

Project ZR0009

**GARAMBA NATIONAL PARK PROJECT, CONSERVATION OF THE NORTHERN
WHITE RHINOCEROS
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Report July-December 1997

SUMMARY SHEET

Project ZR0009

Garamba National Park Project, Conservation of the Northern White Rhinoceros Democratic Republic of Congo

Project Start Date: March 1984

Project End Date: 2005

Report prepared by: Dr Kes Hillman Smith

Reporting period: July - December 1997

Long term goal: Conservation of the Northern White Rhinoceros in the wild in Garamba National Park

Focus of the project for the fiscal year July 1997 to June 1998:

- ▶ Assist ICCN to stop the massive poaching that has moved down through the park pushed by the war in Sudan and exacerbated by events associated with the Liberation War in the DRC and to protect the remaining rhinos. In order to do this and for the long term future of the park and the rhinos and for the position of WWF in the new country:
- ▶ Strengthen the relationship with the new government and develop collaboration and effective support with the Ministry of Environment and Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)
- ▶ Continue to provide benefits and incentives to ICCN staff in Garamba.
- ▶ Start to rehabilitate the park and to re-establish effective functioning, through re-equipping, training, technical and logistical support and strategy development
- ▶ Carry out a series of rhino recces and a full Park survey to assess the impact of events on the rhinos and other mammal populations
- ▶ Begin the process of development through planning, raising support and contributing to the strategic planning workshops for ICCN and the future for Garamba.
- ▶ Implement phase 1 of the integration of community participation in sustainable conservation

Developments during the period:

- ▶ Round Table Meeting in Kinshasa and development of strong collaborative base with new Government and important Embassies
- ▶ Request for major support from the President, through the Minister of Environment
- ▶ Validation of previous WWF agreement to enable import of equipment
- ▶ Development of proposal to support rehabilitation of the park, for funding by USFWS through US Embassy Kinshasa
- ▶ Development of proposal for major re-training programme for the guards and obtaining of agreement on it from Ministry of Environment.
- ▶ Purchase of the equipment needed to rehabilitate basic anti-poaching operations
- ▶ Delegation from Kinshasa to examine the situation in Garamba and take action re.military
- ▶ Three missions by Project Leader to support and assess the work in Garamba, continual radio back-up
- ▶ Replacement of 75 untrained military with 12 re-trained military in occupation at Nagero
- ▶ Re-activation of the previous anti-poaching programme, but without equipment or radio back-up

- ▶ Increase in poaching and presence of poachers in southern sector
- ▶ Leave and return by Logistics Officer
- ▶ Presentation of papers on the situation at International Ranger Federation Congress, Costa Rica and Congress on Conservation and Development, Turkey, with external funding
- ▶ Work on data analysis, monitoring and papers
- ▶ Development of proposal for community integration in sustainable conservation
- ▶ Following the Round Table meeting, negotiation by WWF International for placement of a Technical Advisor in Kinshasa to help the ICCN and Ministry develop new strategies and to assess and manage the problems of protected areas from the Direction General as well as from the field

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Developments and activities in coming months:

- ▶ Mission to Kinshasa by PL, PO and Reg. Rep. to obtain equipment exonerations, discuss strategy for facilitation of the anti-poaching training programme and the forthcoming meeting with the President of the Republic.
- ▶ Flying equipment in to Garamba as soon as exonerations come through.
- ▶ Support to anti-poaching and park management by PL
- ▶ Mission to Kinshasa by CMR as part of the delegation to meet President Kabila.
- ▶ Mission to Kinshasa by CMR to contribute to the strategic planning workshop of ICCN
- ▶ Facilitation of the implementation of the anti-poaching training programme for the guards
- ▶ Implement refreshment monitoring training programmes
- ▶ Support to monitoring by CMR and re-development of Rhino and Law Enforcement Training Manuals
- ▶ Development of data analysis systems
- ▶ Intensive rhino reces April, May and June
- ▶ Systematic aerial sample count, April.

Progress to date: Less than 50% satisfied. Events move so slowly, despite our best efforts.

Help from WWF: High level request to the President for military intervention to help resolve the problem of rebels and deserters carrying out massive poaching for meat, ivory and rhino horn in the park.

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WWF Project ZR0009
GARAMBA NATIONAL PARK PROJECT, CONSERVATION OF THE NORTHERN
WHITE RHINOCEROS
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Project Start and End Dates: March 1984 and ongoing.
Report prepared by: Dr Kes Hillman Smith and Fraser Smith
Reporting period: July - December 1997

LONG TERM GOAL: **Conservation of the Northern White Rhinoceros in Garamba National Park**

ACTIVITIES;

To achieve this goal under normal circumstances, activities are based around 7 main outputs:

1. ▶ Strengthening of political and institutional support.
2. ▶ Developing the personnel capacity
3. ▶ Implementation of strategic law enforcement
4. ▶ Logistical support to park operations
5. ▶ Continuation and development of rhino monitoring and research
6. ▶ Maintenance and development of law enforcement monitoring
7. ▶ Initiation of a community outreach programme

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT CONTEXT:

1997 has seen the change from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The effects of looting, requisitioning and military occupation have led to major restrictions on the amount and effectiveness of anti-poaching. As a result, the poaching, which has until now been largely for meat and fuelled by the war in adjacent Sudan, and which was already too much to be handled by the guards with current resources and training alone, has taken off and spread down into the rhino area..

The main objective for the reporting period and the whole fiscal year was therefore to work towards stopping this poaching, regaining control of the park and saving the rhinos, as follows:.

OBJECTIVES JULY 1997-JUNE 1998:

- ▶ Assist ICCN to stop the massive poaching that has moved down through the park pushed by the war in Sudan and exacerbated by events associated with the Liberation War in the DRC and to protect the remaining rhinos.

In order to achieve this and for the long term future of the park and the rhinos and for the

position of WWF in the new country :

- ▶ Strengthen the relationship with the new government and develop collaboration and effective support with the Ministry of Environment and Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)
- ▶ Continue to provide benefits and incentives to the ICCN staff in Garamba
- ▶ Start to rehabilitate the park and to re-establish effective functioning, through re-equipping, training, technical and logistical support and strategy development
- ▶ Carry out a series of rhino reces and a full Park survey to assess the impact of events on the rhinos and other mammal populations
- ▶ Begin the process of development through planning, raising support and contributing to the strategic planning workshops for ICCN and the future for Garamba.
- ▶ Implement phase 1 of the integration of community participation in sustainable conservation

Pre-requisites and changes

In order to do this however, there were certain pre-requisites :

- ▶ A new government and new officials were in charge and old agreements were potentially invalid
- ▶ 75 recently recruited military were in occupation at the park headquarters and military movements continued to use any remaining vehicles, fuel or equipment, precluding the security for bringing any more in.
- ▶ Guards initially were disarmed but later carried out joint patrols with military, who were in control of the weapons, but who did not have the experience of the guards.
- ▶ The poaching problem was carried out largely by trained military deserters, had strategically important and political implications and was on too large a scale to be dealt with by a conservation NGO alone.
- ▶ Training programmes, re-equipping and other proposed actions needed to be developed and approved and recruited or implemented.
- ▶ Anti-poaching and support to park staff needed to be kept going under circumstances of insecurity
- ▶ Monitoring needed to be kept going with many staff having left and computers and other equipment damaged by events
- ▶ Investigations and revisions were necessary in field where staff had been involved in looting.

The project personnel could still not be based full time in the field and needed to concentrate all efforts on dealing with these various problems in order to re-establish effective conservation and save the rhinos and other wildlife. It necessitated modifying roles to tackle these issues and to facilitate and assist ICCN in the process of rehabilitation. If emergency action can be taken quickly and effectively enough the process of development with fresh strategies based on past experience and the release on so many past financial restrictions holds challenging prospects for conservation of this and other protected areas in the DRC.

REPORT ON PROGRESS:

1. Timetable of activities from July 1997 to December 1997

July CMR to Kinshasa to make preliminary contacts in collaboration with WCS and GIC representatives, then PL, Regional Representatives Eastern and Central Africa, and Director General of WWF joined for Round Table meeting of donors, Ministry of Environment and other key Ministries, ICCN and key Embassies. Collaboration was pledged between donors, and the government for the rehabilitation and development of conservation in the DRC, both at protected areas level and at the more central strategic planning and support level. The serious situation in the four World Heritage Sites was presented and the Minister undertook to present the picture to the president and request his intervention to stop the poaching. (Minutes were in Annex 1 of the previous report, July 1997) The old Accord de Siege was re-drafted and a request made for interim validation of the existing agreement.

August

Proposal developed for re-equipment and submitted to US Embassy, Kinshasa at their request. They submitted it for emergency end of year funds to US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Proposal developed for in field anti-poaching training programme to be carried out by Game Rangers Association of Africa. Equipment and suppliers investigated.

PL to Garamba, where poaching found to be worse (63 dead hippos along Garamba river) but one baby rhino born to F6 and named *Congo*.

September

CMR & JP d'Huart to Kinshasa. Proposal for training programme presented and later agreed in principle and in January agreed in full. Letter of validation of existing agreement signed.

PL to International Ranger Federation Congress, where interest was generated in the need for an international "Conservation Force", possibly under a UN umbrella to come in to fulfill training and support needs in conservation areas in times of man-made crises including war. Investigation and follow up on suitable equipment. Data analysis and paper writing.

October

Delegation of PDG and Conseiller Admin et Finance au Ministre ECNT to Garamba with PL to assess situation and deal with problems of equipment, personnel and of military. Young little trained military later replaced with 12 re-trained military based at Nagero. ICCN staff in control of own weapons and equipment and taking full charge of anti-poaching. Preparation of material and development of ideas for a modified approach to project operation.

November

Purchase of anti-poaching equipment in South Africa and negotiation of transport all the way. Jack Greeff, the chosen anti-poaching training chief instructor took another job and was no longer available, nor were others investigated. GRA stated that they were no

longer able to carry out the in field training due to policy decisions in South Africa. An audience with the President of the Republic was granted for WWF. It will be held in February 1998.

December

CMR to WWF-Netherlands and video conference with WWF-UK to help rhino fund-raising campaigns. Eight days leave for CMR, 7 for PL. Further revisions to USFWS proposal as requested by WWF-US and its re-submission by kind collaboration with WWF-US in December. PL to Garamba to pay bonuses and verify the situation.

Throughout the period, basic anti-poaching and monitoring has continued at Garamba and radio contact with and frequent support visits by project staff have also been maintained. The Logistics Officer was in situ most of the time except for two months leave in August and September. Data analysis, reporting and proposal development and correspondence, have also continued throughout.

OUTPUTS

1. Strengthening of political and institutional support.

At the start of the period, poaching was out of control in the park and the existing facilities and level of training insufficient to counteract it effectively enough, in addition a new government, Ministers and PDGs were being appointed. Much of the focus of attention therefore was on developing a strong collaboration with the new government and moving as fast as possible on all the procedures that would enable effective field action again. At the end of the year many of these had been achieved, although the training programme was held up by lack of suitable people who were able to come.

Detailed Trip Reports are lodged with WWF, if required, for specific information on each visit or major activity.

The validation of the old agreement allows for the re-equipping of the anti-poaching operations of the park. The visit of the President Delegeue General (PDG) a.i. and the Administrative Advisor to the Minister, to Garamba was a very positive move towards sorting out the problems of personnel that had been involved in looting, trying to recover vehicles from the military and resolving some of the problems of large numbers of un-trained and poorly supported military misusing the park and facilities. The Ministry and ICCN are very aware of the problems, but often their actions are restricted by inadequate funds. The agreement of WWF to post a Technical Advisor, with financial support at the head-quarters recognises this need and will contribute considerably towards helping develop a functional conservation strategy for the country and strengthening the management of the protected areas. The long term experience of the project in working with ICCN at the field level means that a valuable contribution can be made to the broader planning and implementation of national conservation as well as of Garamba itself, further validating the long term investment.

It is further proposed that as a means of addressing some of the management problems that were raised during earlier management planning workshops based on long term experience, the system

of a project document agreed on a contractual basis with ICCN and the Ministry should be re-established, but with stronger rights to the project based on their increased higher ratio of financial contribution.

2. Developing the personnel capacity

Dr Mbayma has completed his Msc at Durrel Institute of Conservation Ecology and is currently in Kinshasa helping to promote issues there. There has been a focus on selection for promotion in responsibility, of good guards from among those working at Garamba who have proved themselves both in the field and as having been loyal during the periods of civil strife and looting. The PDG has chosen to transfer any high ranking staff who carried out looting for their own profit. It has been agreed verbally that a few suitably qualified personnel could be employed by the project on a trial basis with a view to their later integration into ICCN if satisfactory, and that there could be promotion from within existing personnel.

A major anti-poaching training programme was developed, proposed and agreed to by the government, in order by to help support and motivate the guards to effectively counteract the current massive poaching, while also developing their capacity to continue to maintain control in the long term. This was aimed to be followed up by a conservation and monitoring training session, when the initial field action is dealt with, but basic rhino and law enforcement monitoring will continue as an integral part of any field action even before this.

3. Contribution to the implementation of strategic law enforcement.

The plan to hit back at the poaching through training and support to the guards in order to save the remaining rhinos and wildlife was to be put into effect as soon as permissions were in place and it was possible to bring equipment and people back in, at the very latest by the start of the dry season in the new year.

The elements are:

- ▶ An effective field operation of anti-poaching with the ICCN guards and supporting personnel, coupled with or as part of
- ▶ A major anti-poaching training programme in the field, with the practical work involving anti-poaching patrols
- ▶ Simultaneous rehabilitation with all the equipment and supplies necessary for effective anti-poaching.
- ▶ Operation from field bases and a strengthening of these, when they have been re-captured, both to be in the centre of action and to protect equipment from requisitioning.
- ▶ Development of the use of mobile field bases using the new vehicles ordered.
- ▶ Streamlining of the law enforcement monitoring and maintenance of records throughout all field operations in order to measure success.
- ▶ Reinforcement training in the monitoring

- ▶ Evaluation of results of first anti-poaching training and a re-training programme in the contrasting long grass season.

The training programme was to have been carried out under the auspices of the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRA), based on the GRA/WWF Training Needs Assessment carried out in January 1997 (Greeff, 1997) . However in view of the serious situation which necessitated some leadership operation in the field with the guards, the GRA were unable to bring the type of people qualified to do this and another group has been found who could, under the auspices of GRA, possibly undertake the training programme.

Because of its internal policy on law enforcement, WWF cannot, however, directly pay anyone other than the ICCN staff for participation in anti-poaching and therefore other donors need to contribute directly with the government if this type of action is requested by them. WWF will continue to support the ICCN operations of the park, including extra emergency support as necessary. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is providing a major grant to contribute to the major re-equipment programme that has been necessary in view of the losses. The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) continues to support the bonuses and supplementary salaries of the personnel and their medical costs. Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) continues to support the aircraft, which is vital to the whole operation, for transport, reconnaissance, survey work and medical evacuation.

Implementation of the operation is therefore delayed, but the situation has been presented to the President in mid-February and his full support and that of the Ministry of Environment has been given.

4 Logistical Support to Park Operations

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the kind support of the US Ambassador and his staff in Kinshasa, is giving substantial financial support to the purchase of equipment and vehicles to replace those lost and to develop the new anti-poaching strategy. WWF(UK) has been able to put forward more money than previous annual budgets and WWF(Netherlands) are contributing to enable purchase of the rest of the equipment. Most of the field equipment has now been purchased and is waiting for clearance of the exoneration documents from Kinshasa. (Annex 1)

The Logistical Officer has been overseeing WWF and vehicle maintenance daily activities at the park and the PL and CMR have been in constant radio contact. The PL has flown in regularly with salaries and spares for vehicles and has carried out limited aerial reconnaissance work as fuel stocks allowed. The PL and CMR have been carrying out all the logistical support operations necessary with back up from the Regional Office, and for this reason as well as security and lack of any equipment or fuel to work with in field, it has been necessary to be based out of Nairobi.

5. Continuation and development of rhino monitoring and research

The guards have continued to record all rhino observations in the standard format throughout all the problems and these have been summarised by Giningayo and Tamwasi. Without the photocopier or computers, all forms have been reproduced and sent from Nairobi by the CMR.

Two rhinos are known to have been killed during the year. These were the young male Channel 2 in March and a horn that was recovered from a poaching camp on the Willidibazagara in November. The horn appears to be a second horn of a female identified as possibly F4, *Boletina* or F1 *Mama Moke*. Almost certainly more have died however.

But at least two calves have been born. In August a calf was born to F6 *Pacque* and near the end of the year a calf was born to F3 *Kuni*. Both of these have been seen on a brief recce flight in early February, as well as 4DF *Minzoto* and her calf *Mbolifue* and the sub-adult males *Elikeya* and *Bonne Annee*. The Table summarises the observations for the year. Sixty eight observations of rhinos were made, comprising 145 rhino sightings of 25 individuals. Two of the 25 were known to have been poached during the year and that number includes only one of the afore-mentioned births. The calf born to F3 must have been born at the end of 1997 but was not seen until early 1998 and therefore does not come into this set of observations. Thirty eight of the 68 observations were from the air, when the aircraft was able to be there. Only 8 rhinos in 4 observations were seen from the ground in the long grass period at the end of the year following the flights in August. Accurate numbers of rhinos remaining will not be known until we have been able to carry out several series of rhino recce flights, when the fuel gets to Garamba.

Climatic measurements, which are necessary to back up the basic monitoring and research, continued as normal throughout the year and the Table PARAMETRES DU CLIMAT in Annex records the summary for the year. Despite the effects of *El Nino* elsewhere in Africa the rainfall is marginally below average, as shown on the table and graph of rainfall for the period 1986 to 1997.

6. Maintenance and Development of Law Enforcement Monitoring

Law enforcement monitoring has also continued throughout the period despite the absences of project personnel. This has been excellent in demonstrating the value of the system and the motivation and training of the personnel. It has enabled a measurement of the situation, which coupled with mapping from monitoring and from surveys makes it possible to present the picture in an effective way to potential funding bodies and supporters, and will give a baseline from which to measure success of further operations. These results have also been summarised monthly by Giningayo and others and records have been kept at the central store, on which payment of bonuses can be calculated.

The maps demonstrate the distribution of poaching and contacts throughout the year compared with the previous year, and the graphs show the patrol effort and results during 1997 compared with preceding years. The evolution of the poaching in recent years despite the efforts put in clearly demonstrates the need for really effective outside intervention and specialised training if the park and rhinos are to be saved.

The series of maps of the distribution of armed contacts reproduced in the previous report show

how the poaching had been moving down through the park until it had reached the rhino and elephant concentration areas. The map of the distribution of contacts (*accrochages*) throughout 1997 has been plotted with red stars for the poachers identified as Sudanese and yellow for those identified as Zairois/Congolese. All the latter are grouped around the south east corner of the park and clearly originate from Faradje. These are most frequently the groups that are also after ivory. In 100% of the cases where motive for poaching has been identified by the guards, meat is recorded as the motive. In five of these cases, ivory is also a factor, but in no cases was ivory taken without meat. The type of animals killed also reflects this motive, as shown in the table of species recorded poached. The results indicate that the poaching is largely driven by a major meat supply system. This is advantageous in terms of control, because the poachers have to take the time to butcher the animals and smoke the meat and the camps that they make to do this make them far easier to detect than if they just moved in and out for ivory or rhino horn. An increase of the ivory and rhino horn traded across the border with Uganda has been reported, however (Gregoire Malamas pers comm.), as has been an increase in the ivory passing through Khartoum from the south (Bradley Martin, pers.comm).

There were 53 armed contacts recorded in 1997 compared with the same number in 1996. However, the amount of patrol coverage in 1997 as measured by patrol days was one third of that in 1996. An examination of the ratio between contacts and patrol days from 1993 to 1997 demonstrates a 250% increase in poaching in 1997 over the previous year. Increasing size of poaching gangs has provoked an increasing size of anti-poaching teams. In the first half of the year patrols involved in contacts averaged 14 guards, in the second half, the average was 22. Few large patrols leads to very inefficient coverage. The large groups of poachers are composed of hunters and porters and the number of poachers carrying weapons is always far less than the number of guards who are all armed. The records of rounds used per contact also indicates an inefficient use of ammunition. The situation is snowballing into an impasse that can only be resolved by specialised anti-poaching training and motivation.

In order to measure the full effect of the poaching and other events on the park and large mammals and to map distribution of poaching camps and other human effects, a general aerial survey of the park is planned for April 1998.

7. Initiation of a Community Outreach Programme

Although the project has long been working towards developing positive community integration into conservation, it has generally been considered a low priority. The events of the year, when the system of civil authority broke down and the law of the traditional chiefs took over, clearly demonstrates that this is not just a luxury. Long term conservation of the natural resources of the park and buffer reserves needs a positive involvement of the local communities based on their existing, powerful and well respected traditional authority systems. It is a high priority with ICCN and the new government.

A framework for starting implementation of this aspect has been developed by Emmanuel de Merode in conjunction with the project personnel, the local chiefs and a proposed Programme Coordinator, Mr Claude Gambale, a local Azande, well educated, experienced and motivated,

who is currently employed by UNHCR. It has been proposed that the initial phase of implementing such a project would be for Gambale to be contracted on a consultancy basis to facilitate the implementation of the first pilot project in the scheme, examine the best ways of implementing similar schemes in other *collectivites* and *groupements* in the Reserves and to put together the details necessary to develop a full scale project proposal. Funding possibilities to be pursued in the long term include the UNDP/GEF project, the Dutch government and a link into the CARPE project. Immediate support may come from a small grant scheme through the British Embassy in Kinshasa, as well as from existing WWF funds. It is proposed that implementation begins in February 1998.

WORKPLAN, REVISED IN VIEW OF CHANGING EVENTS

January

- ▶ PL, PO & Regional Rep. EARPO to Kinshasa to present funding constraints and needs to Minister and discuss a plan, and to finalise the exonerations.
- ▶ Report and proposal writing, correspondence and data entry and analysis.
- ▶ Logistical support to developing operations.

February

- ▶ Visit to Garamba to assess the situation and reports of rebel activity building up there.
- ▶ CMR, RR of CARPO and DG WWF to audience with President Kabila, with Minister and reps. of ICCN to try to get a go ahead on law enforcement training and joint action.
- ▶ Project development with Gambale of Community Project

March

- ▶ CARPE meeting, & GEF and other planning meetings?
- ▶ Implementation of anti-poaching training and support
- ▶ Rhino survey
- ▶ Equipping and installation of radio relay and system
- ▶ Implementation of Community project

April

- ▶ Systematic Sample count of park
- ▶ AfRSG meeting
- ▶ Rhino recce
- ▶ Anti-poaching training and re-equipping on-going

May

- ▶ Anti-poaching training and reinforcement on-going
- ▶ Monitoring training programme
- ▶ Rhino recce

June

- ▶ On-going support to law enforcement
- ▶ Rhino recce
- ▶ Evaluation and planning workshop