

Proceedings of a Workshop on

**Conservation of African rhinos on
private land through utilization**

Onderstepoort, South Africa
8 & 9 October 1999

African Rhino Owners Association (AROA)



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Foreword

This workshop was made possible by funding from WWF-East Africa. The aims of the workshop were to formulate guidelines for and identify problems of white rhino conservation and utilisation on private game ranches in Southern Africa. The latest national census of white rhinos on private land, the results of which are reported here, shows a healthy growth in the population, which should reach 2000 animals in the year 2000. New markets should be developed elsewhere in the world to ensure the future of white rhinos in South Africa. I thank Mr Alan Ainslie for the cover illustration and Dr Piet Mulder, Prof Banie Penzhorn and Mr Daan Buijs for acting as facilitators of the three discussion groups.

J G du Toit

Chairman: African Rhino Owners Association

APPENDIX 1

DISCUSSION GROUP 1 : A SUBSTITUTE FOR AROA?

AROA presently has little output besides surveys. It is also very low-key and some rhino owners don't know of its existence. It therefore doesn't offer much value for members' money.

Owners need a professional organisation (i.e. a company) which can get the industry in order, especially to register all horn stocks.

Without having our house in order, we would never get to resume legal trade, which will eventually reduce the value of rhino stock (presently R210 million, at R109 000 per animal). the supply of live animals will increase and the demand will drop.

The company should focus on conservation; a steady income is needed, since game farms compete for land with other agricultural interests.

Care should also be taken not to put interested groups into two camps: the conservationists (mainly State) versus the users (mainly private). Good relations, as is now the case, should always be maintained.

The company needs sufficient income to employ a full-time, competent administrator and lobbyist.

(Discussion group facilitator: Daan Buijs)

APPENDIX 2

DISCUSSION GROUP 2 : MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

VISION:

Viable populations of black and white rhinos in suitable habitat throughout their original range (which includes private, state-owned and communal land)

IDENTIFICATION:

- Identification of individuals should be the overall aim.
- Identification of individuals is essential in small, intensively managed populations.
- In large populations, individuals should be marked whenever they are handled.
- The following identification systems are recommended:
 - ear notching (should be standardised)
 - microchip
 - body (site should be standardised)
 - horn (how practical is this?)
 - photographs
 - DNA-typing (from skin collected when ear is notched)
 - paired samples; one in a central reference facility

MONITORING:

- Ideally, population monitoring should be based on individual recognition
- Ideally, a standardised annual reporting system should be instituted for all populations
- Record-keeping of translocation of individuals in a central registry

TRANSLOCATION/INTRODUCTION:

- A manual should be published containing detailed information on translocation of rhinos and the requirements for establishing rhino populations in new areas.
- Through experience has been gained through trial and error; AROA should drive a project to collate this information for the manual

HORN:

- Individual horns should be identifiable
- Registry should be kept by AROA (concern about confidentiality if kept by government agency)
- One-channel marketing
- Preservation of horns in storage

REPRODUCTION:

- Hunting of males: sharing of information to facilitate freezing of sperm
- "Rent-a-Bull", i.e. exchange of bulls to prevent/minimise inbreeding - essential that central registry is kept
- Criteria for hunting of females should be investigated

DISEASES:

- AROA to promote research towards development of a reliable test for tuberculosis in rhinos

HUNTING:

- Hunting of males: sharing of information to facilitate freezing of sperm
- AROA to state its position on hunting of black rhinos

GENERAL:

- AROA should retain close contact with the Rhino Management Group of Southern Africa and operate according to principles and goals of national black rhino plans
- AROA to promote research into genetics of small populations of rhinos
- AROA should be pro-active in disseminating information

(Discussion group facilitator: Banie Penzhorn)

APPENDIX 3

DISCUSSION GROUP 3: LEGISLATION, POLICY AND SECURITY

LEGISLATION:

Current legislation inadequate

- Fragmented with difference in approach by provinces;
- Capacity of support systems (Justice, provinces, etc.) suspect and deteriorating;
- Uniform national legislation preferred option, lacking at present;
- New legislation should cater for incentives (trade and conservation) and social and ethical responsibilities, where applicable;
- Taken note and support project to promulgate Endangered Species Act.

2. Stakeholder involvement

- Intricate and restrictive legislation can alienate landowners; realise, however, that some rules mandatory in terms of international conventions and treaties;
- Stakeholder (landowners) to be involved in legislative process (also CITES)

3. Specific issues to be legislated for

- Mandatory legislation of rhino populations;
- Microchip marking of live animals and parts and derivatives **entering trade**. Special attention necessary when considering worked and cut-up products. Marking of all live animals to be encouraged, but always considering the welfare of the animal;
- Mandatory marking of all rhino horn in private possession. Agreed that this is necessary, but legislator must consider all options including amnesty, costs and maintenance of registers;
- Safekeeping of rhino horn under similar rules as applicable to fire-arms. Deemed as impractical and "overkill" at this stage

POLICY:

Code of conduct as regard to conservation, utilisation and trade in rhino horn is vital yet it may result in internal disagreement (example: bow-hunting). In this regard the sale and hunting thereafter of trophy animals to be included if deemed necessary;

Clear channels of communication and consultation between owners and authorities should be established and maintained;

International trade in rhino products (excluding horn) should be investigated. The current situation is not clear;

The introduction of subspecies not indigenous to South Africa should be investigated and policy guidelines formulated;

Female (rhino) hunting an issue to be considered and policy guideline imperative.

SECURITY:

Incentives in legislation to enhance security should be considered;

Formal and informal assistance to landowners and authorities imperative. In this regard training courses, advice and manuals are measures to be considered;

The suggested reaction plan and emergency plan are accepted and should be initiated.

(Discussion group facilitator: Piet Mulder)