



Elephants kill Rhinos in park

It's a conservationist's nightmare. Elephants in Pilanesberg National Park have been killing the rhinos.

According to Environmental Conservation N.W. Province (Bop Parks) chief ecologist Dr Greg Stuart-Hill, four white rhinos have definitely been killed by elephants, with another six suspected of having been killed by elephants this year alone.

Stuart-Hill says they know the elephants were the culprits because penetration marks were found on the rhinos' backs, which couldn't have been caused by other rhinos.

Bop Parks was the first to receive orphaned youngsters from the Kruger National Park culls in the 1970s. According to Bop Parks

deputy director Steve Johnson, they are probably feeling the long-term repercussions of being pioneers in releasing juvenile elephants into the wild.

Socio-biological processes among species are playing themselves out among the animals, especially now that populations have grown, says Johnson.

There is often confrontation between rhinos and elephants at waterholes, but it rarely results in death.

Stuart-Hill has a private theory. Great care has been taken to make sure there are matriarchs to take charge of the herds, mostly made up of orphans from the culls at Kruger Park.

The females have settled down well, but males are always kicked out of herds eventually, and they have no dominant bull to keep

them in line or show them how to act, explains Stuart-Hill.

They are like a bunch of male juvenile delinquents without guidance, a classic case of too much testosterone, and not enough maturity or adult supervision.

They might also be too small to dominate the females sufficiently to be able to mate with them, which could make them even more ill-tempered.

Having a bigger adult bull around would also cut down on the period of time they are in musth, an annual condition where males separate and become moody and violent, looking for females in heat, says Stuart-Hill.

Whatever the cause, Bop Parks had to deal with a very novel problem, and fast.

(Courtesy: Keeping Track).

NATAL RHINOS TO KENYA

The Natal Parks Board provided 20 white rhinos as a gift from South Africa to the people of Kenya.

Ten rhino will be donated to the Masai people in the Masai Mara and ten will be donated to the

Lake Nakuru National Park which is run by the Kenya Wildlife Services. Each group of rhino will be accompanied to their final destination by Natal Parks Board staff and a Grindrod Airfreight specialist.

"This is the largest single international donation of rhino the Natal Parks Board has ever made, and is part of the Board's striving for the improved conservation of rhino throughout the world," said Dr

Georges Hughes, Chief Executive of the Natal Parks Board. "The donation of the rhino to Kenya has been made possible by TOTAL South Africa and TOTAL Kenya who are paying most of the costs involved in the project.

We have also had outstanding and enthusiastic support for this project from the Governments of Kenya and South Africa," he said.