

8 Danger for Tanzanian Rhinos

By Dr Rolf D Baldus

Tanzania is internationally respected for its wildlife conservation policies: its extensive network of protected areas covers around 25% of the total land area and consists of 13 national parks, 31 game reserves and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Wildlife management areas are an additional category of conservation range under community management. Protected Areas in Tanzania are set aside and managed under various authorities. Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) is the parastatal organization empowered to manage the national parks. The game reserves including the Selous (with close to 50,000km² one of the largest protected areas in the world, the oldest in Africa and a World Heritage Site since 1982) are under the Wildlife Division, which is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority is a separate parastatal.

There are mineral deposits in many of these areas. The Ministry of Energy and Minerals will issue prospecting and mining licenses regardless whether the area is protected or not, but makes it quite clear that the final responsibility for exploration and mining in national parks and game reserves lies with the respective conservation authority. Recently this Ministry granted thirteen licenses to three companies to prospect for precious stones in various parts of the Selous Game Reserve. All 13 prospecting concession areas granted are within or close to the rhino range.

Based on past experience there is a high probability that mining activities in the Selous would have negative consequences for the area's environment and its biodiversity, including endangering the growing elephant and rhino populations. Some projects in the 1980s like the building of a dam and a hydroelectric scheme brought up to 2,000 workers to Stiegler's Gorge at the Rufiji River and while prospecting for oil, thousands of kilometers of straight cut-lines were bulldozed through the Selous providing access for poaching gangs. Both projects greatly contributed to the near-complete loss of the rhino population which at the time was estimated to be around 3,000. They also facilitated the poaching of more than 50,000 elephants.

Presently the rhino population in the Selous is slowly increasing. The remnant population in the northern tourist sector has been under intensive protection and the 20 animals individually known animals are breeding. The rhinos are expanding their range and are increasingly seen by tourists and scouts. Five additional separate populations south of the Rufiji River receive protection through the anti-poaching units of the reserve. No signs of rhino poaching have been found in the last 15 years. However, there is small-scale elephant poaching within the rhino range.

The Selous management has greatly improved wildlife security in recent years, but it would be difficult to cope with a large influx of people and the activities connected with legal and illegal mining of precious stones and prospecting/exploitation for other minerals. The political responsibility for prospecting and mining in any protected area of Tanzania ultimately lies with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. An anomalous situation now

exists in which one conservation agency of this ministry has banned mineral prospecting whilst another appears to be about to permit it.

Unfortunately mining is presently not the only imminent danger for the Selous rhino population. The Tanzania Government plans to construct a large dam across the Ruvu River at the north-eastern edge of the Selous Game Reserve to supply Dar es Salaam with water (see also African Indaba Vol 4 No 1). The dam will not only destroy several hundred square kilometers of dry-season grazing land that is indispensable for the wildlife of the northern Selous but will also flood parts of the rhino range. Like 25 years ago this project will once again introduce a large workforce close to these specially protected rhinos.

9 Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Auction 2006

By Gerhard R Damm

The 2006 Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife 17th Game Auction held on Saturday 13 May at the Centenary Game Capture Centre in the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park realized R8.075 million (2005: 8,765 million Rand). Rated by the South African game industry as the best of its kind, the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Game Auction provides top quality animals to private land owners, thus disseminating excellent genetic stock throughout the country. 215 head of game were sold at the live auction and 1721 at the catalogue auction (2005: 286 respectively 905). A total of 760 impala sold in 2006 (2005: 145) and 100 springbok (2005: 0) made the bulk of the increase in heads of game sold in 2006 over 2005. The annual wildlife auction is the by-product of successful conservation management and is a practical manner of disposing of game surplus to the needs of the many protected areas under the management of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The revenue generated by the auction will supplement the operational budget of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

For the first time in its 18 year history, the auction offered two young male white rhinos from the Makhasa community conservation area. Under the leadership of Inkosi Simon Gumede, former member of the KZN Nature Conservation Board and current Chairman of the KZN Portfolio Committee on the Environment, the experiment of community conservation areas bears its first fruit. These two white rhinos jointly fetched R215,000 which will be used by the community to fund various projects.

White rhino fetched good average prices of just under R133,500 per animal for the 33 animals sold. This compares well to last year's South African average price for this species, which stood at just R95,200 and is also up on last year's Ezemvelo auction price of R99,323 (+34%). This development highlights again Ezemvelo's role as top supplier of rhino in the country.

The 24 hippo were sold at an average price of R15,700 – a significant drop of 44% when compared with last year's average price of R28,174. Ezemvelo, the main supplier of nyala in the country, reduced its offer of nyala family groups in 2006 to 244 animals (2005: 358 animals), yet the average revenue per animal dropped by almost 8% to R3,763. Compared with the aver-

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AFRICAN



INDABA

Volume 4, Issue No 4

eNewsletter

July 2006

Dedicated to the People and Wildlife of Africa

1 South Africa – Quo Vadis?

Proposed new norms and standards for hunting and game ranching enter hot discussion phase!

By Gerhard R Damm

On May 2nd the "national norms and standards for hunting" and the "protected species regulations" were published on the website of DEAT; the proposed regulations remained open for public comment until June 19th. A widespread national and international echo made itself heard immediately and DEAT will have to analyze a tremendous amount of public input. Not astonishing, considering the importance of South Africa as destination for the international hunter (around 8,000 will arrive in 2006) and the local demand for hunting (more than 50,000 South Africans are highly dedicated hunters, and another 150,000 hunt at least occasionally).

This reaction surprises even less, when considering that 20 million hectares (200,000 km² = 16.39% of the country's terrestrial surface (ca 1.220 million km²) are under private conservation and game management programs – versus a total of 7.5 million hectares (75,000 km² = 6.15% which fall under nationally and provincially protected areas. Hunting contributes to the South African economy at least 4.5 billion Rand a year. The contribution of the private and communal landowners, who dedicate skills and resources towards the conservation of the national natural heritage, certainly surpasses even this high figure.

Unfortunately, the reactions are not limited to concerned stakeholders like game ranchers, wildlife managers, conservationists and hunters, as well as to that section of the public which is knowledgeable. The international conflict-industry, represented by all shades of anti-hunting and animal rights organizations is having a heyday presenting their twisted interpretation of hunting as "socially unacceptable killing of animals" and the game rancher as the willing accomplice of the "killers". Such simplistic views and false interpretations serve to polarize public opinion without offering solutions. The recent elephant debate is another glaring example how public views can be manipulated.

In a pluralistic society conflicting views should foster debate, not create conflict. Coexistence rather than confrontation, tolerance rather than fanaticism are the key words. The use of natural resources, in particular their "extractive use" is considered by some a problem, by other a right – but the "anti-faction" self-righteously dismisses the obvious common ground which arises from sustainable and adaptive wildlife management methods. The anti-use faction has yet to deliver their "sustainable" model for a coexistence of wildlife and people. As a matter of fact, any substantial deviation from "incentive-driven-conservation" would most likely not only deal a death blow to commendable private and communal conservation efforts (and reconvert a good por-

tion of the 200,000 km² under private conservation management to industrial agriculture) but also seriously impact on the financial basis of national and regional protected area schemes (i.e. Transfrontier Parks).

The concept of regulating wildlife management with comprehensive "national norms and standards" is correct. The preliminary analysis of the drafts shows, however, less than satisfactory results. A balanced approach of science-based natural resource stewardship and user-friendly regulations within functioning administrative systems are of utmost importance for a National Conservation Strategy. I hope, therefore, that DEAT considers the constructive criticism of hunters and game ranchers.

International agreements (CITES, CBD) and multinational organizations (UNEP, IUCN) recognize the conservation value of sustainable extractive and non-extractive uses as valid land use options with ecological, social and economic benefits. It has been acknowledged that pure protectionism, originating in the colonial and post colonial preservation fortress mentality, pro-

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