

SWAZILAND (Task 1.2 – 1.8)

Review by Richard Emslie (AfRSG) (Country visit: 28 August to 1 September 2000)

1 MECHANISMS FOR PLANNING AND COORDINATING NATIONAL RHINO CONSERVATION EFFORTS

1.1 Rhino Management Authority

The situation in Swaziland is somewhat unusual given the Swazi monarchy's executive powers, and that the Head of State, his Majesty King Mswati III is senior to the elected government of the day. Up until the promulgation of Legal Notice number 142 of 1998 by King Mswati III on the 12 November 1998 (Annex 5.1), the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC) was the official body representing Swaziland internationally as well as being responsible for CITES matters and administration of the Game Act. However following the issuing of this legal notice, wildlife matters were removed as a government responsibility assigned to the Ministry of Tourism and Communication, and instead these responsibilities were transferred to the King's office.

On the 30th November 1999, the King's Office wrote to the head of the CITES Secretariat (Annex 5.3) informing him of the change in Swazi representation at CITES, and that certain named SNTC members were no longer were Swaziland's CITES representatives, and listing four people who instead would be authorised Swazi signatories for CITES matters (two of those listed are from the Kings Office and two from Swaziland's Big Game Parks (BGP) with at least one from each body to be a signatory).

On the 6th March 2000, the Minister's office in the Swaziland Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade wrote to the SADC rhino programme c/o Dr Yemi Katerere (of IUCN-ROSA) explaining that since the 30th November 1999 the administration and the day-to-day management of the Game Act, CITES and all associated conventions/agreements on wildlife had been delegated to BGP, specifying the Head of the organization Mr Ted Reilly as the contact person (Annex 5.2). IUCN HQ was similarly notified by a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Annex 5.4). Annex 5.5 is a copy of a royal warrant confirming this arrangement, and the delegation of responsibilities to BGP by the King.

SADC WTCU needs to be informed of these changes if they have not already been, as SNTC and not Big Game Parks were invited to, and attended the SADC rhino programme stakeholders meeting in March 2000. According to BGP, some confusion has been caused with the SNTC on occasion continuing to, or being asked to represent Swaziland at international or regional meetings (e.g. SADC rhino programme stakeholder workshop or pre-CITES SADC range States meeting), when they no longer have the authority and mandate to do so (Annexes 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4).

Since 1995, when the last three white rhinos in Mlawula Natures Reserve (managed by the SNTC) were translocated out as a precautionary measure (Boycott in report to SADC Stakeholders Planning Workshop) all rhinos in Swaziland have been conserved on land managed by BGP. One reserve managed by BGP is a Royal Reserve held in trust for the nation, while another is privately owned by BGP. However in the latter case the properties that make it up are in perpetual trust under a constitution assuring their long-term survival. Although private, the land has been legally proclaimed and has the highest legal conservation status possible. This enabled BGP to insist that electricity supply lines had to make a detour round and not through the reserve. In addition the reserve must be managed in terms of the aims of the act (i.e. for wildlife conservation) that would prohibit changes of management (land-use) in the future. Any donated land in Swaziland can be got back if it is no longer being used for the purpose it was donated.

1.2 National Rhino Strategy

Swaziland does not have a formal national rhino strategy. However in managing Swaziland rhinos, BGP seeks to breed animals up as fast as possible and to biologically manage populations (through translocation) to maintain them in a productive state.

1.3 Action Planning

Management is on an informal ad hoc day-to-day basis.

1.4 Coordination Mechanisms

No information on co-ordination mechanisms was provided.

1.5 Focal Point

Mr Ted Reilly (AfRSG, SADC, CITES) and Mr Mickey Reilly (RMG, RESG) of BGP.

SNTC (who up till late 1998 were the official agency representing Swaziland on nature conservation matters) were invited to represent Swaziland at the SADC rhino programme stakeholders planning workshop. However, following the transfer and change in official responsibilities for nature conservation and who should represent Swaziland officially at international wildlife forums (from Government Ministry to Kings Office and from SNTC to BGP - see Annexes 5.1 to 5.5), as the recently designated authority and the only agency that currently manages rhino in Swaziland, it would be appropriate for SADC WTCU to approach BGP to ask them to nominate the focal point for the SADC programme.

1.6 Potential for facilitation by SADC rhino programme

Given the current absence of a national strategy for rhino conservation, it is anticipated that Swaziland would benefit from the assistance of the SADC RPRC in developing one. Swaziland currently only has two rhino parks with one black rhino and two white rhino populations. BGP have indicated they would appreciate external expert advice on their estimates of carrying capacity and stocking rates of black rhino and other browsers as this would help them fine-tune their biological management.

2 EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RANGE STATES

(Excluding SADC Rhino Programme)

2.1 Co-ordination with other range states

There are no formal links with other range states although Swaziland's BGP are represented on both the RMG and the AfRSG. BGP have worked closely in the past with SAPS's ESPU and selected undercover Wildlife Investigators working for some of South Africa's rhino management agencies.

Mr Mickey Reilly (BGP) has attended a number of RMG meetings and Mr Ted Reilly is an AfRSG member. Swaziland's BGP has also actively participated in the Rhino and Elephant Security Group of Southern Africa.

The last introduction of black rhino from KwaZulu-Natal to Swaziland was sponsored by the President of Taiwan as a gift to the King of Swaziland. These animals are being looked after on behalf of the King by BGP (a private run organization). The initial black rhino founders came from Zimbabwe.

In September 1994, Swaziland was one of the original signatories of the "Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora" more commonly known as the "Lusaka agreement".

2.2 Existing commitments with other SADC range states

In practice while the "Lusaka Agreement" has facilitated cooperation between individual parties in dealing with cross-border wildlife crimes, delays have been experienced in establishing a permanent task force (partly up as of the failure of some countries to ratify the agreement), thereby hindering the operations of the agreement.

3 RHINO POPULATION STATUS

3.1 Summary Statistics on rhino numbers, distribution and trends

For security reasons, exact numbers of rhinos and their location is considered classified information by BGP. However, on a confidential basis, population sizes and trends have been given to the AfRSG. At the request of BGP, the exact totals of rhino are even kept continental, with the result that the country

totals (10 black and 50 white rhino) included in continental population estimates are approximate and not exact figures. Both black and white rhino numbers are increasing, and the trends are up.

3.2 Population monitoring and reporting

Rhino are known and monitored using individual ID based methods. In the case of Swaziland's black rhino population, an effort is made to sight every animal every two to three days, and the failure to do so is likely to lead to a specific search for that animal.

As rhino numbers and distribution is classified information, no detailed written status reports are produced by BGP. However, details of some rhino management operations (e.g. the methods used in the very successful reestablishment of additional black rhino into an existing population) have been shared at rhino conservation meetings such as the RMG. As with a number of other populations, Swaziland has experienced problems with elephants killing white rhino. Swaziland recently lost three adult white rhino and two calves to elephants, and as a result two elephants suspected to be involved were shot.

3.3 Requirements for surveys and monitoring

No population surveys are required. BGP requested external expert assistance to review of the estimate of black rhino carrying capacity and make recommendations on stocking levels of other browsers.

4 MANPOWER AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR RHINO CONSERVATION

4.1 Anti-poaching resources

In the main rhino park, tourist game drives in BGP open Land Rovers driven by BGP staff (with radio comms) adds to security. There are 12-13 Land Rovers, most of which are tourist Land Rovers, plus a Mazda 4x4 and a Land Cruiser that are management vehicles. At any time during the day three tourist vehicles may be out with a BGP driver and possibly a guide. Tourists are not allowed to drive privately in the park adding to control. The other rhino park has three tourism vehicles and two management vehicles. It was felt that motorbikes if bought would further enhance rapid reaction capabilities.

In one park, in addition to Mickey Reilly there is one head ranger and 12 field ranger posts translating to a manpower density of just under 1 man/5 km², while in another park the rhinos are consolidated and protected in an ~1,250 ha enclosure. In this park (not just the rhino areas) there is one head ranger and 20 ranger posts (translating to an overall manpower density 1 man/14 km². BGP has another 12 rangers at Mlilwane that could be called upon in an emergency. Thus manpower density is high. There is regular patrolling with tourism activity further adding to security.

Information on salary levels was provided and but it was requested this information be kept confidential. Seen in the context of the local economy, remuneration levels were relatively good. Remuneration included a performance bonus, plus a uniform and food. Staff get one month's paid leave and five days off/month.

In keeping with many rhino management agencies, BGP run an informer network. Interestingly, staff who report on other corrupt staff are paid double the normal rates in an attempt to minimize internal corruption. The more people are convicted the higher the bonus. It must be a good case with sound verified information to get a bonus.

4.2 Expertise available for specialised aspects of rhino management

BGP uses experienced rhino vets (e.g. KZNV's Dave Cooper) and capture teams from neighbouring South Africa (e.g. Grant Tracy). There are only 8 people appointed as Game Rangers in Swaziland, and they are able to handle drugs under the law. Thus BGP could act in an emergency.

4.3 Specialised equipment available for rhino management

BGP to have a specialized giraffe-trailer that can be converted into a rhino capture trailer with the crate and loading ramps built-in as part of the trailer itself. There is also one truck available.

5 PARTICIPATION OF NON-STATE AGENCIES IN RHINO CONSERVATION

5.1 Community Involvement

There are currently no direct community programmes around Parks managed by BGP. However, at a meeting to discuss possible projects and cooperation as part of the Lebombo Spatial Development Initiative, Mr Ted Reilly offered to provide support for a community conservation programme in the area surrounding Hlane. However while willing to support a genuine cooperative community conservation project, BGP were not interested in supporting a one-way “hand-out” scheme (which are perceived as dangerous given concerns that this can create problems of expectations if such donations are not repeated, or the level of resources provided declines), with the result that Big Game Parks only committed themselves to supporting this programme on the condition that the neighbouring communities themselves first demonstrated a sincere commitment to the programme themselves by each providing at least one head of cattle. To date there has been no commitment of this kind from the neighbouring communities, and therefore nothing has happened from the side of BGP.

5.3 Local and International NGO Involvement

Over the years big Game Parks has benefited substantially from a number of both local and international donations.

For example, Mkhya has benefited from donations by:

- WWF (water programme),
- Dr and Mrs Schneier of Exeter investment Pty Ltd (rhino protection),
- European Union (fencing)
- UK government (R70,000 for bomas)
- Ngwenya Glass (percentage of sales),
- HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands (purchased 1000 ha of additional land for E1.4m),
- Engen
- Rhino Rescue Trust of Great Britain,
- AID Environment (advice and resources for development and the environment)
- Douglas Armitage
- Steel and Wire International
- Don Ewing
- Rurul Pumps
- Raymond and Ingrid van der Meer
- Rhino Foundation-the Netherlands
- Tony Mashant
- Suzi candles that

Much of BGP operating expenses are covered by profits from cattle herd operations (first Brahman and later a pure Nguni), plus income from tourism operations. However donations on top greatly increase the scope and extent of possible capital development projects. A potential donation from IFAW was turned down by BGP because of the “strings attached” to the donation. BGP see no negative side to this donor support.

In the case of Hlane some land has recently been swapped for more new land. The sugar company that can now traverse the piece of the old park land pays an annual amount equivalent to half the saving in haulage costs because of being able to traverse the swapped land. This complements the revue being generated by game sales and tourism.

5.5 Private Sector Involvement

BGP is privately run, and the main rhino park is privately owned and managed.

6 PROPOSED PROJECTS

Projects identified or supported by BGP:

- Provision of external technical assistance to review and refine black rhino carrying capacity estimates and comment on stocking rates and carrying capacities of other browsers.

- Provision of scrambler bikes to enhance rapid reaction capabilities in the main rhino park (not strictly regional and possibly fundable through USF&W RTCF).
- Support for further development of Horn Fingerprinting to develop a useful forensic test to source recovered illegal horn.
- Financial support to enable the RESG to resume having meetings.

7 NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

The Game (Amendment) Act No 4 of 1991, and amendment of the Game Act of 1953 (Annex 5.6) and The Non-Bailable Offences Order No 14 of 1993 (Act), and Annex 5.7. Black and White rhinos are specified as 'specially protected game' in the first schedule of the 1991 Act, and in the Game (Amendment) Order 12 of 1993.

7.1 Penalties

Penalties for those convicted of rhino crimes in Swaziland are severe, and translate into mandatory minimum jail terms five to seven years. If convicted, offenders face a mandatory jail sentence of five years within additional two years if they cannot refund the value of the animals approached as specified in the act. This penalty has been applied and appears to be acting as a deterrent. No rhinos have been poached in Swaziland since December 1992.

In horn dealing cases, those convicted are supposed to receive a mandatory sentence of seven years, but in practice it appears the five-year mandatory sentence has been applied. They have been about five or six horn trafficking cases and all concerned got five years. In one case a ten-year sentence was handed down with five years for horn and five years for ivory. The seriousness with which wildlife crimes are currently viewed is indicated by the recent sacking by the king of the traditional prime minister (one of the most powerful men in the country) for the poaching of three impala on a decreed rest day during a recent King's hunt. Swaziland has also passed a non-bailable offences act (Annex 5.7). The contravention of section 8 of the Game Act is treated along with murder, rape, robbery and contravention of sections of the arms and ammunition and pharmacy acts as a non-bailable offence. Thus if somebody is arrested for a rhino crime survey will not be granted bail.

7.2 Ownership of Rhinos

Information was not available on ownership or custodianship of rhinos. Effectively, the BGP are managing Swaziland's rhino on behalf of the King and Government, by Royal Warrant. The King may gazette areas for protection of game, including rhinos.

7.3 Hunting and live sales of rhinos

Safari hunting of rhinos is allowed by special permit. Trophies can be exported and imported with permit. There is no clause relating to live sales of rhinos in 1990 and 1993 legislation.

8 DATA SOURCES

8.1 Names, addresses and contact details of all informants/interviewees

Mr Ted Reilly
 Head & AfRSG representative
 The Kingdom of Swaziland's Big Game Parks
 C/o Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary
 +268 528 3944 or 416 1591 or 416 1675

Mr Mickey Reilly
 Field Management & RMG Representative
 The Kingdom of Swaziland's Big Game Parks
 C/o Mkhaya Game Reserve
 Box 311 Malkerns
 Cell 09268 6040308
 +268 416 1591 or 416 1675

Attempts to contact SNTC's Richard Boycott (09268 442 4241) by phone were unsuccessful on a number of occasions due to problems being experienced with international calls to Swaziland.

8.2 Documentation

There are no policy documents or reports available.

9 TRADE AND IMPORT/EXPORT OF LIVE RHINOS

9.1 CITES Management Authority

BGP are now the CITES authority.

9.2 Veterinary Controls

Information was not available.

9.3 Past Imports and Exports

Initially 6 black rhino were introduced from Zimbabwe in 1987 (donation) and more recently a further 6 animals from KwaZulu-Natal were introduced as part of a donation to the King of Swaziland paid for by the President of Taiwan.

10 HORN STOCKS

10.1 Control, Storage and Identification

Horns recovered from the field are locked up for safekeeping by BGP.

10.2 Involvement in AfRSG rhino horn fingerprinting project

Samples were supplied to AfRSG Project. BGP has been very supportive of project and supplying any additional samples that may be required. More black rhino samples are required.