit lyk inderdaad tog of die mensdom vir die swartrenoster 'n plekkie in die son gun.