

(b) Presentations by Rhino Focal Points of SADC RRG Range States

Each of the focal points appointed by each of the SADC rhino range state provided a summary presentation on the status of rhino conservation in their countries. Each representative had been requested to use SWOT headings (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) for their presentation summaries and also to provide feedback on in-country activities under the SADC RPRC. Presentations were followed by some questions and discussion.

2.5 Angola (Nkosi Luta Kingengo)

Summary

The last meeting attended by the focal point for Angola was the stakeholders' meeting for the SADC rhino programme in South Africa in March 2000. Since that time two activities were planned:

- (a) field activities
- (b) collection of data from all of Angola, including the use of questionnaires.

Field activities had not been possible due to financial constraints and instability prevailing in the country. However, from questionnaire replies received, there were positive indications of the possible presence of rhino from four provinces:

- Kwanza North and South
- Namibie province
- Kunene province
- Kuando-Kubango province

In addition a report of one white rhino had been received during a field survey in Kissama NP in December 2001.

Discussion

(Surveys) Mr du Toit remarked that hopefully Angola was coming out of war phase. Since the rhino situation was probably similar to that of the giant sable, maybe it would be best to combine coordination of surveys with other species. He asked if there were plans for a national survey of wildlife. Mr Kingengo replied that there were plans for surveys of elephant, rhino and giant sable.

(Strategy) Mr Kingengo said that there was no rhino conservation strategy in place, and the development of this would be preceded by the wildlife survey. Wildlife conservation activities in Angola fell under the IDF, which included departments for wildlife and inland fisheries. There was a National Directorate for Protected Areas, and it was necessary to consolidate activities for the wildlife department.

(Legislation) Mr Kingengo said that wildlife legislation comprised the *Regulamento de Caça* of 11 December 1957, and this had been revised through a more recent revised executive decree and agreement between ministers of finance and agriculture (No 36/99 of 27 January 1999). Summary details of this revision were provided to the SADC RPRC coordinator.

2.6 Botswana (Moremi Tjibae)

Introduction

Botswana, like other SADC rhino range state, is in the process of rebuilding her rhino population, which was in the past decimated by poaching to the extent that it was on the brink of extinction. To achieve this recovery, rhino sanctuaries or reserves have been established, and these areas accommodate the majority of rhinos in Botswana. These areas afford maximum security or protection to rhino, whose movements are monitored on daily basis. Recently two white rhinos have been spotted in the wild in Moremi Game Reserve. These are the only rhinos in Botswana who are not monitored on daily basis. Their chances of contribution to the population growth are minimal as they live an isolated life. Attempts will be made in future to relocate them to an area where their chance of contributing to the country's rhino population recovery will be higher.

Beside the above two rhinos, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks has re-introduced white rhinos into Moremi Game Reserve in collaboration with a private concessionaire. To date we have successfully reintroduced five rhinos, of which three were bought by the concessionaire from one of the private nature reserves, and the other two were a contribution from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The rhinos have adapted well to their new environment. Preparations are currently at an advanced stage to receive 32 white rhinos from South Africa as part of an agreement to exchange Roan antelopes for White rhinos from South African National Parks. They will also be released in Moremi Game Reserve. We hope they will form a viable breeding nucleus in the area.

Our current rhino population stands at 38 white rhinos. These rhinos are distributed as follows:

Moremi Game Reserve	7
Mokolodi Nature Reserve	7
Tholo Ranch	3
Khama Rhino Sanctuary	21
Total	38

With the arrival of the thirty-two (32) rhinos from South Africa, Botswana will have a total of 69 white rhinos.

Black rhinos are extinct in Botswana. Botswana currently still has an outstanding offer of a pair of black rhinos from Namibia. Once a decision has been made to relocate them to Botswana, they will be sent to one of the sanctuaries where there is maximum protection. An assessment has been made in part of Moremi Game Reserve through the SADC Rhino Programme. The area has been found to be suitable for black rhinos. Due to the past conservation failures that lead to the extinction of rhinos in Botswana, efforts are being made to rebuild and protect the white rhino species first. Once these prove to be successful, attempts will be made to reintroduce black rhinos. Before reintroductions are made, our present conservation measures will be evaluated for its success and failure, and shortcomings rectified.

Policy

With the assistance of the SADC Rhino programme, Botswana has a new Rhino Conservation and Management Strategy, which has still to be adopted by the Department. The strategy is for both white and black rhinos. Even though it is not yet formally adopted, it is already being implemented. Our rhino coordination committee has met several times to plan for relocation, security, reintroduction and other issues concerning rhino. The committee only meets when there is an issue to attend to. Beside the Rhino management strategy each nature reserve or sanctuary has its own management plan to guide its daily activities. Most of the rhino conservation programmes are implemented by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the communities. About 80% of our rhinos are in community-managed areas.

We have sought assistance in the past from SADC rhino programme to train staff on monitoring procedures. So far two members of Department of Wildlife and National Parks staff and one member from Khama Rhino sanctuary have been trained. They have in turn trained members of their organisations. Assessment of both Khama Rhino Sanctuary and Moremi Game Reserve suitability for establishment of both white and black rhino was also done through the assistance of SADC Rhino programme. A report was made and the rhino reintroduction programme has been initiated at Mombo. Five rhinos have been relocated to the area and more are still to be sent to the area. Recently we received the SADC *WILDb* database from the programme. The database will go a long way to assist us in our rhino management. Our rhino programme also utilises a pool of knowledge available locally which we either tap during regional meetings or source from individuals whenever there is need.

Weaknesses

Botswana's current rhino programme is going on smoothly. Since 1992 we have not lost a single rhino through poaching, except through natural mortality. Our rhino populations are growing quite well. Rhinos are breeding in sanctuaries and we hope our white rhinos will have recovered in five years to come. Our rhino programme is confined to small areas, mainly sanctuaries or nature reserves. This has proved to be a successful conservation programme. Unfortunately the same cannot be said with rhinos in the

unconfined habitat in Moremi Game Reserve, which is a huge area. This may create problems during breeding. It may not be easy for males and females to meet. We are still to prove our rhino conservation ability with the Chiefs Island reintroduction programme.

Opportunities

Most rhino range states have in the past failed to conserve or provide security for their rhinos, leading to their extermination or extinction. The emergence of nature reserves or sanctuaries has contributed in the recovery of rhino populations in some countries, especially Botswana. Eighty percent (80%) of rhinos in Botswana are in private reserves. Recently there has been partnership between our Department and a private concessionaire that is also proving to be viable. The success of such ventures is due to their efficient management. Private nature reserves or sanctuaries are managed on a business basis aiming for profit. The involvement of the public in rhino conservation should be encouraged where possible to accelerate the rate of rhino recovery in countries with low rhino populations.

Since Botswana entered into an exchange programme of rhinos for roan antelope with South Africa, we have had some inquiries for similar exchanges with private farmers from our neighbours. This indicates that there is potential for the sourcing of rhinos that can be used for reintroductions that can be exploited for rhino recovery programme. Expertise or funding for such reintroduction or recovery programme is available through SADC Rhino programme, the African Rhino Specialist Group, and Rhino and Elephant Security Group. Through these organisations, experts and funding can be sourced. A private concessionaire in Botswana was assisted by members of African Rhino Specialist group to source funds from US Fish & Wildlife Service. The money used to purchase three rhinos from the Mokolodi Nature Reserve.

No response had yet been received from Namibia to a letter sent by the Botswana PS enquiring about provision of black rhinos offered by Namibia in 1990.

Threats

Rhinos in Botswana face minimum threats from external factors, except the two which are occasionally seen in Moremi GR. The rest are in nature reserves or sanctuaries where they are protected on 24 hour basis. Quite a number of resources both manpower and equipment has been deployed on rhino conservation programme. Those rhinos that have been released in the wild have been fitted with radio transmitters to enable easy monitoring. They are tracked and monitored daily. Both air and ground surveillance is used to discourage potential poachers. The concept of community-based natural resource management has assisted quite a lot in management of wildlife in Botswana. Through the programme communities have established sanctuaries like Khama Rhino Sanctuary. Potential poachers are always reported to the authorities once discovered before they do any damage.

SADC Rhino Programme Activities

The programme has been of great assistance to Botswana. The sponsorship the programme offers has enabled Botswana to send delegates to meetings which has equipped such officers with knowledge on matters relating to rhinos in general. We currently have a rhino management strategy though not formally adopted. It is currently spearheading rhino conservation activities in the country. Officers have been trained through SADC sponsorship. The assessment of the suitability of Mombo for the reintroduction of rhino has also benefited us. Rhinos have been introduced and security measures put in place as indicated in the report. This has proved to be successful. Recently we have received a rhino database from SADC rhino programme. The database will assist us on our rhino conservation programme.

The following are proposed as future needs from SADC rhino programme:

- Microchips and readers to mark some of our rhinos that are not marked.
- Sponsorship for study tour so as to learn from other rhino range states.
- Facilitation in acquiring of black rhino.

Conclusion

Rhino conservation in Botswana is a priority. Plans are at advanced stage to bring rhinos back into the wild. All the available resources at our disposal have been deployed to protect them. We hope it will be a matter of five to six years before Moremi Game Reserve will have quite a good number of white rhinos. It

is our intention to have both white and black rhinos released freely in their natural habitat where they occurred in the past.

Discussion

Mr Maige asked when Botswana could move to RMG. Mr du Toit said that Botswana had a shown commendable effort, but did not want to move them out of the RRG too quickly. Mr Theophilus said that the DWNP had received many approaches from private sector for introduction of rhinos, but did not want to get too excited about these. Botswana wanted to continue with government-to-government deals on rhino for now. Mr Daconto asked that the experience from Botswana be fed towards reintroduction planning and implementation in other RRG countries.

2.7 Malawi (Roy Bhima)

Introduction

Malawi has one population of black rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis minor* that is located in fenced sanctuaries in Liwonde National Park. Three pairs of male and female were introduced from South Africa in 1993, 1998 and 2000. The first pair produced two male calves in 1997 and 1999. The second pair produced a calf in early 2000. Another calf was born in October 2001. Two deaths have since occurred. In 2000 the first male adult died and a pregnant female from the third pair died. The rhino population is currently seven. Prior to the introductions in Liwonde National Park, the species had been declared extinct in 1990. In the 1980s the species was confined to Kasungu National Park and Mwabvi Game Reserve only. Kasungu National Park had between 10 and 20 individuals in 1984 (Jachmann, 1984) while Mwabvi had 6-7 individuals. In 1990, these animals were not seen anymore.

Strengths

The introduction of the rhino in Liwonde National Park is intended to build a strong population in the country. As a critically endangered species worldwide and in the country, the rhino was declared a protected species soon after it was introduced in the country. This meant that the species would be accorded appropriate management priority. This ensures adequate protection to the species. The population is kept in a fenced sanctuary and protected by a team of six scouts. The park has one Warden, a Research Officer and five scouts' camps. These will ensure that the rhino are given the right attention in all areas of management.

There has been the Malawi Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Project in the park that has conducted scouts training programmes. These have assisted with the patrolling of the park to ensure that poaching is controlled. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife has recently signed a new ten-year contract with FZS to assist it with various areas of management. The project will improve some infrastructure of the park that will be beneficial to the management of the rhino. It will soon be constructing a 50 km electric fence along the eastern boundary between June and September 2002. This will assist with the control of illegal entrance into the park. The intention of the project is to fence the entire park. Roads of the park will also be developed to improve accessibility to various areas of the park. The project will also enhance community-based management to improve relationships with neighbouring communities. The presence of the project in the park will definitely be of great importance.

Ecological work in the park has been carried since the park was established. The vegetation was first mapped in the 1970s and has been monitoring the vegetation inside and outside the rhino sanctuary all along. We worked together on the first pair of rhino that came in 1993 and published a paper titled "Observations on two introduced black rhinos in Liwonde National Park" in 1996. Efforts to monitor the vegetation and the rhino are still going on.

Weaknesses

The major weakness affecting development of rhino conservation is funding. Although the DNPW has provided a rhino scout team to protect the rhino, it has not provided any extra funding to the Liwonde National Park recurrent budget for the Park Warden and the Research Officer to undertake other routine work such as inspections, monitoring movements and controlling fires. The Warden and the Research Officer are located 30 km away from the rhino sanctuary and often, they have not been able to visit the