



## African Rhino Specialist Group

### Activity Report 2009–2012

Attended CITES CoP15 and 61st and 62nd meetings of CITES Standing Committee. Submitted mandated joint AfRSG/AsRSG/TRAFFIC report for CoP15 and two information documents for SC meetings. Also participated in the CITES Rhino Working Group set up at SC61.

Successfully organized the biennial AfRSG meeting in Mokala NP, South Africa, attended by 50 international delegates. Continental numbers and a list of Continental Key and Important rhino populations were updated at this meeting. Red List entries also updated with latest information.

Assisted with the development and facilitation of strategic rhino conservation plan revisions for Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania. A strategic plan for South Africa's important white rhino population is also in draft phase. Also assisted Namibia with a review of its rhino security plans.

Provided advice and technical assistance and training to numerous national programmes and organizations.

Aided in minimizing illegal rhino related activities by assisting with the development and presentation of evidence in mitigation of sentence in a number of bench mark rhino cases. Worked as part of a team producing an information handbook on rhino for judiciary.

Facilitated greater cohesion amongst South African private rhino owners.

Actively participated in numerous rhino focused meetings/discussions, such as 'Coalition against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT)' meeting, South African National Dialogue meetings, South African Scientific Authority alternative management options meeting, S.A. Parliamentary portfolio meeting, AWF/KWS rhino meeting in Kenya, SADC Rhino Management Group, and Rhino and Elephant Security Group/Interpol Environmental Crime Working Group meetings.

Continued editorial assistance to *Pachyderm* journal.

### Success stories

- Continental numbers of both white and black rhinos continue to grow, despite increased poaching.
- African rhino Red List entries updated.
- Provision of evidence in rhino cases has seen record high sentencing and support for RhoDIS DNA initiative.
- Greater cohesion of South African private rhino owners.
- Rhino plans developed for most rhino range states.

IUCN SSC Sir Peter Scott Medal for Conservation was awarded to the previous Chairman (Dr M. Brooks) and Lowveld Trust's R. du Toit, who also won a Goldmann Award. Dr R. Emslie was awarded IUCN SSC Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership.

### Challenges

- To reduce poaching as a result of unprecedentedly high black market value of rhino horn.
- A need for greater international cooperation, alignment of legislation and awareness in fighting the illegal trafficking of rhino horn.
- Increase the value of rhino in the face of increased protection costs and a reduction in live sales demand.
- Objectively explore alternative strategies to sustainably conserve rhinos.

### Future Goals

- Reduce poaching, black market value and illegal demand for rhino horn that is driving rhino poaching.
- Development of an enabling environment to facilitate the continued expansion of rhino numbers and range.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of alternative strategies to sustainably secure rhinos into the future.
- Enhance international cooperation and sharing of information to reduce the illegal trade in horn.
- Increase the international status of rhino related crimes. Promote the need for strong and consistent penalties for rhino crimes and the use of RhoDISTM central DNA database for rhinos in tracking of horn, prosecution of rhino cases and rhino research.



### Facts

**Chair:** Michael Knight

**Deputy Chair:** Benson Okita-Ouma, MBS

**Red List Authority Focal Point:** Richard Emslie

**Number of members:** 31

**Website:** [www.rhinos.org/professional-resources/iucn-african-rhino-specialist-group](http://www.rhinos.org/professional-resources/iucn-african-rhino-specialist-group)



Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*). © Lucky Mavrandonis