SWART- EN WITRENOSTERS WEER TUIS IN KRUGERWILDTUIN

BLACK AND WHITE RHINOS RE-ESTABLISHED IN KRUGER PARK

DIE jare 1971 en 1972 sal sekerlik in die geskiedenis van die Krugerwildtuin bekend staan as die jare waarin sowel die wit- as swartrenoster in die Laeveld van Transvaal hervestig is.

Hoewel die eerste witrenosters al in 1961 na die Krugerwildtuin gebring en in die renosterkamp naby Pretoriuskop geplaas is, was hierdie diere vir meer as 'n driekwart eeu afwesig in hierdie gedeelte van Suid-Afrika.

NINETEEN seventy one and nineteen seventy two will probably always be remembered in the history of the Kruger Park as the years in which both black and white rhinos were re-established in the Transvaal Lowveld.

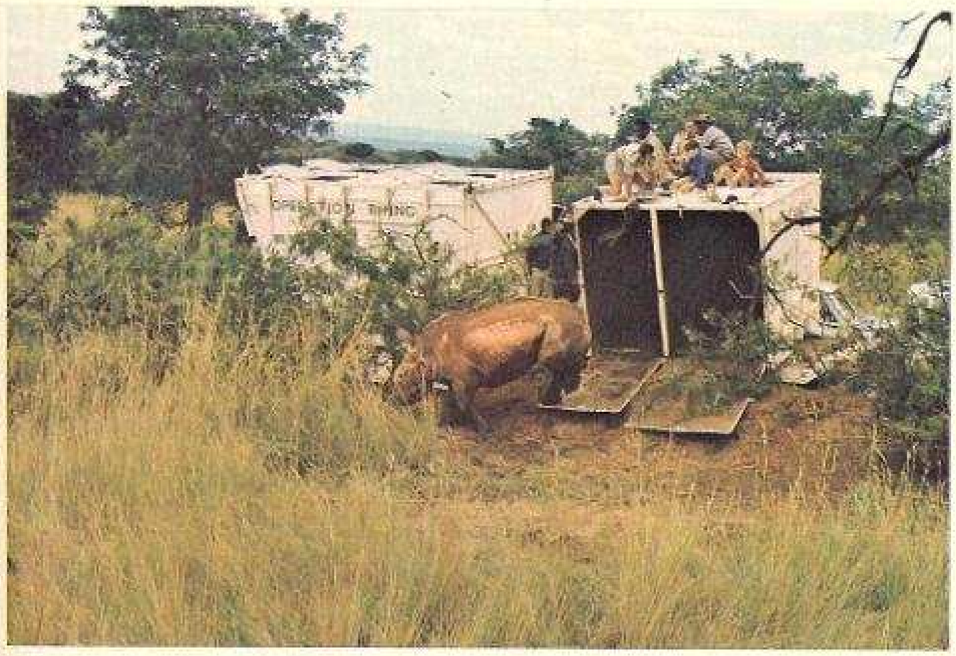
Die vervoerspan met die laaste twaalf swartrenosters wat vanaf Rhodesië na die Krugerwildtuin gebring is nog op Rhodesiese bodem.

The team responsible for transporting the last batch of twelve black rhinos from Rhodesia photographed in that country.

One of the younger rhinos did not take kindly to being released in the Kruger Park. He attacked a nearby road construction machine and tried to rid himself of his frustrations by battering it. After a while the enraged animal was immobilized and transported to another area where he was released.

Een van die jonger witrenosters wat in die Wildtuin losgelaat is, het die loslating hom nie so maklik laat welgeval nie. Hy het 'n teerwa in die nabyheid bygedam en sy gevoelens deeglik op die kolosale voertuig uitgewoed. Na 'n ruk is die verwoede dier geimmobiliseer en na 'n ander omgewing geneem vir vrylating.

In sy gesaghebbende werk, „Die Laeveld — Sy Natuurlewe en sy Mense", wat gedurende die veertiger jare verskyn het, skryf kol. J. Stevenson-Hamilton, wat sedert 1902 opsiener van die Krugerwildtuin was, dat die wit- of breëliprenoster reeds om en by 1873 in dié deel van die Laeveld van Transvaal wat later die Krugerwildtuin sou word, uitgeroei is. In sy werk verwys hy na mnr. W. Sanderson wat in 1873 vir die eerste keer die gebied suid van die Olifantsrivier besigtig het en talle elande in die



White rhinos had been absent from this part of South Africa for more than three-quarters of a century when the first consignment arrived in the Kruger Park in 1961 and was placed in the rhino enclosure near Pretoriuskop.

In his authoritative work, "The Lowveld — Its Wild Life and its People", which was published in the 1940's, Col. J. Stevenson-Hamilton (who was the superintendent of the Park from 1902) writes that white or broad-lipped rhinos were extinct in that part of the Transvaal Lowveld which would later become the Kruger Park from about 1873. He refers in his book to a Mr. W. Sanderson who travelled through the area south of the Olifants River in 1873 and saw a number of eland in the so-called Middleveld near the present-day town of White River. Mr. Sanderson also found many other large mammals, including black rhinos, in this area.

In 1880 a Mr. Glynn reported that the larger animals in the area were becoming rare and that he often came across wagons loaded with biltong and giraffe skins. In his opinion, if it had not been for the tsetse fly which made the area unhealthy to live in, all the larger animals would probably have been annihilated within twenty years of the advent of the first European hunters.

With the construction of the Selati railway line in 1893 a new type of hunter appeared on the scene, namely the city-dweller who moved along the line in a trolley from Komatipoort and, with his Bantu porters, hunted to his heart's content in the tsetse belts. Col. Stevenson-Hamilton alleges that it was these new hunters who were largely responsible for destroying most of the black rhinos, barely thirty years after the white rhinos had

Van die eerste witrenosters word in die suidelike deel van die Krugerwildtuin uit die vervoerwa losgelaat.

Some of the first white rhinos to be re-established were released in the southern part of the Kruger Park.

sogenaamde Middelveld naby die plek waar die dorp Witrivier vandag is, gesien het. Hy het ook talle groot soogdiere, waaronder swartrenosters, in hierdie gebied gevind.

In 1880 het 'n mnr. Glynn gevind dat die groter diere in hierdie gebiede al ietwat skaarser begin raak het en dat hy voortdurend waens teengekom het wat met biltong en kameelperdvelle belaai was. Hy beweer dat as dit nie was vir die tsetsevlieg wat oor groot dele van hierdie gebied voorgekom het nie, sou al die groter diere stellig binne twintig jaar na die koms van die eerste Blanke jagters uitgeroei gewees het.

Met die bou van die Selatispoorlyn in 1893 het 'n nuwe tipe jagter op die toneel verskyn, naamlik die stedeling wat op 'n trollie al langs die spoorlyn beweeg het en van Komatipoort af, vergesél van Bantoedraers voetgeslaan het om in die tsetsegordels na willekeur te jag. Volgens kol. Stevenson-Hamilton was hierdie mense grootliks daarvoor verantwoordelik dat byna al die swartrenosters bykans dertig jaar na die witrenosters uitgeroei is. Die spoor van die laaste swartrenoster is omstreeks 1936 in die suidelike gedeelte van die Krugerwildtuin gesien.

Die jaar 1971/72 was die grootste wildverskuiwingsjare wat die Nasionale Parkeraad nog beleef het — dit was dan ook die jare waartydens die wit- en swartrenosters in die Wildtuin hervestig is.

Nadat die Natalse Parkeraad bekend gemaak het dat hulle omtrent 700 witrenosters te veel het, is daar op 15 Februarie 1971 begin met die oorplasing van 200 witrenosters vanaf Natal na die Krugerwildtuin. Met die samewerking van die Natalse Parkeraad is in Julie 1971 ook die eerste swartrenosters in die Wildtuin losgelaat sodat hul totaal op twaalf te staan gekom het.

Op 15 Desember is die laaste van die 200 witrenosters in die Krugerwildtuin afgelaai. Hierdie oorplasings het so suksesvol verloop dat daar net drie witrenosters tydens die oorplasing gevrek het — blykbaar as gevolg van ooreisingsiekte. Hierdie witrenosters het hulle reeds volkome in die Krugerwildtuin tuisgemaak, waardeur 'n wildsoort wat reeds teen die jare 1870 uitgeskiet is weer in hul ou habitat wei.

In CUSTOS sal mettertyd staaltjies van die wedervarings gedurende die oorplasing van die diere en gebeurtenisse na hul aankoms in die Krugerwildtuin verskyn. □

become extinct in the area. The last black rhino track was found in the southern part of the Kruger Park in about 1936.

In 1971 and 1972 the National Parks Board translocated a great deal of game — and it was during this time that the white rhinos and black rhinos were re-established in the Kruger Park.

The Natal Parks Board announced that it had a surplus of about 700 white rhinos. Accordingly, arrangements were made for 200 of these animals to be transferred from Natal to the Kruger Park. The operation began on 15th February, 1971 and the last of the 200 white rhinos arrived in the Park on 15th December of the same year.

In the case of the black rhinos, the Natal Parks Board also came to the rescue and twelve of these rare animals were released in the Kruger Park in July 1971.

The translocations were so successful that only three white rhinos died during the journey — apparently as a result of so-called overstraining disease. The white rhinos have settled down well in their new habitat and thus a species which had become extinct in the area by the 1870's has reappeared in its old haunts.

In later issues of CUSTOS we will publish articles about the translocation of the animals and about occurrences after their arrival. □