

MALAWI

(Task 1.2 – 1.12)

Review by Drew Conybeare (Country visit: 14 – 18 August, 2000)

1 MECHANISMS FOR PLANNING AND COORDINATING NATIONAL RHINO CONSERVATION EFFORTS

1.1 *Rhino Management Authority*

The national rhino management authority in Malawi is the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), which falls under the Ministry of Tourism. The DNPW manages five National Parks and four Wildlife Reserves.

1.2 *National Rhino Strategy*

There is no formal national rhino strategy.

1.3 *Action Planning*

There are no formal conservation action plans. However, documentation at DNPW indicates that the intentions were to:

- Consolidate data on the range, distribution and population size of rhinos in the country;
- Establish a sanctuary and monitoring programme in Liwonde National Park; and
- Improve the DNPW funding base and infrastructure.

According to the Director, the Liwonde development was formally planned, but this document is not now easily locatable. The project is described in section 3.

1.4 *Coordination Mechanisms*

There are no formalised planning structures set up within DNPW specifically to deal with rhino conservation. This is probably because there is only one small, reintroduced population.

1.5 *Focal Point*

Dr Roy Bhima, Principal Parks and Wildlife Officer (Research), who is the Head of the Research division is the contact person within DNPW for the SADC Rhino Programme. He will also be Malawi's representative to the AfRSG.

1.6 *Potential for facilitation by SADC rhino programme*

The DNPW feels that it has the expertise to produce a comprehensive strategy and action plan for the management of rhino. It would, however, require support from the SADC Rhino Programme in the form of assistance to review the draft document and funding to implement aspects of the plan.

2 EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RANGE STATES (Excluding SADC Rhino Programme)

2.1 *Co-ordination with other range states*

The DNPW entered into a project agreement with the South African National Parks Board for Liwonde National Park. The major activities of the project were to construct an electric crop protection fence along the Park boundary, introduce some rhinos from South Africa, and construct a tourist camp. Some staff were also given a training course in Kruger National Park. This project has apparently not been formalized through any high-level bilateral agreement, and communication between South African National Parks and DNPW has been mainly between Dr Anthony Hall-Martin and the Director of DNPW.

Although the details are not entirely clear, it appears that these rhinos were donations from the South African Government with air transport provided by the South African Air Force.

2.2 Existing commitments with other SADC range states

The South African intention (according to a letter from Dr Hall-Martin) was to set up a project between South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique in which rhino from Mozambique would be added to the Liwonde population to increase the genetic diversity of that population. Ultimately translocations back to Kruger NP would benefit the South African population, and a population could also be established in an appropriate protected area in Mozambique. To date there has been no communication with Mozambique authorities on this intention.

3 RHINO POPULATION STATUS

3.1 Summary Statistics on rhino numbers, distribution and trends

In the early 1980s there were about 12-15 rhinos in Kasungu National Park and 8-12 in Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve. By 1990, these had all been killed as a result of cross-border poaching from Zambia and Mozambique.

Following reintroductions from South Africa, there are now seven black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis minor*) in Malawi, located in the rhino sanctuary within Liwonde National Park. These are two adult males, two adult females and three offspring of undetermined sex.

Liwonde Project

Liwonde National Park is 538 km² in area, situated on the Shire River in southern Malawi. The average annual rainfall is about 1 000 mm and the Park is 500 m above sea level. In collaboration with South African National Parks it was agreed to institute a development project to fence the Park to minimise wildlife/human conflict, improve the infrastructure, train staff, translocate animals and construct a tourist camp. An electrified Veldspan boundary fence was constructed in 1990. Full agreement with the surrounding communities was apparently not reached and the fence was largely destroyed by villagers. The wire was used for snares, with resulting declines in the numbers of many of the species in the Park. The communities later realised the advantages of the fence and requested its re-erection, which has now been done.

One male and one female rhino aged about 5-6 years were introduced from South Africa in 1993, followed by another pair in 1998. The first pair has produced two calves and the second pair one calf. The initial introduction was made into bomas within a 1 500ha (15 km²) electric fenced sanctuary. When the second pair arrived they were released into a second paddock adjoining the first but the dividing fence was not removed immediately. This fence was subsequently removed to make a 38 km² sanctuary. The translocation of another pair of rhino is expected from South Africa in October 2000, and another paddock of 10 km² is being added to the existing sanctuary.

The first four animals introduced came from Kruger National Park. Of the two animals due in 2000, one is expected to come from Kruger and one from Pilanesberg. The first calf was born in June 1997, the second was in 1999 and the third was first seen in March/April 2000.

Prior to the introduction of the rhinos, a group of Scouts and one Parks and Wildlife Assistant (Ranger) went to Kruger National Park and received training in various aspects of rhino protection (such as firearm handling, tracking, radio procedures and rhino behaviour). This group returned to Liwonde with the first introduction of rhinos and formed the Rhino Protection Unit that started guarding the rhinos on a full time basis. The rhinos share the Park with a range of other species, including about 400 elephants, and there are also other species within the sanctuary.

3.2 Population monitoring and reporting

Two armed Scouts are on patrol in the Liwonde sanctuary continuously, and at any one time there are also four attendants patrolling the fence. The scouts are rotated weekly, and are in full-time radio contact with the Warden's office.

There has been one incident of scouts exchanging fire with poachers who were trying to enter the Sanctuary. The Protection Unit produces patrol reports at the end of every month. The level of detail of the information gathered is not clear but data are held by the Park Warden.

3.3 Requirements for surveys and monitoring

There are no requirements for surveys, as DNPW does not think that there are any other rhinos remaining in the country. There were reports of rhino presence in Namizimu Forest Reserve in 1993/94, but follow-up investigations did not confirm these.

4 MANPOWER AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR RHINO CONSERVATION

4.1 Anti-poaching resources

The total scout establishment in Liwonde NP is 27, a density of 1:20 km², and there are 4 Rangers, 1 Warden and 1 Research Officer. The rhino sanctuary at Liwonde is an electric fenced area of 38 km², protected by a Rhino Protection Unit 24 hours a day.

The recurrent budget was said to be about MK2000-3000 per month, mostly donated (R. Bhima pers. comm., but see section 5.2).

There is a road network in the sanctuary and two artificially supplied water points. There are no vehicles specifically attached to the rhino sanctuary. There is one water bowser, to provide water for the patrolling scouts.

Salary scales are shown below. In addition to the salaries shown, field allowances may be paid at a rate of MK2500 per month for scouts and MK3060 per month for Parks and Wildlife Assistants, if they are in the field for more than 14 days. No field allowances are paid to Assistant Parks and Wildlife Officers.

Annual Salary scales for some junior staff in DNPW in Malawi

PW - Parks and Wildlife USD1:MK60 (August 2000)

Grade	Malawi Kwacha (MK)	USD
PW Scout	13512 - 23928	225 - 399
Field Allowance	2500/month	42/month
PW Assistant	20412 - 34452	340 - 574
Field Allowance	3060/month	51/month
Assistant PW Officer	34692 - 41892	578 - 698

4.2 Expertise available for specialised aspects of rhino management

The availability of specialised expertise in rhino management is as follows:

Rhino tracking: the Rhino Protection Unit attended a course in rhino protection in South Africa that included a module in rhino tracking. This course was for junior staff only.

Rhino Capture: there is no expertise. Past capture has been done by the SANP.

Veterinary expertise has been supplied by the Department of Animal Health. The veterinary officers have not received special training in rhino management.

Ecological evaluations and demographic monitoring can be done by the Wildlife Research Unit. The Research Officer at Liwonde can undertake monitoring activities with guidance from the Principal PWO (Research).

4.3 Specialised equipment available for rhino management

There is no specialised rhino management equipment available, such as recovery vehicles, helicopters, crates etc. When translocations were made from South Africa, all the equipment was supplied by the donors.

5 PARTICIPATION OF NON-STATE AGENCIES IN RHINO CONSERVATION

5.1 Community Involvement

A collaborative approach is being pursued as the new strategy for managing Liwonde National Park. The Liwonde NP Advisory Committee was formed in 1997/98, comprising various stakeholders including community representatives, political leaders, local NGOs and the South African High Commission. Although minutes of previous meetings do not indicate discussion of rhino conservation and management, this can be included when necessary. The intention ultimately is to release rhinos into the National Park and cooperation of the local community will be key to their future security. There does not appear to be any real direct community involvement in rhino conservation.

5.2 Local and International NGO Involvement

The most important NGO involved in rhino conservation in Malawi is a local group of businessmen known as the "J & B Circle of Friends". The name comes from a connection with the whisky manufacturer Justerini & Brooks Ltd of London that was involved in the rhino reintroduction project through its "Care for the Rare" programme from the start. J & B funded some of the transportation costs of the initial introduction from South Africa to Malawi. The J&B Circle has assisted with funding of transport for the animals from Blantyre to Liwonde, construction of the rhino bomas and sanctuary, and also with recurrent costs of rhino management and maintenance of the sanctuary (B. Palmer, pers. comm.). The money is almost entirely raised locally and the annual support is presently about MK1,5 m. J & B (UK) also makes a smaller annual contribution. The J&B Circle are funding the extension to the rhino sanctuary at a cost of about MK 2,5 m.

Frankfurt Zoological Society is funding the Scout Training Programme. This is based in Liwonde NP but is national in scope and not restricted to rhino conservation. It started as a 2-year programme and has been extended for 2 years to 2000. It is now to be extended for a further 2 years.

Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management (COMPASS) is a USAID Malawi funded organisation that aims to help build capacity for local communities to manage their natural resources in a sustainable manner. It gave assistance with construction of staff accommodation in the rhino sanctuary.

WWF-US funded a monitoring project for the rhinos in Liwonde NP that led to a publication (Bhima and Dudley, 1996). The Wildlife Society of Malawi was also involved in that project.

5.3 Private Sector Involvement

Private sector involvement, particularly by the J&B Circle, is clearly very important in rhino conservation within Malawi, in addition to the major role of the SA National Parks Board in contributing rhinos for reintroduction. There is also a facility for private sector involvement with DNPW in general through the system of Honorary Rangers.

6 PROPOSED PROJECTS

The following projects were suggested by DNPW (R. Bhima, pers. comm.),

Ecological surveys

As the DNPW is still in the process of building the rhino population there is a need to verify the carrying capacity of the rhino sanctuary in Liwonde NP, to ensure that the rhino density does not exceed the optimum density for maximum reproduction. The area has been described as having a relatively low capacity by Emslie and Brooks in 1999 (IUCN African Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan).

A detailed monitoring programme of the habitat should also be done to monitor the dynamics of the vegetation. There has only been one study of the vegetation in the sanctuary (Bhima and Dudley, 1996). Studies have not continued in the old sanctuary and have not been initiated in the expanded area of the sanctuary. Observations on rhino interactions and their habitat preferences would also be suitable ecological studies. Detailed proposals for these studies will be prepared.

Development of a Management Plan

The objective of the rhino project at Liwonde is stated in correspondence only (i.e. there is no specific rhino management plan). A Management Plan will specify the role of the different sections of DNPW and that of the J&B Circle of Friends in the day-to-day management of the rhino. As the situation is now, there is often confusion arising between DNPW staff in the Park and the J&B Circle of Friends.

7 NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

The primary wildlife legislation in Malawi is the National Parks and Wildlife Act (No. 11 of 1992). Copies of the Act and Policy and also National Parks and Wildlife (Protected Species)(Declaration) Order, 1994 can be found in Annex 9.1.

7.1 Penalties

The Act makes no specific reference to rhinos but provides for certain species to be listed as protected species on an annual basis, and this list has included rhino. The penalty for killing a protected species unlawfully is a fine of MK10,000 and imprisonment for 5 years.

DNPW has recently drawn up a Wildlife Policy (Annex 9.2) that does make provision for conservation of wildlife on customary (communal) land and on private land, and the National Parks and Wildlife Act is under review in order to take the new policy requirements into account. The requirement for the annual listing of protected species is likely to be replaced by a permanent list. The penalty for killing a protected species is likely to be increased to MK50,000 and imprisonment for 10 years.

7.2 Ownership of Rhinos

In the National Parks and Wildlife Act, ownership of wild animals existing in their wild habitat is vested in the President. The Act makes no specific reference to wildlife on private land or private ownership.

8 DATA SOURCES

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

Mr L. Sefu, DNPW, Director. P.O. Box 30131, Lilongwe 3, Malawi. tourism@malawi.net

Dr R. Bhima, DNPW, Principal Parks and Wildlife Officer (Research). P.O. Box 3013, Lilongwe 3, Malawi. sadcwstcu@malawi.net

Mr A. Ferrar, DNPW, Technical Adviser, P.O. Box 3013, Lilongwe 3, Malawi.

Mr B. Palmer, J&B Circle of Friends. c/o Stewarts and Lloyds Pvt. Ltd., P.O. Box 579, Blantyre. bpalmer@malawi.net. Tel: 635033/102/335/481

Other people cited by Dr Bhima, but not interviewed by me.

Mr H.E. Nzima, DNPW, Deputy Director. Address as above.

Dr A. Hall-Martin, South African National Parks, P.O. Box 787, Pretoria 001, South Africa

Mr M. Labuschagne, Frankfurt Zoological Society Training Programme, Liwonde National Park, P.O. Box 41, Liwonde, Malawi.

Mr A. Dzimbiri, Assistant Parks and Wild Life Officer (Management), Liwonde National Park, P.O.Box 41, Liwonde, Malawi.

Mr A. Chirwa, Assistant Parks and Wilife Officer (Research), Liwonde National Park.

Dr C.O. Dudley, Wildlife Society of Malawi, c/o Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba.

8.2 Documentation

Bhima, R. and Dudley, C.O. (1996). Observations on two introduced black rhinos in Liwonde National Park. *Pachyderm* **21**:46-54

DNPW (1998). Management Plan for Liwonde National Park. DNPW, Lilongwe, Malawi.

Ministry of Tourism and National Parks (1998) Wildlife Policy. Department of National Parks and Wildlife. January 2000.

Republic of Malawi (1992) National Parks and Wildlife Act (No 11 of 1992). 4th May, 1992.

Republic of Malawi (1994) National Parks and Wildlife (Protected Species) (Declaration) Order, 1994. Government Notice No. 89. 30th March, 1994.

9 TRADE AND IMPORT/EXPORT OF LIVE RHINOS

9.1 CITES Management Authority

The Director of National Parks and Wildlife is the Management Authority for CITES. Requirements for import/export are the standard CITES import and export permits.

9.2 Veterinary Controls

Veterinary requirements for the previous imports in 1998 were:

- Inspection and certification as free of disease in South Africa by a state veterinarian or private veterinarian approved by Government.
- The animals to come from an area with no clinical cases of Foot-and Mouth Disease.
- The animals to have had no contact with Anthrax within the previous month.
- After arrival in Malawi, quarantine for 21 days with an inspection by a Malawi Government veterinarian.

9.3 Past Imports and Exports

Previous importations have been:

- October 1993. 2 rhino from Kruger NP, South Africa to Liwonde National Park. Donation.
- September 1998. 2 rhino from Kruger NP, South Africa to Liwonde National Park. Donation.
- October 2000 (proposed importation): 2 rhino from South Africa, 1 from Kruger, 1 from Pilanesberg to Liwonde National Park. Donation.

10 HORN STOCKS

10.1 Control, Storage and Identification

The DNPW has no stocks of rhino horn. If some horn was collected from the Liwonde sanctuary it would be kept in the main storeroom in Lilongwe where ivory is stored, where records are kept using the CITES format. Horns would be tagged and numbered for identification.

10.2 Involvement in AfRSG rhino horn fingerprinting project

There has been no involvement in the AfRSG rhino horn fingerprinting project, as there are no horn stocks. Horn samples from the offspring of imported animals could be of interest to this project.