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| ABSTRACTS |
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CAPTURE, POST-CAPTURE CARE AND TRANSPORTATION OF WHITE RHINO
Ceratotherium simum

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The white rhino capture technique as employed by the Natal Parks Board involves the use of a helicopter, two follow-up vehicles and two field recovery vehicles equipped with rhino crates. This enables the capture team to capture two rhino at a time which has two distinct advantages. Firstly, one can speed up the operation making it more economical, and secondly two rhino running together can be captured, resulting in them adapting much better to captivity than individual animals, with cow/calf combinations doing the best.

Drugs used for capture

| | Etorphine hydrochloride | Fentanyl citrate | Hyoscine hydrobromide |
|-----------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Adult | 1,0 - 1,5 mg | 30 mg | 25 mg |
| Sub-adult | 0,5 - 0,75 mg | 20 mg | 12 mg |
| Juvenile | 0,25 mg | 12 mg | 12 mg |

It is preferable to first boma train any animals which have to be transported for more than 12 hours. These animals are first put into large pens (the bigger the better, but at least 20 x 20 m) to make their difficult adaptation to captivity a little easier. The main problem encountered is that of non-feeding. Our experience is that 10 - 20% of animals have to be released after a maximum period of 10 days due to them refusing to eat.

If the animal starts eating, it is kept for approximately 3 weeks in the larger pen before being moved into a smaller (12 x 6 m) pen which has a crate attached to it. The animal's feed is moved closer and closer to the crate, until it is eventually feeding in the crate. The philosophy behind this technique is to tame the animal down and acquaint it gradually with being confined.

An adult rhino's daily diet would consist of a bale of *Eragrostis teff* (ca. 25 kg), ca. 2 kg of lucerne (not too much) and 5 kg of horse cubes. This is all divided into a morning and evening ration. The rhino is kept in the smaller pen for at least 3 weeks before being crated. The total boma training period is therefore at least 6 weeks. The animal is then darted with a small dose of Etorphine hydrochloride and enticed into the crate which is then loaded onto a truck. It is usually not necessary to tranquillize the animal en route, especially if the trip is going to be less than 12 hours, however occasionally Azaperone tartrate may have to be administered if an animal starts fighting its crate.

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