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INTERNATIONAL ZOO NEWS

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Sebakwe Rhino Population Update

The current set of data for the rhino population in the Midlands Conservancy indicates that during the year of 2002 there have been 5 births and only 1 death. The total population figures are therefore now:

Aged males (25 years plus)	5
Aged females	3
Adult males (8-25 years)	11
Adult females	12
Juvenile males (2-8 years)	4
Juvenile females	16
Calves (0-2 years)	9
Total	60

After recent observations and inspection of a number of the rhino by a National Parks representative, it was reported back to the Conservancy that all those animals observed were seen to be in a very good condition.

History and data records which have been compiled and held for each rhino within the Conservancy are being transferred from the current paper-based system onto a computer-based one called "Wildb". This Microsoft Access Database programme was developed by WWF SARPO for National Parks to assist them in their overall monitoring of the black rhino population. Once the transfer of existing data is complete, information can easily be updated and added as necessary.

As well as capturing detailed individual, group and event data for each rhino within the Midlands subpopulation, this programme provides the ability to record photographs and identifying images of individuals. These can be edited and updated throughout each animal's life. Co-ordinate data from the regular sightings of individual rhino captured by the rhino monitors on hand-held GPS systems can be directly downloaded into the computer database. As data continue to be collected, over the years they will provide a valuable record of the various rhinos' lives, movements and locations within the Midlands Conservancy. The system permits up-to-date data to be transferred electronically from the Midlands Conservancy's local computer records into National Parks' main database.

The one death was that of a young female, Tafara, whose body was found in dense bush by guards who were searching for her. She had several body wounds and a head wound where she had been gored by another rhino.

This is a brief update on the status of the rhinos at the Sebakwe Rhino Trust reserve in Zimbabwe, reprinted from Sebakwe News (Spring 2003).

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