

ANNEX SA3

1.3 Conservation Strategy for the White Rhino (Revised) *GH*

A STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD POPULATIONS OF SOUTHERN WHITE RHINO *Ceratotherium simum simum* IN SOUTH AFRICA

VISION

MINDFUL OF ITS CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL ROLE IN THE CONSERVATION OF THE SOUTHERN WHITE RHINO, SOUTH AFRICA'S VISION FOR THE SUB-SPECIES IS OF:

- **VIALE POPULATIONS** IN NATURAL HABITAT THROUGHOUT ITS FORMER RANGE.
- **SHARED COMMITMENT** BY THE STATE, COMMUNITIES AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES.
- **SIGNIFICANT FLOW** OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS.
- **CONTINUED NATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY** IN CONSERVING WHITE RHINO.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

1. BIOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

Objective:

To achieve a medium-term metapopulation growth rate of at least 5%, and to ensure long-term genetic and demographic viability in at least the State and private/community sectors.

Aim to develop and maintain on State protected areas at least 2 populations of more than 1 000 rhinos, 3 greater than 100 and 10 greater than 50; and in private/communal ownership at least 3 populations greater than 100 and 5 greater than 50.

Rationale:

An Increase number of rhinos in additional populations under a full range of management models (i.e private, community and State) will add strength to the strategy from a security and genetic perspective, and provide an increased buffer against the effects of poaching. The management of populations for maximum growth also increases opportunities for rhinos to generate income that can be used to offset some of the high cost of their conservation (CITES Res Conf. 9.14), as well as building up numbers of surplus animals that can be used to establish additional populations.

4.09.2000 Spike to Pieter Botha: This doc. has been approved at minister & minister level & is currently with DEAT legal advisors - how to implement?

Actions:

- Estimate Ecological Carrying Capacity of each rhino area.
- Monitor rhinos to get accurate population estimates, measures of reproductive performance, condition, levels of disease, mortality levels etc. (*Preferably use techniques based on individual identification for all but the very large populations, e.g. more than 500 rhinos*).
- Manage for maximum productivity, through stocking at a maximum of 75% of estimated Ecological Carrying Capacity.
- Consider supplementary introductions to minimise the loss of genetic diversity.
- Assess suitable areas for the establishment of new populations.
- Aim to have a founder population of at least 20 animals.
- Translocate surplus animals (following recommended procedures and guidelines) to establish new populations in areas of secure and suitable habitats.
- Ensure rhinos that are translocated are free from any notifiable disease.
- Accelerate the establishment of key and important populations on private and communal land.
- Undertake applied research where necessary.
- It is recommended that a regular system of status reporting and synthesis of reports is instituted for key** (more than 50 rhinos) and important** rhino populations (21 - 50 rhinos) with a potential carrying capacity of >50 rhinos. [**As defined by the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group].

Indicators:

- Metapopulation growth rate of at least 5% per year.
- Achieve desired number of key and important populations.
- Status reporting operational. Routine use of appropriate monitoring techniques.
- Application of reliable tests for notifiable diseases such as bovine tuberculosis (TB).
- Number of populations of different sizes by management model.

2. SECURITY, PROTECTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Objective:

To reduce the effects of poaching on populations, and ensure the successful conviction and sentencing of rhino poachers and illegal traders.

Rationale:

The major threat to rhino numbers is poaching and illegal trade. These must be minimised to sustain population growth and maintain the economic, tourist, social and community value/benefits of white rhino.

Actions:

- Maintain pro-active crime prevention through the development and use of intelligence networks.
- Undertake threat analyses of rhino areas.
- Develop rhino protection action plans.
- Use effective procedures for more successful prosecutions, (e.g. use specialist investigators, expert witnesses to argue in aggravation of sentence in court, etc.)
- Adequately contain animals within secure areas.
- Maintain continuous monitoring of animals for security.
- Insert micro-chips in animals using a standard system (e.g. Trovan) when immobilising them.
- Establish and maintain good community relations.
- Implement a uniform horn registration system, with documented audit trails and subsequent safe storage and auditing of horn stockpiles.
- Maintain effective manpower density, training, equipment and deployment for anti-poaching activities.
- Monitor the effectiveness of field personnel.
- Field management should strive for good leadership, active involvement and supervision.

Indicators:

- Number of rhinos poached (corrected for effort).
- Ratio of poached to natural deaths.

- Proportion of poaching cases with subsequent convictions.
- Court cases won vs. lost, and sentences handed down.
- Total number of illegal incidents (not restricted to rhinos) associated with a given rhino population.
- Ratio of all illegal incidents to arrests.
- Results of staff assessments (skills, readiness, equipment maintenance etc.)
- Morale of staff as indicated by staff turnover, corruption, number of disciplinary hearings and number of staff implicated in illegal activities.

3. SUSTAINABLE USE

Objective:

To develop the socio-economic sustainability of white rhino conservation and the flow of benefits from sustainable use.

Rationale:

The expansion of rhino populations (especially on private and communal land) and the continuation of appropriate conservation management programmes require economic incentives to be maximised. CITES Res. Conf. 9.14 recommends that revenue derived from the use of rhino should be reinvested in rhino conservation programmes.

In the face of declining State contributions to nature conservation, economic returns from wildlife help to sustain conservation management programmes. They also provide the basis for investment by the State, communities and the private sector in further land and expanded populations.

Actions:

- Sell live rhinos to appropriate buyers.
- Promote and undertake controlled ethical hunting, including the application of an appropriate procedure for issuing permits, the avoidance of inappropriate hunting methods, and the marking and registration of trophies.
- Promote and undertake safe and responsible tourism opportunities, which do not negatively impact on wild rhinos, their habitats or other species.
- Facilitate investment in tourism facilities, based on rhino conservation, which provide a positive return, increased participation, and the development of new employment opportunities.

- Pursue a legal trade in rhino products in accordance with international agreements and conventions, including CITES.
 - *Promote a uniform national system for controlling a legal trade in rhino horn, including the identification, marking and registration of stocks.*
 - *Promote the development and adoption of national legislation.*
 - *Introduce a system for monitoring the impact of any reopening of a legal trade in rhino horn, on rhino populations in South Africa.*
 - *Promote incentives for the reinvestment of revenues from trade into rhino conservation.*
- Support the captive breeding or display of white rhino by reputable institutions.

Indicators:

- Number of inappropriate practices/contraventions.
- Proportion of horn stocks registered.
- Success in acquiring authority to trade in rhino products from CITES.
- Number of tourists attacked or injured by rhino.
- Number of rhinos injured or destroyed in tourist-related incidents.
- Proportion of tourism revenues dependent on rhino conservation.
- Revenue derived from existing trade, and prices achieved for rhinos and products.
- Number of transactions, and value of trade.

4. ANIMAL WELFARE

Objective:

To ensure that nationally accepted standards of animal welfare are implemented in white rhino conservation.

Rationale:

It is essential that South Africa maintain high animal welfare standards both for the sake of individual rhinos and for South Africa's standing internationally. This covers both the management and handling of rhinos in existing populations, as well as the evaluation of the final destination of relocated animals.

Actions:

- Apply national welfare standards during capture, translocation**, holding live sales and their subsequent management. [***Ensuring rhinos are exported only to acceptable destinations.*]

