

Species

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From the Specialist Groups

African Rhino

While the African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) does not actively promote the trophy hunting of rhinos, it has evaluated its effects on rhino populations and has provided advice based on international best practice for rhino conservation for policy formulation by African rhino Range States and other international authorities.

Since hunting of southern white rhino started in 1968, numbers in the wild have increased from 1,800 to 14,540 in nine African countries with another 750 in captivity worldwide. Live sales of surplus southern white rhino have helped reduce densities in populations where numbers were becoming too high, while at the same time generating significant revenue for formal conservation authorities as well as private owners. This has resulted in the creation of many new populations with good growth potential. Rhinos are charismatic megaherbivores and non-consumptive use of rhinos as ecotourism drawcards has also stimulated demand. Thus limited hunting, live sales and ecotourism together have created economic incentives to use land for wildlife rather than other less ecologically desirable land uses such as the production of sugar cane or timber. The creation of positive incentives for non-state land owners to conserve white rhinos has been particularly important. This is because all the state conservation areas in South Africa (the major range state) have now been stocked with white rhino and future expansion is now largely dependent on increasing numbers in privately and community owned areas. While the majority of southern white rhino are still conserved in State-managed reserves, an increasing number (3,400) are now conserved on private and community land.

Limited hunting of a small number of surplus male black rhino under a CITES quota has also started in South Africa. As was reported to CITES CoP 14,

while the primary rationale for this is to further metapopulation demographic and genetic conservation goals, this has also generated significant revenue much of which has gone to formal conservation agencies to help cross-subsidize their conservation efforts. However, when dealing with a *Critically Endangered* Species it is essential that conservation and not economics drive the selection of surplus males to be

hunted. To this end a revised black rhino hunting application assessment system has recently been drawn up by a Southern African Development Community Rhino Management Group Working Group, comprising South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, which follows more closely the

guidelines drawn up on this by the AfRSG several years ago. While it still has to be formally adopted the proposed system has been favourably received by formal conservation agencies in South Africa.

Dr Richard Emslie, Scientific Officer, African Rhino Specialist Group

Antelope

Working to improve monitoring of large mammals in hunting areas

A team of Antelope Specialist Group (ASG) members is developing an initiative to improve the monitoring of large mammals in Hunting Areas (HAs) within West and Central Africa. In these regions, HAs play a major conservation role by (i) often encompassing larger areas than National Parks and by (ii) acting as buffer zones and ecological corridors around and between National Parks. HAs of various legal status (*Secteurs de Chasse, Zones d'Intérêt Cynégétique, Zones Villageoises de Chasse*, etc.) lie either inside Protected Areas (PAs) gazetted as IUCN Category IV and VI, or outside PAs in areas classified as *zone ouverte* or *zone banale*.

The intention of this initiative is to provide support to HA managers and wildlife authorities to help (i) measure the sustainability of the consumptive use of game species in HAs and (ii) assess the contribution of HAs in conserving non-game species of particular conservation concern.

Limited hunting, live sales and ecotourism together have created economic incentives to use land for wildlife



Giant eland, *Taurotragus derbianus*, females on a hunting block in the northern Central African Republic with one of them collared