Mozambique (Felismina Longamane Langa)

Summary

In the last year a national committee was created for rhino conservation, including representatives chosen from the provinces. Unfortunately, due the lack of funds, it has not been possible to hold a meeting of the committee up until now.

Evidence of Rhino Presence

In 2000, there was new evidence of the presence of rhinos in Mozambique:

1. Spoor of two rhinos was reported from villagers within Sinave National park, after floods.
2. In November 2000, three rhinos crossed the border from Kruger NP to Coutada 16. These animals were taken back by SANP.

Rhino conservation Goals

- Long Term of existence of rhino ensured;
- Anti-poaching unit established;
- Conservation profile of Mozambique increased;
- Number of rhinos known

There is a plan to set up an IPZ for rhino within Coutada 16, and reintroduce 10 rhinos. As soon as funds have been obtained, the priority will be the fencing of an area in Coutada 16 where rhinos can be reintroduced in order to fulfil these goals.

Discussion

Mr du Toit wondered how firm was the rhino report from Sinave, and if it was likely that these were hippos. Ms Langa said that the rhinos that moved into Coutada 16 were repatriated to Kruger NP without Mozambican involvement. There was a proposal to change the status of Coutada 16 as a rhino protected area. In Mozambique, there was now a fine for rhino poaching of 1 billion meticals (USD 90,000), under a new law approved in 1999, with no option of a custodian sentence.

Namibia (Rudi Loutit)

Introduction

Namibia's black rhino *D.b.bicornis* population currently numbers 735. The country population is made up of 2 Key 1 populations (Etosha NP and Kunene region), one Important 1 population in Waterberg Plateau Park, the metapopulation on ten ranches under the MET Custodianship scheme and the two small rhino groups at Hardap Game Park and Mangetti Game Camp in the Kavango Region.

Etosha NP

Rhino in Etosha are primarily monitored during the dry season at permanent water points, where they drink regularly at night. The method is to observe as many rhino as possible at each different waterpoint, during the full moon periods. Rhino are photographed during these full moon counts, for individual recognition. There are currently more than 2000 photographs of individual rhino in a database. Photos are linked to the relevant individual rhino and particular waterpoint counts. This allows for the viewing of all photos of a particular rhino of the photos taken during a particular waterpoint count. 64 waterpoints are covered each year during the full moon periods from July to September inclusive. Only 8% of individual rhino are opportunistically observed at waterpoints and 5% of recorded sightings of individuals are made by chance in the field, during routine patrols. Ear-notching of clean rhino continues and in 1999-2000 a further 61 individuals were notched. Some rhino were fitted with transmitters and tracked to provide information on movement patterns, drinking frequency and number of waterpoints used. Ear-notching commences in the Namutoni area in March 2001.

Kunene Region

Black rhino in the Kunene Region occur in eight ecozones covering the total range area of the population. Ecozones are based on differences in terrain, geology, and rainfall patterns, differences in the availability of food and water and the resulting differences in rhino density, breeding and

movement patterns. Although limited movement between areas occurs within the eight ecozones, they are effectively isolated units. A minimum population estimate for black rhino in the Kunene Region is based on known recognisable individuals (identifiable by characteristics such as horn size, shape, ear notches, tails an and distribution range). All 124 are recorded as present in the 1997 census and have been seen subsequently. There is a further 10 clean individuals as yet unidentifiable, but regarded as being present. The age structure indicates a healthy population when all eight zones are combined. However, the sex ratio is slightly biased towards males, and 66 males to 55 males and 3 currently unsexed calves. The sex ratio of the rhino younger than 15 years is of greater concern, having 42 males to 26 females.

Waterberg Plateau Park
The black rhino population at Waterberg currently numbers 33 individuals. This population showed a growth of approximately 6% during 1999/2000.

Custodianship Scheme Metapopulation
This population currently numbers 77 animals. 58 rhino have been introduced onto ten ranches throughout Namibia during 1993-94, 1996 and 1997 followed by a moratorium while the scheme was revised in 1998-99. Following cabinet approval for continuation, a further 16 rhino were translocated during 2000. A total of 58 rhino have been introduced to ten ranches over the five years that translocations took place. In total eight (8) rhino have died and 27 calves have been born and survived. To date all females in the scheme have had at least one calf each, some giving birth to their third calves in 2000.

Hardap Game Park
This population is made up entirely of Kunene Region animals translocated to Hardap in the early 1990's. A single female aged 4.5 years old was translocated to a Custodianship ranch in 2000. Two calves were recently born to the two adult females. Population 7.

Mangetti Game Camp
The initial population rose to 7 animals during the mid 1990s, but three mortalities has reduced the numbers to 4 as at the end of February 2001. The remaining rhino will be translocated to Eden Wildlife Sanctuary in 2001.

Comments
1. A further 14 rhino are scheduled to be translocated to Custodianship ranches in 2001
2. There is a five-year plan for both rhino species in Namibia. This plan guides the annual capture/translocation programme of the MET.
3. The National and Kunene Region strategies are currently being revised. The Etosha and Kunene Region populations will in future be managed jointly under the guidance of the Principal Conservation Scientist in Etosha. Joint monitoring teams are to be trained combining the best of MET/SRT staff.
4. The security evaluations of all rhino localities in Namibia are currently being revised following full scale on site inspections by joint MET/Protected Resources Unit teams in 2001.

Discussion
Mr Loutit said that in future the Etosha and Kunene rhino populations would be managed jointly. They would start to reduce numbers in Kunene below carrying capacity. Recipient areas would be the Erongo conservancy (2000 km^2), the Namib Naukluft NP, and possibly eventually the extreme South of Namibia. Western arid-adapted animals are to be moved to the more arid western strip of Namibia. Dr Emslie asked about the small population sizes on farms. Mr Loutit said that there was minimum area of 100 km^2 for the farms. Larger areas could be developed in the Erongo and Waterberg 'conservancies', and possibly a Transfrontier area in the South with the Richtersvelt in South Africa. Mr Loutit said that the last animal poached in Etosha was in 1999. Two white rhinos had been poached more recently at Ojiwa Ranch.