

## Relocating rhinos to Zambia: Part two

As reported in the last issue of *The Horn*, the recent relocation of 15 black rhinos from South Africa to North Luangwa National Park in Zambia has been a great success. There has been significant progress in North Luangwa in the last few months, including a new calf...

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2006 was an eventful year for the black rhino reintroduction project, and not without its moments of tension and anxiety (with the adventures of Twikatane, Julila and Twashuka), sadness at the loss of Lina, and delight with the birth of Twibukishe. It was also a very positive year: Zambia's population now numbers 16, the new arrivals have settled down, and we are ready to welcome a third and last translocation to North Luangwa.

Five black rhinos were successfully introduced into North Luangwa National

Park, Zambia, in 2003, and the first calf was born in early 2005. Last year, the reintroduction project was given a significant boost with the arrival and release of an additional ten individuals into an adjoining 144 km<sup>2</sup> fenced sanctuary.

The subsequent loss of one of the females to natural causes was offset by the birth of a calf to Julila, who arrived from Kruger National Park already pregnant. Julila caused much concern initially as she broke out of the sanctuary soon after her release from the bomas. But the area she chose to settle in was just adjacent to the sanctuary, in good habitat, and given her advanced pregnancy it was decided that the best course of action would be to allow her to continue to live outside. Additional security was put in place, and the gamble paid off with the birth and survival of her calf. Both are doing well and we periodically check her whereabouts by radio tracking.

On the project's annual Conservation Education Celebration Day, the calf was named Twibukishe, meaning "we remember", in a competition between schools. The name is in honour of the hundreds of black rhinos which had vanished from the Luangwa Valley by the late 1980s. Twibukishe is an effective reminder that if we are to succeed in the future, we must not forget the past.

In early November, a new scout observation post was installed on the Muchinga escarpment, overlooking the northernmost section of the new sanctuary. Constructed from steel and placed on stilts, the post is equipped with a radio, telescope, binoculars and night-vision equipment, enabling staff to scan the sanctuary and surrounding area day and night and report any significant or suspicious observations. A second post has already been prefabricated and will be stationed on the escarpment, overlooking the area where the new calf and his mother are living.

Preparations, including the splitting of the northernmost sanctuary, are well

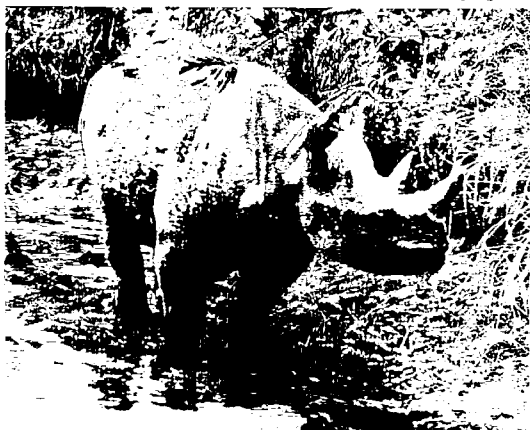
under way for a third translocation to bring Zambia's founder population to the recommended number of at least 20 unrelated animals, thereby maximising chances of achieving the goal of a viable, free-ranging population of black rhino once more roaming on Zambian soil.

The reintroduction of black rhinos into North Luangwa National Park is an international conservation initiative, with implementing organisations including the Zambia Wildlife Authority, South African National Parks, the South African North West Parks and Eastern Cape Parks Boards, Frankfurt Zoological Society's North Luangwa Conservation Programme, and Frankfurt Zoo. Financial support for the programme has been provided by Conservation Foundation Zambia, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Save the Rhino Trust Zambia, the Beit Trust, David Back, the Prince Bernhard Fund for Nature, the EAZA Rhino Campaign and Frankfurt Zoological Society.



MONITORING SCOUTS OF NORTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

IMAGES: ZAWA RHINO MONITORING SCOUTS OF NORTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK



## Grant

In December the EAZA Rhino Campaign gave €16,800 to the NLCP to pay for additional observation posts for the sanctuary, together with new monitoring equipment, and also to re-issue environmental education materials, which were originally developed for local communities and especially children.