

The important role of the Rhino Management Group (RMG) and its revised Conservation Plan for the Black Rhinoceros in South Africa was discussed. It was mentioned that recent RMG data seemed to be indicating that metapopulation performance is beginning to decline, and that some populations may need increased removals to return them to higher levels of productivity. The recent translocation of some of the out of range eastern black rhino from Addo National Park back to East Africa was mentioned, as was the consolidation and increase in size of Addo with a view to creating a park with a carrying capacity for over 100 south-western black rhino. The export of a sizeable founder herd of south-central black rhino to Malilangwe in Zimbabwe in 1998 was mentioned.

The new draft strategy for the conservation and sustainable use the wild populations of southern white rhino in South Africa was outlined. Key components of this strategy involve biological management, security, protection and law enforcement, sustainable use, animal welfare, community involvement and co-ordination. The important role of the private sector in rhino conservation in South Africa was discussed. Results of the most recent survey of white rhinos on private land in October 1999 by Daan Buijs revealed that numbers of white rhinos continued to increase on private land with over 1,920 rhinos in 164 different populations.

Problems outlined included how to maintain conservation standards in State-run protected areas in the face of declining government grants, and how to maintain economic incentives for the private sector and communities to encourage them to buy and conserve white rhino and other game, and in so doing increase in the country's carrying capacity for white rhino.

### 3.11.7 Swaziland (R. C. Boycott)

The situation in Swaziland is unique in that Swaziland's rhino populations are in private game reserves. Swaziland's rhino populations are small with approximately 10 black rhino (*Diceros bicornis minor*) and 50 white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*). The private game reserves are land-locked within Swaziland and do not abut any international borders of either South Africa or Mozambique. The situation seems to have made these populations safe from poachers from other countries. No recent illegal operations have been reported, the last incident being in 1992 at Big Bend.

In 1995 the last 3 white rhino in Mlawula Nature Reserve (a reserve managed by the Swaziland National Trust Commission) were translocated to one of the private game reserves as a precautionary measure. The location of Mlawula on the border of Mozambique had enabled poaching to take place. The move of the rhino into a land-locked private game reserve has enabled Mlawula Nature Reserve to improve its security. Mlawula is being game-fenced and the fence electrified and once the area again becomes safe for rhino the rhino will be returned. Mlawula Nature Reserve borders Mozambique and there are opportunities under regional initiatives such as the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) and the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI).

Mololatja Nature Reserve in north-western Swaziland shares common border with Songimvelo Game Reserve in South Africa which has an important rhino population. Through joint management programmes Mololatja forms an important buffer zone for Songimvelo. While Malolatja does not suitable rhino habitat the reserve has received two elephants from the Songimvelo herd that moved down the Nkomati valley into Malolatja in 1992. The elephant are faring well and future management of these elephants is under review. Similar to the situation in eastern Swaziland and Mozambique, there are new opportunities for Mololatja Nature Reserve becoming an important part of a Transfrontier Conservation Area with Songimvelo Game Reserve.

Another recent development is the establishment of Swaziland's first conservancy in north-eastern Swaziland. The conservancy is composed of a number of partners namely Mlowula Nature Reserve, Mbuluzi Game Reserve, Hlane Game Reserve, Shewula Game reserve (a community reserve on Swazi National Land {SNL}) and Sisa Ranch. This represents a partnership between state- and privately-managed nature reserves and the local community.

In the late 1970s a survey of Nationally Protection Worthy areas was conducted in Swaziland. This resulted in the proclamation of Mlawula and Malolatja Nature Reserves. It is our intention to revisit the other identified areas as part of the Swaziland Environmental Action Plan. Hopefully further suitable areas will be identified that will be able to support additional rhino populations. The Swaziland National Trust Commission would appreciate input from the Rhino Specialist Group in this exercise.

### 3.11.8 Tanzania ( M.K.S. Maige)

Tanzania has two different taxonomic groups of black rhino, *Diceros bicornis michaeli* and *Diceros bicornis minor*. The white rhino, *Ceratotherium simum*, does not occur in Tanzania.

During the 1960s it was estimated there were about 70,000 black rhinos in Africa (Cumming, du Toit and Stuart, 1990), with approximately 10,000 of these animals in Tanzania in the 1970s (Anon, 1993). Tanzania was popularly considered to hold one of the largest concentrations of black rhinos in Africa. Two of the four recognised black rhino subspecies, the southern-central *Diceros bicornis minor* and the eastern *D. b. michaeli*, occur in Tanzania (du Toit, Foose and Cumming, 1987). Their historic distribution extended virtually throughout the country to include the dry Acacia savannahs in the north, the Brachystegia woodlands in the south and west, and the coastal forest savannah mosaics in the east. They additionally occurred in highland forests, swamplands and dry thickets.

At this time rhinos were frequently seen and their large numbers permitted them to be shot on license by hunters and captured for international zoological gardens. Goddard (1967) recorded 108 individual rhinos on the floor of the Ngorongoro caldera during the period 1964–1966. However, within 23 years Kiwia (1989) recorded this figure as having dropped to 25 animals. Such was the carnage being inflicted by poachers on Tanzania's once prolific rhino population. The increased demand from about the 1970s, by Yemen and East Asian countries, for rhino horns to be carved into traditional 'jambiya' or dagger handles and for their purported medicinal properties, further reduced rhino numbers.

By 1984 it was estimated that Tanzania's rhino population had been reduced by 70% from 10,000 to around 3,000 animals. Since 1984 Tanzania fell from being the foremost black rhino range state holding a quarter of all Africa's black rhino, to being a minor range state holding less than 1%. By 1990 black rhino numbers in Tanzania had been reduced by over 97% to less than 100 animals.

The severe decline in elephant and rhino numbers, and the extent of poaching of all species throughout the country, prompted the Government of Tanzania to launch an unprecedented nation-wide crackdown on poachers, illegal dealers and traders in wildlife products named "Operation Uhai" in 1989. The operation was undertaken by members of the army, police, Wildlife Division, Tanzania National Parks and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, and with special magistrates assigned to hear wildlife cases immediately they were brought to court. The operation was most successful and poaching was greatly reduced since then.