

News in brief

UK FUNDS FOR AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION

Last year Britain's Environment Minister announced government funding for projects which promote the conservation of the elephant in Africa.

The projects, in Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana, include training in anti-poaching techniques, awareness and education programmes for local communities and conservation measures in game reserves which are popular among tourists.

They will receive a total of £600 000 jointly from the Development of the Environment and the Overseas Development Administration during this financial year.

The Minister said: "I am sure that these projects will make a major contribution to survival of this magnificent and important creature. Conservation of the environment is a priority for the British Overseas Aid Programme. Since 1990, we have committed more than 20 million pounds to wildlife conservation projects in Africa.

"The projects are designed to strengthen the capacity of African wildlife departments to combat poaching, and to help communities which share their environment with elephants to develop measures aimed at their preservation.

"I believe that the extra assistance we are providing will be of considerable help to African elephant range states in meeting this difficult challenge."

The projects are, for the most part being managed by the WWF and other conservation groups such as the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation.

The funds will support the following projects: Community based conservation (desert elephant) Owambo region, Namibia (£38 000); in Tanzania, conservation and management of Selous Game Reserv (£100 000), integrated conservation programme for Lake Manyara catchment basin (£42 000), conservation in Rungwa/ Kizigo reserve complex (£80 000), AWF project - community-based awareness/ educational programmes (£34 000); strengthening the Zambian National Parks and Wildlife Department (£62,000), the Lower Zambezi National Park - conservation and management (£38 000), support for the Zambian Wildlife Species Protection Department (£64 000), conservation in West Lunga National Park and three adjacent game management re-

serves (£50 000); in Botswana, training in anti-poaching techniques and radio equipment (£66 000); AECCG Regional Co-ordination meeting (£26 000).

NAMIBIA'S GROWING TOURISM INDUSTRY

The growth rate of the tourism industry in Namibia is a tremendous success story according to the figures released recently by the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism. These show that the industry has grown 30% per year since the country's independence in 1990. The official number of tourists for 1992 is placed at 282 000. The turnover in the tourist industry more than quadrupled in the past three years to an estimated R507 million. The Ministry expects a 20% growth rate for 1993. Considering the worldwide recession, these figures are extraordinary. If this trend continues, Namibia could become the prime tourist destination in southern Africa, if not in the whole of Africa.

The growth is contributed to the marketing efforts of the Ministry and the various private tourism companies operating in Namibia. Other important contributory factors are the political stability, quality of service and amenities and, to a lesser extent, the international success of individuals in various fields carrying Namibia's name into the limelight.

NAMIBIA COMBATS POACHING

TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce), the world's largest wildlife trade monitoring programme, reports that in striking contrast to the dismal trend in most of Africa, wildlife populations in Damaraland and Kaokoland (Kaokoveld) in Namibia have increased! This is largely as a result of the participation of local communities in game management.

In an effort to curb the huge losses of wildlife to poachers in northern Namibia, a system was devised in 1982 whereby local communities were made responsible for appointing their own game guards. With initial funding from the Endangered Wildlife Trust, and later the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), conservationists Elias Hambo, Garth Owen-Smith and Chris Eyre

visited rural communities to initiate a project that would enable local people to participate in the monitoring of their wildlife and to report poaching incidents to conservation officials. Most of the guards chosen were ex-hunters, known for their skill in tracking animals. From 1983 to 1984, illegal hunting virtually came to halt in all the areas where there were game guards.

Today, there are 30 community game guards in Kaokoveld; the WWF recently extended the project to east Caprivi where 15 community game guards have been appointed by local communities. Because they live in remote areas, their salary consists of both money and supplies which are distributed each month by Mr. Hambo when he collects their wildlife monitoring reports.

In the last ten years, elephant numbers have increased from 250 to an estimated 350, rhino from 60 to over 100, springbok from 1 000 to 7 000, gemsbok from 400 to 1 800, zebra from 560 to 2 200 and giraffe from 232 to 300.

STOP PRESS

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RHINO SUCCUMBS TO POACHERS' BULLETS

In a press release, dated 08 March 1993, Khama Rhino Sanctuary officials from Serowe Botswana, announced the death of the three-year-old white rhino bull recently relocated from the Chobe region to the sanctuary. The bull which had been named Lerumo (Bullet), arrived with three bullet wounds inflicted by poachers about a week before his capture. Since his arrival the bull had been kept under surveillance by veterinarians.

Antibiotics were given to him to fight possible infections while his drinking water was laced with vitamins, minerals and glucose. All this did not improve his condition. In a last attempt to save his life, the animal was tranquillized and tube fed. This was successful but did not have the desired effect. Lerumo died late on the afternoon of 5 March. The autopsy performed by Government veterinarians revealed that the poachers bullets which entered into the shoulder area had caused extensive internal damage and claimed yet another victim.

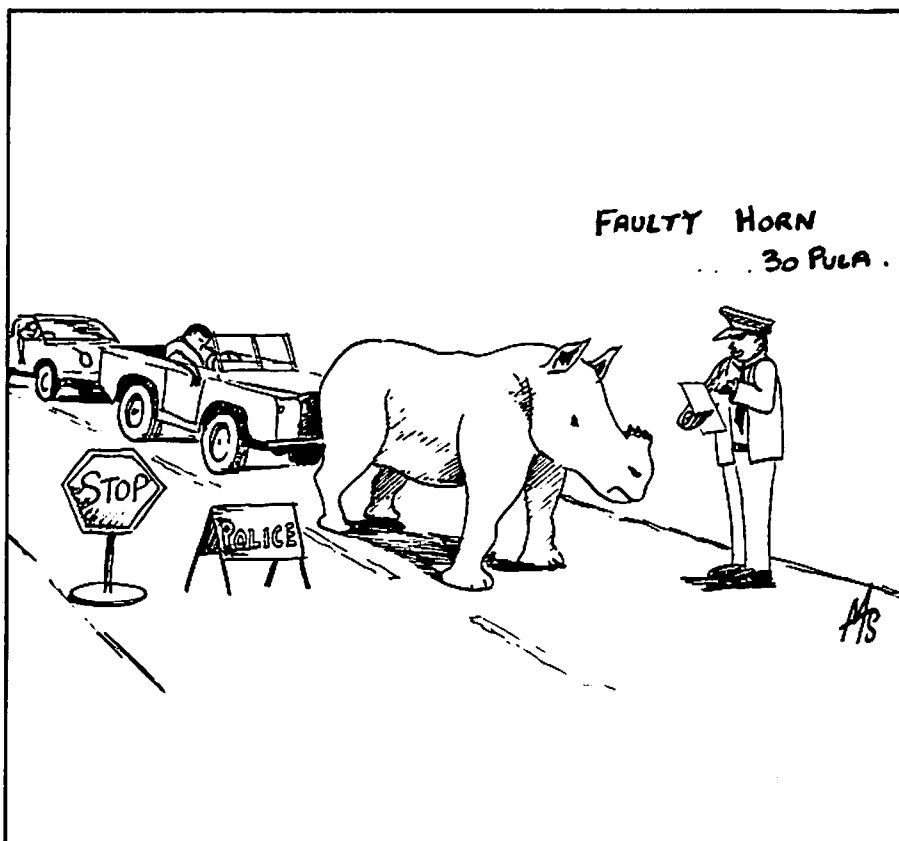
Government, the community and various other stakeholders.

The Khama Rhino Sanctuary – The Sanctuary which is also a community-based project, is currently housing four rhinos from the Chobe National Park. Under the stewardship of the KCS Serowe branch the sanctuary will be run by a trust composed of elected officials from the community.

Okavango Delta – The Society is studying the final draft of the IUCN Team on the Southern Okavango Integrated Water Development Project (SOIWD), an issue which gained international publicity when community intervention prevented the dredging of the Boro River.

You can support conservation by becoming a member of KCS. Membership fees are as follows: Addresses in Botswana and Africa (Addresses Overseas) – individual membership P 30,00 (£ 30,00 / \$ 50,00), family membership P 50,00 (£ 50,00 / \$ 85,00).

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