

# SADC REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR RHINO CONSERVATION

## CREATING AWARENESS OF RHINO CONSERVATION IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS: REGIONAL APPLICABILITY IN SWAZILAND

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*Creating Awareness of Rhino Conservation  
in Rural Schools: Implementation  
Semester 9 task 5.1-1.3*



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**ABOUT the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation:**

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The Programme is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (Project AID 5064).

The Programme is contracted to CESVI and implemented through a regional consortium which comprises:

- The Secretariat of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)
- IUCN-ROSA (The World Conservation Union - Regional Office for Southern Africa)
- The IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group
- WWF-SARPO - (World Wide Fund for Nature - Southern Africa Regional Programme Office)
- CESVI (Cooperazione e Sviluppo)

The **Programme goal** is to contribute to maintain viable and well distributed metapopulations of Southern African rhino taxa as flagship species for biodiversity conservation within the SADC region.

The **Programme objective** is to implement a pragmatic regional rhino strategy within the SADC region following the acquisition of sound information on, firstly, the constraints and opportunities for rhino conservation within each range state and secondly, the constraints and opportunities for rhino metapopulation management at the regional level.

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**DISCLAIMER**

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The information, opinions and materials presented herewith do not necessarily reflect the official views of any of the organisations involved, including the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SADC, CESVI, IUCN-ROSA, WWF-SARPO, AfRSG or governments of SADC member countries.

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**PROGRAMME WEB SITE:**

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# **SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation**

## **CREATING AWARENESS OF RHINO CONSERVATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS III: REGIONAL APPLICABILITY IN SWAZILAND**

### **Semester 9 Task 5.1 – 1.3**

**Natasha Anderson**

#### **Summary**

A trial of The Rhino Cards has been undertaken in 15 primary schools adjacent to the three Big Game Parks in Swaziland to gauge their effectiveness in different school and cultural environments. The Big Game Parks covered were Mlilwane, Hlane and Mkhaya. Teacher training sessions were held in each area for the consultant (N. Anderson) to present the material and explain the objectives of the materials and the trials. The exercise included training for the teachers so that they could implement pre-trial student surveys that have been designed to provide an indication of the general level of rhino conservation awareness. Post-trial surveys will be carried out, with coordination by a Big Game Parks representative (A. Reilly), at a later date to assess if there has been any appreciable change in rhino awareness as a consequence of the input of the rhino cards.

The teacher training sessions were very well attended and the response from the teachers was encouraging. A total of 21 schools (representing a student population in the region of 9,500) participated in the teacher training sessions. Teacher feedback indicated that they felt the material was relevant to the Swaziland education system and it would be easy for them to incorporate The Rhino Cards into their lessons. The overall response was that the information provided in The Rhino Cards was valuable and would make a positive contribution to conservation education.

The Teachers' Pages (Guidebook) was modified to improve its regional content. A new section that contains country specific information for all SADC states has been included. The introduction to the Card Guide section was also changed to contain a more detailed description of how the cards are intended to be used as a teaching aid. This was done to make The Rhino Cards files a more self explanatory package.

The production of the cards was delayed initially to enable 15 sets of The Rhino Cards files for the Swaziland trial to be combined with a print run of an additional 100 sets being funded by Malilangwe Trust, Zimbabwe. This was done to reduce production costs. Additional delays were experienced during production. These were caused by difficulties with materials availability and caused further postponement of the Swaziland trials. As a result the teacher training sessions were only conducted in the first week of March 2004 and consequently no survey results will be available until later in the year.

#### **The Materials**

## **The Rhino Cards**

The Rhino Cards used in the Swaziland trials are the same ones that are in use in Zimbabwe. The cards were designed to be standard for use throughout the SADC region. The Teachers Pages that are included in the Rhino Cards files have been modified to provide more county specific information for each SADC state. In addition the introduction to the Card Guide section of the Teachers' Pages has been elaborated on in an effort to make it clearer as to how the multiple copies of the cards are intended to be used as class sets.

The proposal for this trial suggested confining country specific information to the centrefold pages so that the Teachers' Pages would be produced in county editions. With further investigation it was discovered that it would be more cost effective production wise and more informative to including information on all SADC countries in the one booklet. The revised Teachers Pages now create a standard set of materials that can be used in all SADC states.

With these changes The Rhino Cards files are now more user-friendly and have greater regional applicability. This will allow larger (and therefore cheaper) print runs and greater flexibility in application.

## **Record Sheets**

As in the Zimbabwean trials The Rhino Cards school set includes a record sheet for teachers to record card use. Teachers were requested to record details of which cards they are using to teach which subject and at what grade level. These sheets will provide valuable information with regards to how frequently the cards are actually being used by teachers and why.

## **Surveys**

The survey used in the Zimbabwean trials was modified slightly to remove Zimbabwean specific questions and include more Swaziland questions. The concept of conducting pre- and post-trial student surveys was explained to the teachers and they were requested to carry out the pre-trial surveys before they started using The Rhino Cards in class.

## **Teacher Training**

The three teacher training sessions were organised by Big Game Parks of Swaziland. Preliminary meetings were held in each of the three areas to inform the schools of the material and to invite them to partake in the trial. Roughly seven schools per area were invited in an effort to ensure that a minimum of five schools per park would participate. A total of 64 teachers representing 21 schools attended the three teacher training sessions held in the first week of March. The total student population of these 21 schools is over 9,500 children. See Table 1 for details.

**Table 1: Schools participating in the Swaziland trials of The Rhino Cards**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>No. of reps.</b>	<b>Student pop.</b>
Mlilwane	Bhekephi	4	670
	eSitjeni	5	325
	Ezulwini Valley	3	200
	Hlabazonke	1	215
	Lobamba	3	700

	Mphetseni	3	300
	St Marys	11	500
Hlane	Dlalisile	3	304
	Lusoti	3	593
	Shewula	2	800
	St Pauls	2	309
Mkhaya	Enhlabeni	2	378
	Esigcawni	4	258
	Gilgal	2	880
	Mahlabatsisi	1	158
	Mkhweli	4	616
	Ndangu	2	554
	Phonjwane	1	850
	Phuzamoya	2	110
	Siphoso	4	770
	Tambutu	2	230
Totals	21	64	9720

Note: Figures in italics are informed estimates. Exact numbers were not provided.

### Teacher Response

Interest in the materials was much higher than anticipated by Big Game Parks as indicated by the high turnout for the teacher training sessions. A total of 21 different schools attended the teacher training sessions over the three days. Most schools sent two or more representatives. One school (St Mary's) actually closed for the day to allow all their teachers to participate.

The majority of teachers responded positively to the material. They felt that the graphics and colour of The Rhino Cards added interest and that the information provided was relevant and would make a valuable contribution to conservation education which was much needed. After The Rhino Cards and Teachers' Pages had been presented the teachers took the opportunity to ask questions about rhinos and conservation. In most cases the question session went on for longer than the presentation. The questions asked illustrated a wide variation in the level of awareness amongst the teachers. Their enthusiasm and persistence was encouraging though as it showed willingness and a desire to understand both the rhinos and conservation issues.

At Hlane Royal National Park there was an opportunity to take the participants on a short game drive after the session. For the majority of the teachers it was their first ever trip into a park. Eight white rhinos were seen at close range. This experience had a dramatic impact and all members were keen to organise school visits into the park in the future.

A similar exercise was planned for Mkhaya but the high turnout and heavy rain made it impossible to achieve on the day. Big Game Parks agreed to make alternative arrangements at a later date.

### Additional Material Requested

The initial objective was to trial The Rhino Cards in 15 schools in Swaziland. Big Game Parks invited schools neighbouring their three wildlife areas to participate in the trials. Expecting only a partial uptake of the offer more than the five schools per park were invited. Almost 100% uptake on the offer to participate was achieved and 21 schools sent representatives. Consequently there were not enough sets of The Rhino Cards available to distribute to every school. In addition to the schools that attended the teacher training sessions there are an

additional two schools in the Mkhaya area and an additional one school at Hlane that Big Game Parks feel are important to include in the program. Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary also has an Environmental Education Centre and felt it would be valuable to have a set of The Rhino Cards for that centre. Big Game Parks are requesting that an additional 10 sets of The Rhino Cards be made available to enable them to include in the trial all the schools that have shown an interest in participating and to enable them to use the material in their Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary Environmental Educational program.

**Table 2: Quote from Action magazine for an additional 10 sets of The Rhino Cards**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost (Zim Dollars)</b>
The Rhino Cards - printing	3,204,811.20
Laminating	2,149,488.00
Plastic sleeves for Teachers Pages	47,400.00
Folders	706,248.00
File covers - printing	60,000.00
File spines - printing	12,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,179,947.20</b>

## **Survey Results**

Due to the various delays in commencing the trials no survey results are available at this stage. A follow up report will be provided once the materials have been in school use and the post-trial surveys have been undertaken.

## **Amplification**

Malilangwe Trust, which is located in the South East Lowveld of Zimbabwe, has funded the production and introduction of 100 sets of The Rhino Cards for primary schools in the Chiredzi District. This area covers schools surrounding Malilangwe, Chiredzi River and Save Valley Conservancies as well as Gonarezhou National Park.

In addition the Beit Trust have supported the production and distribution of 22 sets of The Rhino Cards that have been put in schools in and around both the Bubiana and Save Valley conservancies. The Beit Trust is currently considering a proposal to fund the production and introduction of another 150 sets of The Rhino Cards for primary schools neighbouring Bubiana, Buby River, Save Valley and Chiredzi River conservancies as well as those neighbouring Northern Luangwa National Park in Zambia and the Liwonde National Park in Malawi.

Save the Rhino International are in the process of putting together funding to provide another 250 sets of The Rhino Cards for primary schools not covered by the previously mentioned initiatives around the conservancies and Intensive Protection Zones in the National Parks areas. The implementation of this program will be supported by Marwell Zimbabwe Trust.