

SADC Rhino Programme Activities

The place for rhino reintroduction is not determined yet. So, from the programme we would like to ask the urgency of the feasibility study. During reintroduction, we would like to ask for assistance and supervision.

Discussion

(Feasibility study) Mr Daconto said that the feasibility study requested from the SADC RPRC was in the pipeline, to assist Mozambican authorities with reintroduction. He had been in touch with the park planning process for Limpopo NP. This was contained within a broad proposal, initially developed before the park was formed. The proposal will have to be updated, and take in account master planning, which can also include opportunities from the SADC rhino programme.

(Funding) Mr Daconto asked where funds had been secured for reintroduction. Ms Langa said that these were from Dutch donors. Mr Sefu asked about the KfW funding to the Greater Limpopo Park, and if this included money for reintroductions. Ms Langa said that this was for other species, but not for rhinos. Mr Jiah suggested coordination and harmonisation of activities with donors. Ms Langa said that they did not have studies or expertise at the moment, requesting the SADC RPRC to provide this. With the understanding that management planning is focussing on general reintroductions, not just for rhinos, Mr Daconto said that it was essential for the SADC RPRC to be kept informed on other sources of funding secured from Holland, and the progress of master plan, all necessary to ensure coordination. Mr du Toit said that the 'big train' or 'engine' in Mozambique for developing a rhino reintroduction project is the TFCA. White rhinos could be hitched on now, and black rhinos later.

2.9 Tanzania (Mathew Maige)

Introduction

Tanzania is one of the SADC region member countries where both *D. b. minor* and *D. b. michaeli* exist. The Southern part of the country and mostly *Brachystegia* woodland in this and the Central part of the country is potential range for *D. b. minor*. In this presentation however, I will only focus on the conservation status of *D. b. minor* since *D. b. michaeli* is not target of the SADC Rhino Programme.

Status of present initiatives

The straggling black rhino populations in both central parts of the southern highlands of Tanzania are difficult to consolidate. They are rarely seen and are very wary to approach even when sighted. Despite this problem, restocking through translocations is far from the present thinking, but recovery of remnant animals is very much encouraged. A practical achievement is documented for some *D. b. michaeli* in the north. Efforts by both Tanzania's Wildlife division and donors have all concentrated on rehabilitating the Selous Game Reserve's known rhino populations. There are four discrete rhino populations inside the 55,000 km² Game Reserve. Current efforts are concentrated at understanding the dynamics of rhino populations present at two localities – Kidai and Lukuliro.

Strengths

There have been efforts to enable rhino recovery in the Selous since first rhinos reappeared in the 1990's. A policy and Management plan for rhinoceros conservation in Tanzania was developed with assistance of AWF Project called Planning for Wildlife Assessment and Management (PAWM) in Dar es Salaam. This plan ended in 1993 and was revised recently with support from WWF – Tanzania office and more recently by the Wildlife Division. The office of the National Rhino Coordinator was then developed. The plan for rhino conservation provides for rhino recovery through translocations where this is deemed necessary, but also encourages in-situ conservation.

In the Selous, an ongoing rhino conservation project under EU/GTZ/Selous Rhino Trust continues, all as partners to the Wildlife Division. Some of the achievements so far obtained by the initiative include identification of two areas that are frequently believed to be used by approximately 16 rhinos. The estimate is a product of search efforts by the Selous Rhino Project where one expert is employed by Selous Rhino trust and his counterpart is with us here today (Mr Mwang'ombe).

Another area where search for rhinos is conducted in the Selous is Lukuliro, which is assisted by the Tanzania Wildlife Protection Fund/WWF – Tanzania office. In this area, it has been established that there

are 7 animals. Rangers have sighted them. With the two localities being established as rhino areas, the Wildlife Division knows the duty to protect these isolated populations is at hand, unlike it used to be when all these were reported as speculations.

In recognition of work so far done on rhinos in the Selous, the Wildlife Division has deliberately set aside key areas surrounding the Kidai area (one key habitat for Selous rhinos) specific for photographic safaris and no longer for hunting purposes as it used to be. Certainly this is a positive move towards provision of an enabling environment for rhinos to settle down undisturbed by gunshots.

Weaknesses

Though some recommendations propose reintroduction of rhinos to some parts of the Selous, there is general fear that such a move will direct poachers to the Selous Game Reserve. Due to the vastness of the Selous (about 55,000 km²) controlling the situation effectively by the Selous authorities will pose a heavy cost, which the government cannot shoulder. However, at the present financial ability, Tanzania is comfortable with the recovery of remnant populations of black rhino, which seems to be increasing year after year.

Opportunities

So far, the only opportunity we see is the continuation of the Selous Rhino Trust to support population recovery in the Selous. Main areas for support would be training of rangers and provision of monitoring gear where populations are established. There is certainly a strong public/private sectors partnership shown in the implementation of the Selous Rhino Project. We are happy we have an MoU for 10 years since the year 2000 with the Selous Rhino Trust. We are also lucky that we have a re-known Veterinarian, Dr. Morkel, working in the country for the time being.

Threats

These are not man made for the time being. Protection efforts in all rhino protected areas are good. However, diseases and calf predation in some rhino sites are worrying us most of the time. If threats hitting our immediate neighbours in the north come to us, we will have all reasons to worry.

SADC rhino programme activities

Tanzania benefited from this programme when a team of experts from Zimbabwe who were facilitated by the programme made field excursions in the Selous towards the end of 2001. This support to Tanzania came to re-enforce further search efforts to all the two sites. Thanks to the team from Zimbabwe lead by Raoul du Toit and Norman English. The Wildlife Division basically accepts the report they produced and more work will be planned for implementation as recommended. For example, an extension of funding from EU through GTZ has been requested partly to meet some of the training requirements including employing trackers from other parts of Tanzania to work albeit temporarily in the Selous. We see this as an area where more assistance (financial and technical) from the SADC Rhino Programme can be directed to address our long-term handicap on Selous scattered rhino populations.

Discussion

(*Selous*) Dr Brooks asked about the populations of 16 and 7 in the Selous, and whether Tanzania would seek to re-establish or reinforce these with rhinos from outside. Mr Maige said that they were happy with present efforts, trying to consolidate more of what remains in Selous. There was scepticism on moving animals in from outside. With current levels of manpower and the size of reserve, it was difficult to mobilise to cover additional areas.

(*Serengeti*) Dr Brooks asked about the growth of the Moru population from 3 to 9 and the need to avoid inbreeding. Mr Maige said that there was opportunity for looking at metapopulation initiatives, and they now had an expert in place. They could change the composition of populations as required, including unfenced animals, and explore the possibility of removing one or more males.