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Transportation of the black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*

P. S. Rogers

Also see *Transportation of the White Rhinoceros*, this Section.

How to transport the black rhinoceros

As in the case of white rhinos, black rhinos are all crated and transported individually. The Natal Parks Board recommends transporting boma-trained animals only, for two main reasons. First, the initial aggressiveness of the black rhino immediately after capture is such that the journey immediately after capture should be as short as possible. Second, unlike white rhinos, black rhinos are completely awake after administration of the antidote, and are thus stressed by the sudden exposure to the strange sights, sounds and smells of the crate.

Because black rhinos adapt so much more readily to captivity than white rhinos, it is possible to transport them after a boma-training period of only four weeks. A boma-training period of at least six weeks is, however, recommended. The advantages of boma training white rhinos also apply to black rhinos.

Loading

The loading procedure for black rhinos is exactly the same as for white rhinos with a few exceptions.

The black rhino is smaller and is more susceptible to etorphine than the white rhino. The recommended doses are:

Adult	0,25 mg
Sub-adult	0,125 mg
Juvenile	0,0625 mg

Black rhinos often refuse to enter a crate. They stand at the entrance to the crate with their legs splayed, head down, and salivating. If this occurs, a cloth is used to cover the animal's eyes and a rope is slipped over its head. The animal is then pulled into the crate while being guided and supported by an attendant on either side.

If it appears that the animal may go down, nalorphine may be administered at the same dosage rate as in white rhinos (see *Transportation of the White Rhinoceros*, this Section). This becomes necessary much more frequently with black rhinos than with white rhinos.

Transportation

In the author's experience it has never been necessary to tranquillize boma trained black rhinos *en route* to their new destination. They travel extremely well and usually eat large amounts of lucerne during the journey. This seems to keep them quiet: for this reason it is advisable to take along a good supply of lucerne for the journey. Remember to supply adequate bedding.

If tranquillization does become necessary, the recommended doses of azaperone are as follows:

Adult	100 mg
Sub-adult	50 mg
Juvenile	25 mg

These doses may be increased if necessary. Rather start off with low doses: one does not want an animal going down in the crate.

Off-loading

Black rhinos are usually off-loaded more easily than white rhinos. It has been found that if they are allowed to disembark in their own time, which is usually not very long, they are less aggressive in the receiving pens. After disembarkation they often run around and perform for a while. As in the case of white rhinos, a cloth or the handle of a prodder may have to be used to get the animal out of the crate. One seldom has to use the prodder itself. Unnecessary or excessive use of a cattle prodder to get a reluctant animal to disembark will merely aggravate the situation.

Spectators, movement, and noise at the off-loading site should be restricted to an absolute minimum as these factors further aggravate the animal. As with white rhinos, it is essential to separate a cow and her calf on disembarkation. The cow's behaviour should be closely monitored before reuniting the two – this may only take 10 minutes if the cow is calm, but longer if the cow is very agitated.

Release

See *Transportation of the White Rhinoceros*, this Section. In the case of black rhinos it is essential that they are taking in sufficient local browse before being released. It is not necessary to reduce their daily lucerne quota before release.