



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY RHINO MANAGEMENT GROUP INAUGURAL MEETING

KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE NAIROBI SAFARI WALK

11<sup>th</sup> May 2009



**From L-R: seated;** Lakew Berhanu, Fidel Ruzigandekwe, Mohammed H. Madehele, Julius Kipng'etich, Moses Mapesa, Rajan Amin, Anne Kahiha, Angie Genade. **From L-R: front row standing;** Rob Brett, Alastair Nelson, Geoffrey Chege, Patrick Omondi, Peter Leitoro, Samuel Kasiki, Patrick Atimnendi, James Sindiyo. **From L-R: back row standing;** Isaac Lekool, Richard Kock, Benson Okita-Ouma, Elema Halake, Francis Fondo, Jonathan Kirui, Amiyo T. Amiyo, Benjamin Kavu

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**Compiled and edited by:**  
Benson Okita-Ouma, Richard Kock, Rajan Amin and Samuel Kasiki

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### **Organization of the EAC-RMG inaugural meeting**

The meeting was chaired by Julius Kipng'etich and co-chaired by Moses Mapesa. The facilitator was Richard Kock, while the master of ceremony was Patrick Omondi. The meeting's logistics and invitations were coordinated by the KWS rhino programme office, in particular, Benson Okita, Linus Kariuki and Pauline Ndaka. Flora and Fauna International, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Kenya Wildlife Service and the Zoological Society of London contributed financially and in-kind to the inaugural meeting. Eunice Kiarie guided guests for a tour of Nairobi Safari Walk, while Polycarp Okuku guided guests in Nairobi National Park where they sighted some black rhinos.

## East African Rhino Management - Nairobi Declaration 2009

Recognising the efforts and dedication of Eastern Africa States to effectively conserve rhinos; And realising that a sustained strategic and cooperative approach to conservation and management of the taxa is necessary for recovery and growth; We, the representatives of the rhino range states, wildlife agencies and stakeholders in the region working under the umbrella of the East African Community on this date 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009; Unanimously commit ourselves to working together to achieve effective rhino conservation in the region; through a shared regional strategy to achieve the overall goals, namely that;

- A well distributed, growing eastern black rhino population, aiming at establishing 3000 animals collaboratively within 30 years.
- Support all efforts to re-establish and recover the Northern White rhino within its former Eastern African range States.
- Cooperatively manage southern white rhino within the region as a species for community conservation, education and tourism and as a possible surrogate for the near extinct northern subspecies.



## **Summary of proceedings**

### **Introduction**

*by Director KWS Dr. Julius Kipng'etich also Chair of the meeting*

The Director welcomed the honoured Directors, the technical experts from the region the present partners and the KWS Executive Committee to the meeting.

KWS and Kenyans have invested considerable sums in the conservation of the East African rhino sub-species *Diceros bicornis michaeli* over the last two and half decades. The outcomes are positive with steady growth (3-5% per annum) in the population over recent years. Conservation activities are currently guided by a published strategic plan which is specific in its time-bound outputs with a vision of at least 2000 black rhinos in the wild. The immediate goal is to conserve at least 700 black rhinos by 2011 in Kenya and manage the southern white rhino as a species for community conservation, education, tourism, and as a conservation resource for re-stocking white rhino ranges. The management policy is to use modern scientifically based conservation and take calculated risks in the timely expansion when necessary. This would ensure a forward movement on the programmes with focus on security and biological management to guarantee a future for this species. In the security field there is a move towards direct engagement with the poachers through capture and interrogation. The earlier 'shoot to kill' policy missed opportunities to gather necessary intelligence information and in the current political climate attracts some criticism. More important is close engagement with communities and private sector that are willing to place land into conservation hands for rhino and other species. The conservation goals of Kenya are not just the preserve of a management authority but an essential part of National life. Further to the National agenda the rhino issue is not just the preserve of one country, it is of regional and international concern and this meeting is the first one ever for Eastern Africa wildlife authority Directors to meet to discuss the way forward and devise mechanisms for collaboration on rhino and other wildlife species. It is a pleasure for KWS to host this meeting and we will continue to work to ensure its success beyond the talking.

The Director opened the meeting with an invitation for the country representatives to provide a summary of their rhino status and issues.

### **Country reports**

#### **Rwanda**

*by Director of Wildlife Office - Mr Fidel Ruzigandekwe*

Up to 2003, 4 rhinos were known in Akagera National Park which had collapsed from about 80 rhinos previously due to civil war in the country. By end of 2003 only one was sighted and confirmed. The animal was darted and

a transmitter placed in its horn for monitoring. This is still the only confirmed rhino in the country as at 2009.

Rwanda has made considerable efforts to secure the Park, including partial fencing and a formal request has been made to obtain additional rhinos from Kenya.

Rwanda seeks a tangible strategy for the future of regional conservation of the black rhino.

## **Tanzania**

*by Mr. Mohammed Hemed Madehele, National Rhino Coordinator*

Protected area (PA) network in Tanzania comprises 15 National Parks (NP), the Ngorogoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), 33 Game Reserves (GR) and 38 Game Controlled Areas (GCAs). The PA network covers 28% of the total Tanzania's land surface area. Rhino conservation falls under three management authorities namely, TANAPA, NCAA and the Wildlife Division (WD). Tanzania has two subspecies of black rhino populations, *Diceros bicornis michaeli* confined to the north and the *Diceros bicornis minor* found in central and southern parts of Tanzania. Rhino conservation has continued to receive top priority. Together with the Wildlife Policy, Rhino Management Plan (RMP) is the main document guiding conservation of black rhinos in Tanzania.

### Objectives of rhino programme

RMP was developed in 1993 with the following goals:

- to increase the populations of *D.b michaeli* and *D.b minor* to 100 individuals each by 2018, and
- to ensure that each subspecies increase at a rate of 5% per annum.

Preparations are underway to review and update RMP in 2009/2010 financial year.

### The coordination committees

- Rhino Conservation Steering Committee (RCSC) which oversees conservation of rhino in the country.
  - Rhino Management Committee (RMC) which provides technical and management advice on rhino matters to the RCSC. It is also a forum for members to discuss rhino management issues.
- Serengeti-Mara ecosystem Rhino Forum (SMERF). This is a local rhino management group liaising with RMC of Tanzania and Kenya. It coordinates rhino conservation activities in Serengeti NP, NCAA, Grumeti GR and Masai Mara NR populations.

### Black rhino population statistics in Tanzania

The population for *D. b. michaeli* stands at 67 animals while *D. b. minor* is approximated at 26 animals. A male and a female *D. b. michaeli* were translocated into Grumeti Game Reserve in June 2007 from Port Lympne Zoo, UK. Negotiations are ongoing between Tanzania and South Africa to re-introduce 50 *D. b. michaeli* of Kenyan origin from Thabo Tholo, South Africa to Serengeti NP. Plans are also underway to re introduce three *D. b. michaeli* from Czech Republic into Mkomazi National Park.

Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary in Mkomazi National Park lost one young male black rhino aged about 2 years old on 6th March 2008. The rhino died suddenly and the cause of death is yet to be established. Current rhino activities include: surveillance and monitoring techniques to ensure adequate security in the rhino areas; intensification of anti-poaching patrols; information gathering and networking; and training and equipping field patrol staff with anti-poaching combat skills.

### **Ethiopia**

*by Mr. Lakew Berhanu, National Project Coordinator of SDPASE project (Sustainable Development of the Protected Area System of Ethiopia).*

There have been no confirmed sightings of rhino in the Southern region of Ethiopia for over 15 years. However, there have been continuous rumours of rhino presence since 2004 and a field visit for 2 weeks in 2005 to the area of reported rhino sightings by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) provided no evidence. Recently rhino horn was seized at Moyale from a vehicle travelling from Kenya to Ethiopia but the details including the horn derivative need to be confirmed.

### **Uganda**

*by Dr. Patrick Atimnendi and Mr. Moses Mapesa the Director of Uganda Wildlife Authority*

Uganda was a country of vast and diverse wildlife resources in the 1920's and 1930's. Primary role of Game Department then was to protect people from wildlife. In the 1960's the three National Parks (NPs) became famous globally for wildlife concentration, scenery and tourism. Up to 60,000 visitors annually visited Uganda NPs then. The 1970's saw drastic decline in wildlife populations, protected area encroachment and cessation of tourism. Some subspecies like the black & white rhino, oryx, bongo and kudu became extinct. 400 eastern black rhinos (*Diceros biconis michaeli*) existed in Kidepo Valley NP & Machison Falls NP and 300 northern white rhinos (*Cerathotherium simum cottoni*) existed in Machison Falls NP in the 1960's. Post-independence civil wars significantly decimated wildlife populations. Rhinos were poached to extinction, with the last individual seen in the wild in 1983. With the return of peace and good governance, Government of Uganda (GoU) through Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry (MTTI) Uganda Wildlife Authority) UWA and Rhino Fund Uganda (RFU) are working on a program to reintroduce rhinos back to Uganda. Both macro and micro economic policies

e.g. civil service reform have been enacted. Regional and global support towards conservation efforts is being realised.

### Objective of the rhino programme in Uganda

The objective of rhino programme is to reintroduce and re-establish both the black and white indigenous rhino species back into Uganda.

A 3 phase approach i.e. Awareness creation, Breeding program, Release to former habitat is being used to achieve this objective. The achievements so far include:

- Two white rhino translocation into Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC) for education & awareness creation in 2001.
- A 7,000ha rhino breeding sanctuary establishment at Nakitoma in central Uganda; 6 white rhinos (3 males & 3 females) translocated to the sanctuary.
- A 5-year Management Plan (2007-2012) development highlighting breeding and management programs.

### Coordination committees

- MTTI, the line government ministry in-charge of wildlife in Uganda is responsible for policy guidance and direction.
- UWA, the lead government agency is responsible for: 1) Wildlife policy implementation; 2) Overall management of wildlife resources; 3) Global, regional and local coordination on conservation issues; 4) Soliciting for support towards conservation.
- Rhino Fund Uganda (RFU), an NGO established in 1997 with the mandate of rhino reintroduction back in Uganda, aims to do the following: 1) acquisition of rhino breeding stock; 2) In-situ & ex-situ breeding programs; 3) Fund raising and awareness creation; 4) Human resource development; 5) Tourism activities.
- Both UWA and RFU undertake programs with District Local Governments, Wildlife Clubs of Uganda and Local Communities to build national support for the protection and conservation of rhinos in Uganda.

### Translocations

Southern white rhinos from Kenya in 2001: 1 male and 1 female; 2005: 2 males and 2 females; and from Disney's Animal Kingdom (DAK) in 2006: 1 male and 1 female.

Twelve female southern white rhinos; one male and three female *D. b. michaeli* are expected into Uganda in 2009.

### Activities

- Fund raising
- Veterinary services
- Sourcing for breeding stock



- Education and awareness campaigns
- Law enforcement and anti-poaching activities
- Daily routine monitoring
- Tourism services

#### Enabling environment

- Local, regional and global support to rhino re-introduction & conservation in Uganda
- Committed workforce (UWA/RFU)
- Clearly surveyed and marked PA boundaries
- Effective anti-poaching and education programs
- Steadily increasing tourism numbers
- Peace and security

#### Challenges

- Inadequate funding
- Inadequate effective equipment
- External poaching threats

#### Way forward

- Widen/diversify revenue resource base
- Engage regional/international bodies to manage poaching threats.

### **Kenya**

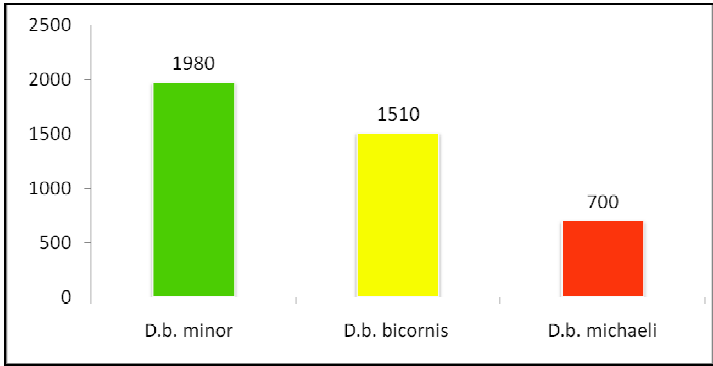
*by Mr. Benson Okita-Ouma, Kenya Rhino Coordinator*

Kenya gave background on black rhinos, the eastern black rhino subspecies, shared experience on the Kenyan situation, summarised the East Africa Community Rhino Management Group (EAC-RMG) briefing document by highlighting its broad mandate, goals, purpose, objectives and achievements since 2004. Agenda items were then introduced by the Chair.

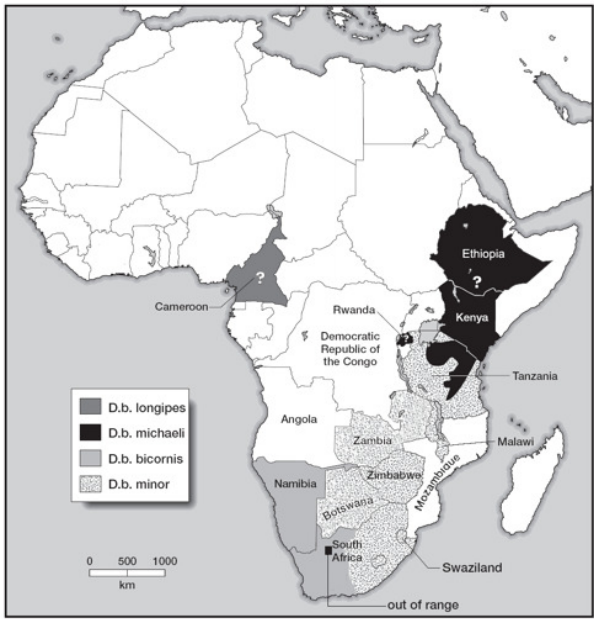
#### Background to the black rhinos

Illegal hunting and trade in rhino horn was the main reason for drastic decline in black rhino numbers. *D.b. michaeli* remains the least recovered of the 3 black rhino subspecies. Heightened protection still remains a main focus in the black rhino conservation. However, in the longer term; Sound Science and Regional Co-operation will be pivotal in the faster recovery of black rhino numbers as desired by all African rhino range States.

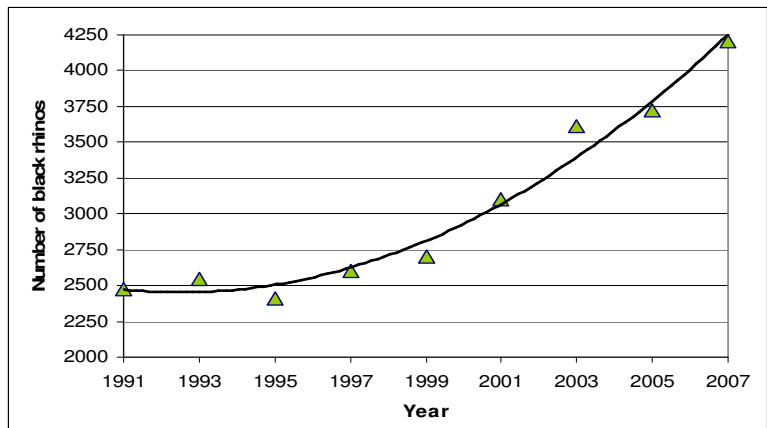
Distribution and population of black rhino in Africa is as summarized in Figures 1 & 2, and Map 1.



**Figure 1:** Black rhino sub-species numbers as at 2007; (Source: IUCN-SSC-AfRSG 2007 data, graphics Okita-Ouma 2009)



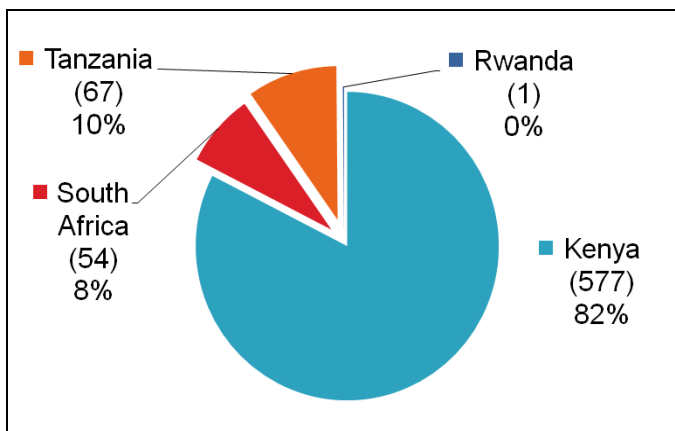
**Map 1:** Distribution of Black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* as at end of 2003 (Source: Amin *et al.*, 2006, updated from Emslie & Brooks, 1999)



**Figure 2:** Black Rhino in Africa, Population Trend from 1991 to 2007 (Source: IUCN-SSC-AfRSG 2007 data, graphics Rob Brett 2009)

Since numbers bottomed out at 2,410 in 1991, numbers have increased by 1,790 in the wild in the 12 years (a 74.3% increase). The number of eastern black rhino (*D. b. michaeli*) continues to increase in the major Range State (Kenya) up to 577 in 2007 compared to 430 in 2001 (an average annual growth of 5.0% over the period) and 330 in 1989.

Approximately 700 *D. b. michaeli* exist *in-situ* in Africa and distributed as shown in Figure 3.



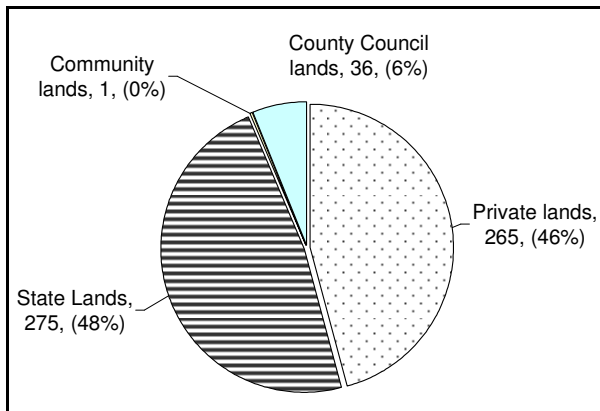
**Figure 3:** Distribution of *D. b. michaeli* in-situ in Africa as at 2007 (Source: IUCN-SSC-AfRSG 2007 data, graphics Okita-Ouma 2009).

### The Kenyan situation

In Kenya, the eastern black rhino occurs in 16 populations distributed in varied habitats of woodland savannas, montane forests and semi-arid bushlands, and in different land management systems (Table 1 and Figure 4)

**Table 1: Eastern black rhino distribution in various land management systems**

| Rhino lands & populations        | Approx land area (km <sup>2</sup> ) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| State lands (7# populations)     | 15,500                              |
| Community lands (1# population)  | 170                                 |
| Private lands (6# populations)   | 1,350                               |
| Municipal lands (2# populations) | 1,560                               |
| TOTAL (16 populations)           | 18,580                              |



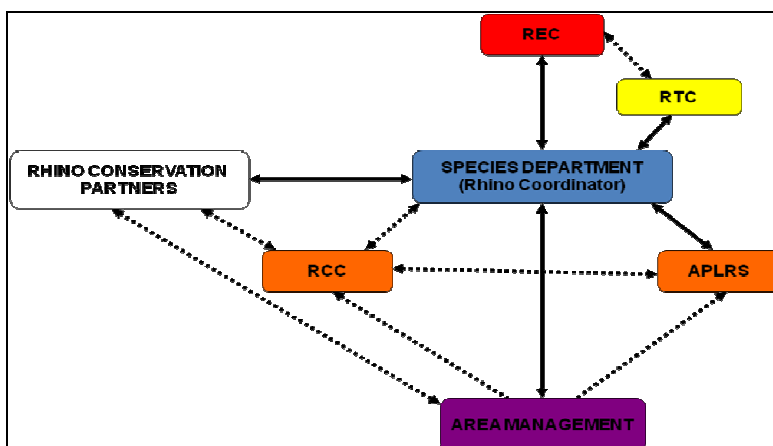
**Figure 4:** Distribution of rhinos in different land management systems in Kenya as at 2007. (Source: Kenya Wildlife Service)

### Vision and goals

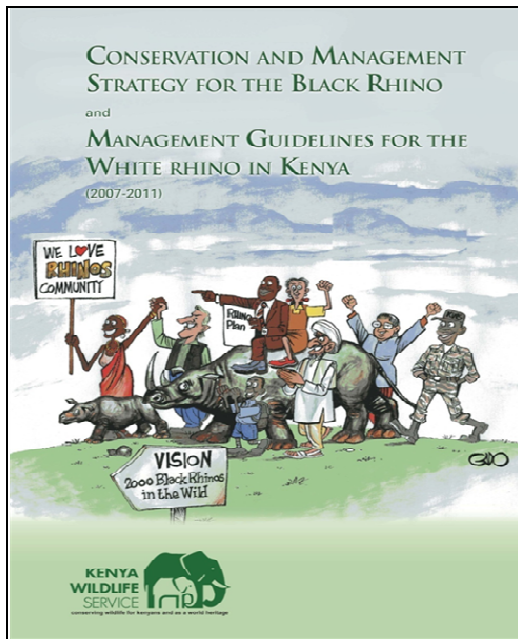
Kenya is currently implementing a 5 year (2007-2011) black rhino strategy and white rhino management guidelines. The vision for Kenya is to conserve at least 2000 black rhinos as a viable population in the wild by 2011. The immediate goal is to maintain a minimum growth rate of 6% per annum in established sanctuaries, achieve a minimum population of 150 black rhinos in free-ranging areas, and realize population growth of a minimum of 20 black rhinos in montane forest areas - all aimed at achieving 700 black rhinos by 2011. White rhinos are managed as species for community conservation, education and for restocking former white rhino ranges.

### The coordination committees

Four committees are responsible in the management and conservation of the rhinos is summarised in Figure 5a. The strategic document (Figure 5b) can be obtained from <http://www.kws.go.ke> or <http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com>



**Figure 5a:** Flow chart showing committees responsible for management and conservation of the rhinos and how they interlink in Kenya. (REC-Rhino executive Committee; RTC-Rhino Technical Committee; RCC-Rhino Management Committee; APLRS – Association of Private Lands Rhino Sanctuary. The solid arrows signify line management and dotted lines signify information flow).



**Figure 5b:** Kenya's rhino strategic document cover page. This 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of rhino strategy was formulated from 29<sup>th</sup> Jan-2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007 and launched on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007.

### **Background on East Africa Community Rhino Management Group**

During its 7th meeting in Tsavo, Kenya, in 2004, the IUCN-SSC-African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) Kenya assessed the conservation and meta-population management needs of *D.b. michaeli*. The key recommendation made by the group during the Tsavo meeting was the establishment of an East African Community (EAC) Rhino Management Group (RMG). EAC-RMG as a regional coordination body would advise on the conservation of eastern black rhino populations in order to maximise growth rates within the constraints of available and secure habitat, while reducing or spreading risk to the sub-species across its range. The body would provide guidelines on scientific and technical aspects of rhino conservation, assistance with sourcing and exchange of dedicated expertise, specialised logistical and technical support and training, and help in sourcing of rhinos to create and enhance viable populations.

The **goal** of the EAC-RMG then was to ensure a well distributed, rapidly growing eastern black rhino population, aiming at establishing 2000 animals by 2030, which is considered a viable meta-population for the long term. *(This was however revised at the EAC-RMG inaugural meeting as highlighted in the declaration at the start of these proceedings).*

The **purpose** of the group is to coordinate and provide technical support for the conservation of rhino and its habitat and promotion of the related development of sustainable livelihood processes conducive to rhino, its range and related biodiversity therein.

The **specific objective** is to implement a pragmatic regional rhino strategy following the acquisition of sound information on the constraints and opportunities for rhino conservation.

The immediate **rationale** then was as follows:

- Rhinoceros, as a charismatic mega-herbivore requires large areas to support viable populations.
- They act as umbrella species for the ecosystems they inhabit because their conservation requirements, by default, encompass those of other smaller species.
- Rhinos can become an important source of income through connected tourism activities.
- Successful black rhino conservation require effective field protection; rapid population growth rates; enabling policy and legislative foundation; technical expertise and know-how; institutional capacity; leveraging of financial resources; and specialised equipment.
- EAC-RMG would create precedence within EAC, for other rare and endangered iconic wildlife species, whose conservation needs to be managed at a regional rather than local level.
- Additional benefits to the EAC-RMG include, but not limited to, joint capacity building; standardised data quality control and analysis; standardised rhino monitoring systems; sharing of translocation and rhino intervention techniques and speaking with one voice/regional block on rhino conservation in the international fora.
- Ultimately the most important thing is to spread the risk for the endangered rhinos and secure adequate and safe rhino habitat for future generation.

#### Progress on EAC-RMG since 2004

- Endorsed by range states and collaborating partners identified
- Expected outputs at regional and country level highlighted
- Terms of reference drafted
- Mode of operation drafted
- Concept sent to East Africa Community Natural Resources Secretariat (EAC-NRES) in 2005 but no formal response has been received.
- Wildlife authorities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda formally consented in 2006.
- Further discussions at IUCN-AfRSG meetings in 2004, 2006; and 2008
- Inaugural meeting planned for 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
- Funding source for the meeting was identified (Flora and Fauna International (FFI), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
- Kenya was requested at the IUCN-SSC-AfRSG meeting to coordinate the process.

Kenya also acknowledged

- Technical input from the IUCN-SSC-AfRSG in 2004, 2006 and 2008.
- Financial and technical support from the FFI, FZS, and ZSL.
- All participants for taking time to attend the inaugural meeting.

- Preparations and logistical arrangements by the Kenyan Rhino programme office.

### **An overview of SADC Regional Rhino Management**

*by Dr. Rob Brett – Director FFI, East Africa*

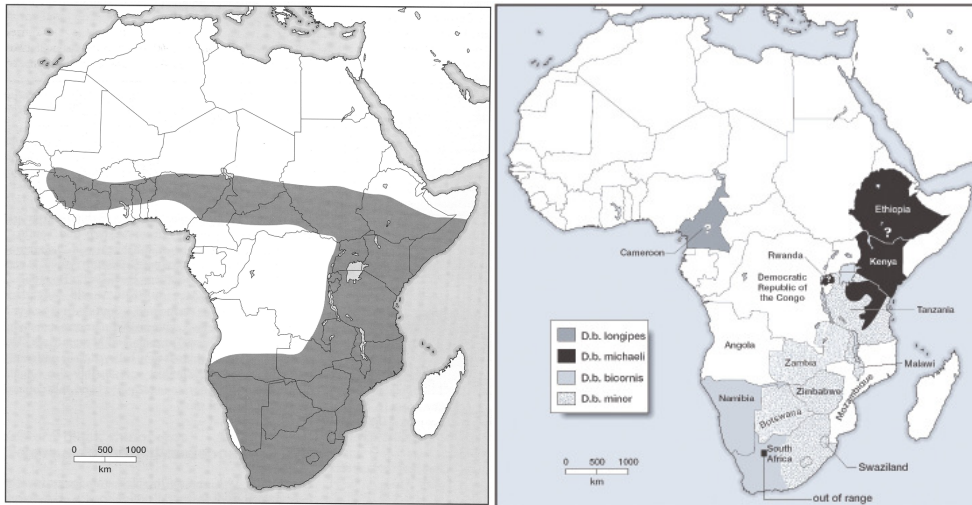
Rhinos were historically distributed in western, central eastern and southern Africa. Currently remnant rhino populations following decline in numbers in the 1960s to 1980s are distributed in east and southern Africa (Maps 2 and 3).

#### SADC-Regional Rhino Metapopulation Management

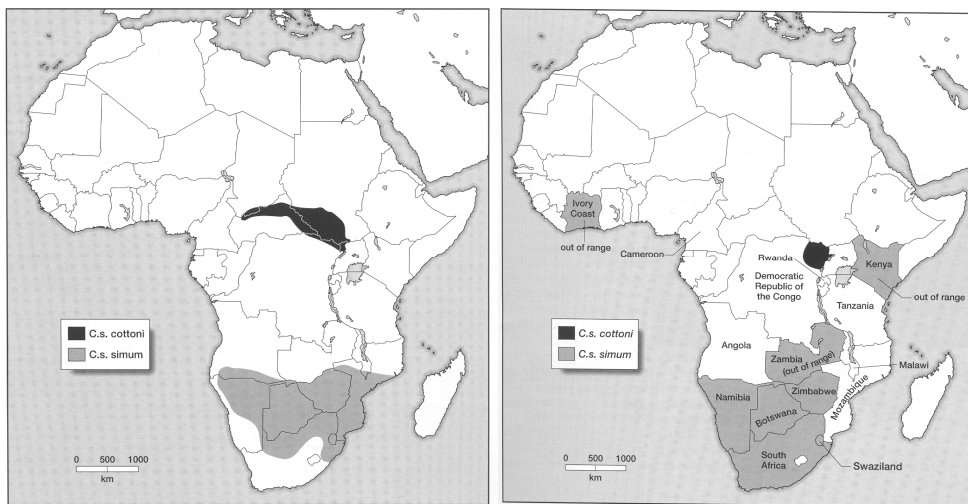
- Subspecies conservation goal is 2,000 animals.
- A meta-population refers to two or more geographically separated populations, with rhinos translocated between them in order to achieve managed gene flow.

#### Genetic Management ideals for new populations

- 20 or more effective (unrelated, breeding) founders
- Establish in an area with Carrying capacity at least 100 rhinos
- Periodic interchange of breeders (1-2 animals per generation)
- Maintain rapid growth rates



**Map 2:** Historical (left) and current (right) black rhino distribution



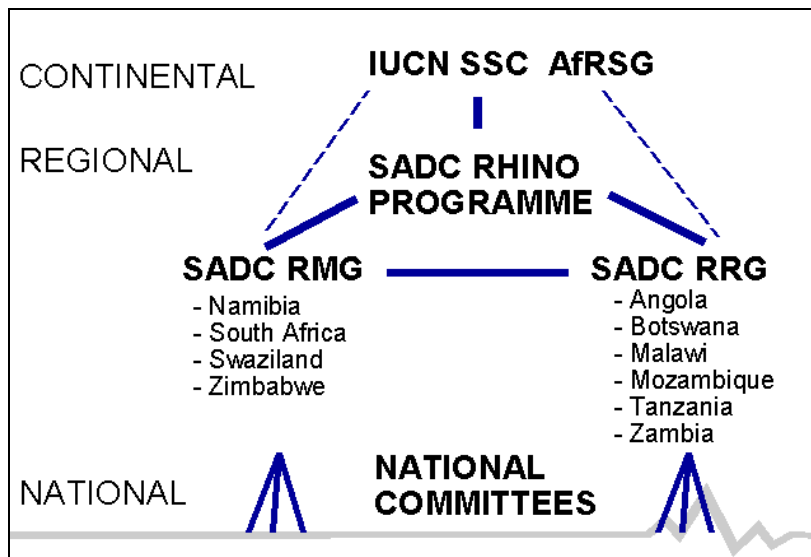
**Map 3:** Historical (left) and current (right) white rhino distribution

### SADC Regional Rhino Groups structure

As structured in Figure 6, the SADC Rhino Management Group (RMG) comprises official government representatives from:

- Zimbabwe
  - Namibia
  - Swaziland
  - South Africa (provincial conservation agencies and National Parks)
  - Representatives from the private sector, the Rhino and Elephant Security Group and rhino experts
- Meetings are held to exchange information and expertise, and to address topical conservation problems facing rhinos in the region. Attention is focussed on facilitating the achievement of national rhino conservation objectives, especially through the refinement of monitoring programmes and the evaluation of population performance





**Figure 6:** SADC Regional Rhino Groups structure

### SADC RMG Role

The Rhino Management Group's role is to assist the various conservation agencies and private landowners in achieving the conservation goals for black rhino.

### SADC Rhino Management Group Strategies

- Evaluate the performance and management of each black rhino population in the region at regular intervals based on the annual RMG status reporting programme.
- Identify problems or information needs affecting the achievement of the goals for black rhino in each country.
- Initiate, develop and coordinate appropriate programmes (meetings, workshops, projects) necessary to provide management advice and to develop appropriate conservation strategies to achieve the goals.
- Evaluate project proposals and make recommendations to relevant bodies.
- Provide advice on request to conservation agencies.
- Liaise closely with all relevant conservation authorities and funding agencies.

### SADC Rhino Recovery Group (RRG) Terms of Reference

Aim or objective of the SADC RRG is to coordinate and facilitate the application of regional resources in re-establishing rhino populations and managing remnant rhino populations, and ensuring their future viability.

### SADC Rhino Recovery Group Strategies

- Facilitate and assist with the development of national policies, strategies and plans.
- Identify key issues and priority needs, including sourcing of rhinos for reintroduction and regional metapopulation management.

- Facilitate building of capacity in RRG management agencies, including targeted training and staff development, and development of appropriate tools and techniques.
- Assist RRG countries with undertaking assessments of potential areas for reintroduction and prioritise these areas.
- Disseminate information on best practice between RRG members, by use of workshops, publications, exchange/study visits, and staff assignments.
- Follow up on confirmed presence of remnant rhinos and promote surveys of remnant populations.
- Circulate guidelines on the reintroduction of rhinos and consolidation of remnant populations.
- Network and share expertise with regional and continental rhino conservation bodies (SADC RMG, AfRSG, SADC Rhino Programme and donor community, including linkage with RESG on security needs).
- Monitor and evaluate progress towards achievement of national rhino conservation goals, and the effectiveness of rhino recovery projects that are implemented in RRG countries.
- Assist RRG countries in the development and funding of project proposals, based on identification of common needs, and facilitate the funding of rhino recovery projects in RRG countries.
- Through ongoing collaboration between range state countries, identify constraints and opportunities for long-term sustainability of shared activities of the SADC RRG countries.

#### SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation

The strategic plan for the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation is summarized in Figure 7. The programme's aim is to provide expertise, specialized logistical support, training, information and catalytic funding in support of SADC regional conservation projects and policies for rhinos as flagship species

- Maximize population growth rates, enhancing overall biodiversity, ensuring economic sustainability, and stimulating local community conservation awareness and involvement in the protection and wise use of these species.
- By establishing regional co-ordination in the management of rhino species, create a precedent within SADC so that this co-ordination can be extended to other wildlife species that should be managed at a regional rather than at a local level.

An example of a successful SADC RPRC sequential input in Botswana is summarized in Figure 8.

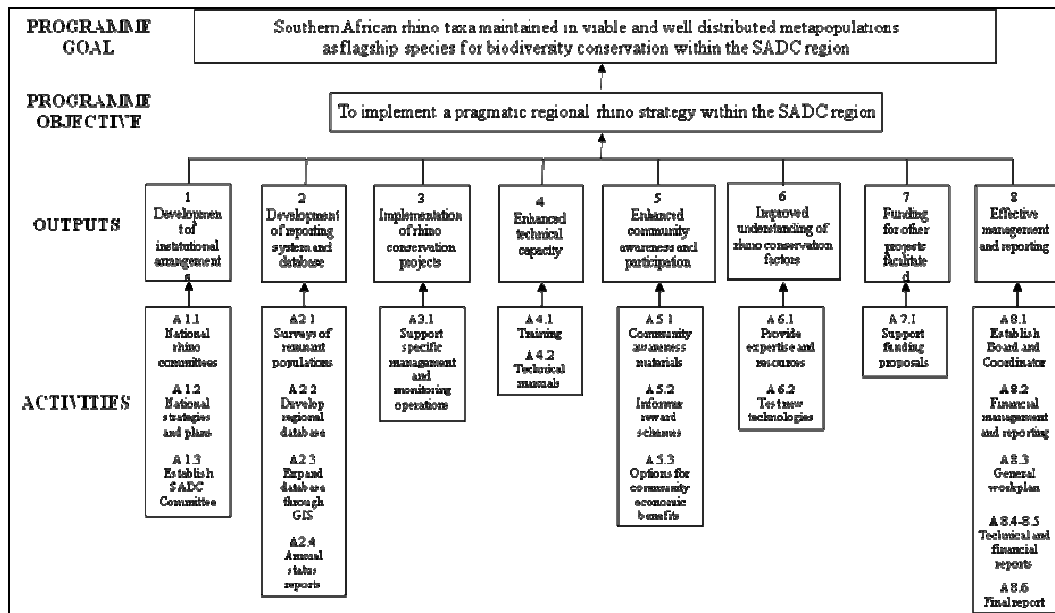


Figure 7. SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation: Log Frame

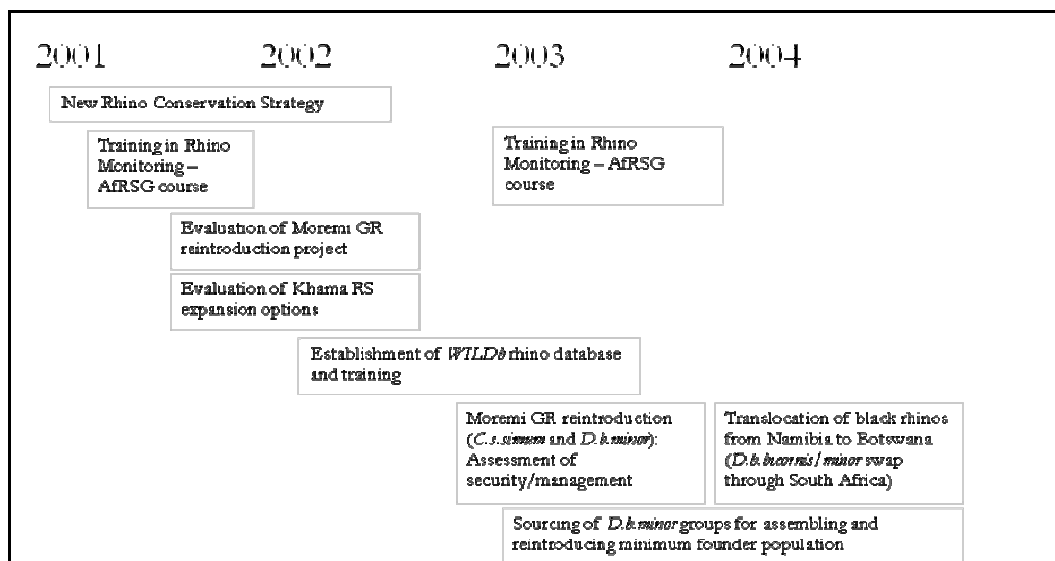


Figure 8: Example of SADC RPRC sequential inputs: Botswana

## Agenda Items of the EAC-RMG Inaugural Meeting

### The following agenda items were endorsed by the participants

- 1) Drafting of a declaration on the regional black rhino conservation
- 2) Agree on EAC-RMG mode of operation including:
  - a) formation of regional rhino executive committee
  - b) formation regional rhino technical committee
- 3) Identify funding sources of EAC-RMG and sustainability
- 4) Name of the group; EAC-RMG or EA-RMG?
- 5) Way forward with time frames

### Specific outputs of the meeting

1. Agenda 1: Declaration on the regional rhino conservation was agreed following input by sub-group of country representatives with facilitation by Dr. Rajan Amin and plenary discussion. The following declaration was adopted by the participants:

Recognising the efforts and dedication of Eastern Africa States to effectively conserve rhinos; And realising that a sustained strategic and cooperative approach to conservation and management of the taxa is necessary for recovery and growth; We, the representatives of the rhino range states, wildlife agencies and stakeholders in the region working under the umbrella of the East African Community on this date 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009; Unanimously commit ourselves to working together to achieve effective rhino conservation in the region; through a shared regional strategy to achieve the overall goals, namely that;

- A well distributed, growing eastern black rhino population, aiming at establishing 3000 animals collaboratively within 30 years.
- Support all efforts to re-establish and recover the Northern White rhino within its former Eastern African range States.
- Cooperatively manage southern white rhino within the region as a species for community conservation, education and tourism and as a possible surrogate for the near extinct northern sub-species.

2. Agenda 2: Mode of operation of EAC RMG with the following outputs:
  - a) Rhino Executive Committee – it was confirmed that the EAC-RMG should fit under the framework of the EAC but it was emphasised that there should be provision for the other former range states to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis. The relevant body for the EAC-RMG to report to would be the East Africa Wildlife and Tourism Committee (EA-WTC) but a wildlife protocol for this committee was still pending. Objectives of the EA-WTC are currently tourism specific and will adopt more wildlife management objectives. The council of ministers did not approve the protocol and tasked the committee in April 2009 to address the balance between wildlife management and tourism and re-

draft the terms of reference. It was reported a new meeting on protocol will be completed at the end of May/June 2009. A key aspect is appointment of an East African Wildlife Coordinator. The Wildlife and Tourism Committee is new so there is an opportunity to lead the wildlife issues with the rhino. The executive EAC-RMG will be called by the secretariat and country representation depends on the National structures i.e. the responsible wildlife authorities e.g. Kenya KWS; Tanzania TANAPA, NCAA etc. It was agreed that the Executive Committee is constituted by the Directors of the relevant agencies. With EAC protocols there is room for ad hoc members (to cater for none EAC sitting member country representatives on EAC-RMG). The Lusaka Agreement is a good precedent for this. Convening EAC-RMG executive meetings at the same time as the EA-WTC meetings will allow the rhino issues to be inserted into the agenda at the main meeting. Funding is a key issue even at the EA-WTC and EAC-RMG executive level as EAC has limited funding. The EAC Secretariat has appealed to member countries to cover own costs but this potentially makes the representation biased. Continuity and commitment is another constraint in terms of effective representation.

- b) The EAC-RMG Technical Committee. The EAC-RMG executive committee will appoint the technical committee. The core group needs to be a small 5-6 people maximum. The technical group needs to be recognised experts. The technical committee can take on ad hoc support beyond the focal country programmes or within as it might wish for specific issues. The main areas for the technical committee to cover are:
- i. Security.
  - ii. Legal aspects and policy.
  - iii. Resource mobilisation.
  - iv. Community and private sector.
  - v. Scientific management.
    - Standardised monitoring systems for management.
    - Metapopulation management.
    - Wildlife Health.
    - Habitat and stocking levels.

It was found necessary to appoint an individual who will be the coordinator of the EAC-RMG technical committee. Mr. Benson Okita Ouma was proposed by the Chair of the meeting to take up the appointment and responsibility of rhino coordination in the interim. The executive committee unanimously endorsed the proposal. Mr. Okita accepted the responsibility.

### 3. Agenda 3: Funding proposals:

- Contribution from the relevant participating core agencies through a “membership fee” which will cover the costs of the coordinator, secretariat and sitting committee members. This will have to be worked out in detail.

- KWS Director offered to host two executive and four technical committee meetings of the EAC-RMG for the next 2 years and cover costs in Nairobi as well as costs of coordination for the next 2 years. However country representatives will cover all their travel costs to attend the meetings. These meetings will be called irrespective of the current lack of protocol and framework at the EAC. As soon as these terms of reference and frameworks are completed at EAC the group can be more formally adopted.
  - Three partners/donors present in the meeting strongly indicated support/seed money for running of the programme and supporting coordination activities.
  - It was reported that WWF had indicated strong support to the development of the strategy and this will be followed by KWS Rhino programme and the EAC-RMG coordinator.
  - The group will help secure funds for specific projects identified in the strategy and needs of individual countries.
  - There is an option of getting a three year programme funding, similar to the SADC-RMG Italian funding and this will be investigated further during the strategy development.
4. Agenda 4: Name of the Group was confirmed as East African Community Rhino Management Group (EAC-RMG). As already mentioned in proceedings of Agenda 1, there is room within the EAC protocols to cater for none EAC sitting member country representatives on EAC-RMG. The Lusaka agreement is a good example on this.

The possibility of developing a programme to drive the EAC-RMG and activities arising in the region from the group was discussed. This will be one of the first areas for development by the Executive and Technical committees. A proposal could take several years to fruition but it can be helpful and catalytic in getting the work done in the region.

#### **Vote of thanks**

*by Director of Wildlife Rwanda*

Thanked KWS for hosting the meeting and the NGOs ZSL, FFI and FZS for supporting this initiative financially and in other ways. He also thanked all who committed time to participate in the meeting and showed commitment to the vision of rhino conservation in the region.

#### **Closure**

*by Director KWS*

He stressed KWS keen interest in the survival of the rhino and other species. Extinction is forever whereas endangered means we still have time. He gave the example of J. F Kennedy's achievement of his vision of Americans landing on the moon in a decade, and pointed out that the targets set by EAC-RMG to achieve 3000 rhino in the region as realistic. KWS is willing to provide leadership for this initiative to succeed, and practical realistic projects backed by best science possible, will lead to the right decisions. The global community is welcome to help in the process as this is a joint effort. It will be necessary to have some bilateral agreements for fast tracking some activities

as some necessary multilateral agreements under the umbrella of EAC may take time to be realised. Director KWS stressed the need for working together and share experiences for the initiative to move forward. We all look forward to the birth of the first rhino in Uganda for 25 years as this will be a key milestone.

The KWS director closed the meeting by quoting Nelson Mandela's "greatest fear" originally authored and published by Marianne Williamson in her 1992 book titled "A Return to Love";

*"Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate, but that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, handsome, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us. It is not just in some; it is in everyone. And, as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others."*

The meeting was closed at 1545hrs

## Annex 1: EAC-RMG inaugural meeting's list of participants

| Names  | Contacts   | Organization  |
|--|--|---|
| Mr. Adelin Ntungumburanye<br>(Absent with Apology) | Director General of INECN<br>tel: <a href="tel:+25722403032">+25722403032</a> ; +257 22238351; +257 79973788<br><a href="mailto:inencndg@yahoo.fr">inencndg@yahoo.fr</a><br><a href="mailto:adelint1@yahoo.fr">adelint1@yahoo.fr</a>   | National Institute for the Environment and Conservation of Nature |
| Mr. Alastair Nelson                                | Programme Manager<br>FZS Africa Regional Office-Serengeti<br>P.O. Box 14935, Arusha, Tanzania<br><a href="mailto:alastairnelson@fzs.org">alastairnelson@fzs.org</a>  | Frankfurt Zoological Society                                      |
| Mr. Amiyo T. Amiyo                                 | Director General<br>Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority<br>P.O. Box 1<br>Ngorongoro Crater<br>Tanzania<br><br>Fax: +255 27 2537007<br><a href="mailto:Amiyo_Amiyo@yahoo.com">Amiyo_Amiyo@yahoo.com</a>  | Ngorongoro Conservation Authority                                 |
| Ms. Angie Genade                                   | Executive Director<br>Rhino Fund Uganda<br>P.O. Box 71020<br>Kampala, Uganda<br><a href="mailto:angie@rhinofund.org">angie@rhinofund.org</a>   | Rhino Fund Uganda   |
| Ms. Anne Kahihia                                   | Assistant Director –Central Rift<br>Conservation Area<br><a href="mailto:Annkahihia@kws.go.ke">Annkahihia@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Benjamin Kavuu                                 | Senior Assistant Director- Community<br>Wildlife Service<br><a href="mailto:benkavuu@kws.go.ke">benkavuu@kws.go.ke</a>   | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Benson Okita-Ouma                              | Rhino Programme Coordinator<br><a href="mailto:bokita@kws.go.ke">bokita@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Elema Halake                                   | Assistant Director – Intelligence<br><a href="mailto:halake@kws.go.ke">halake@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Fidel Ruzigandekwe                             | ORTPN's Director of Wildlife<br>Office Rwandaise du Tourisme et des<br>Parcs Nationaux (ORTPN)<br>Boulevard de la Re'volution n° 1<br>P.O. Box 905<br>Kigali, Rwanda<br><br><a href="mailto:info@rwandatourism.com">info@rwandatourism.com</a><br><a href="mailto:fruziga@rwandatourism.com">fruziga@rwandatourism.com</a> | Office Rwandaise du Tourisme et des<br>Parcs Nationaux            |
| Mr. Francis Fondo                                  | Deputy Director<br>Finance and Administration<br><a href="mailto:fkfondo@kws.go.ke">fkfondo@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Geoffrey Chege                                 | Chairman, Association of private land<br>Rhino Sanctuaries<br>P.O. Box 10607<br>Nairobi<br><a href="mailto:Chege@lewa.org">Chege@lewa.org</a>  | Association of Private Land Rhino<br>Sanctuaries in Kenya         |
| Dr. Isaac Lekool                                   | Head of Capture Unit<br><a href="mailto:lekool@kws.go.ke">lekool@kws.go.ke</a>   | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. James Sindiyo                                  | Senior Warden,<br>Masai Mara National Reserve<br>P.O. Box 60<br>Narok  | Narok County Council  |
| Mr. Jonathan Kirui                                 | Assistant Director Tsavo Conservation<br>Area<br>P.O. Box 14, Voi<br><a href="mailto:jkirui@kws.go.ke">jkirui@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Dr. Julius Kipng'etich                             | Director<br>Kenya Wildlife Service<br><a href="mailto:kipngetch@kws.go.ke">kipngetch@kws.go.ke</a>   | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Justine Hando<br>(Absent with Apology)         | Tanzania National Parks – TANAPA<br>P.O. Box 3134, Arusha, Tanzania<br><a href="mailto:tanapa@habari.co.tz">tanapa@habari.co.tz</a>  | Tanzania National Parks   |
| Mr. Lakew Berhanu                                  | National Project coordinator of SDPASE<br>project (Sustainable Development of the<br>Protected Area System of Ethiopia)<br><a href="mailto:E.W.C.A@ethio.net.et">E.W.C.A@ethio.net.et</a><br><a href="mailto:lakew.berhanu@gmail.com">lakew.berhanu@gmail.com</a>  | Ethiopia Wildlife Conservation Authority                          |



|                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Mr. Linus Kariuki           | Kenya Wildlife Service<br>Rhino Programme<br><a href="mailto:rhino@kws.go.ke">rhino@kws.go.ke</a><br><a href="mailto:lkariuki@kws.go.ke">lkariuki@kws.go.ke</a>   | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Moses Mapesa            | Office of the executive director<br>Plot 7 Kira Road Kamwokya<br>P.O. Box 3530, Kampala<br><a href="mailto:moses.mapesa@uwa.or.ug">moses.mapesa@uwa.or.ug</a>   | Uganda Wildlife Authority   |
| Mr. Mohammed Hemed Madehele | Rhino Coordinator<br>Wildlife Division<br>Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism<br>P.O. Box 1994<br>Ivory room Nyerere Road<br>Dar es Salaam<br>Tanzania<br><br>Fax: + 255 22 2865836/2863496<br><a href="mailto:director@wildlife.go.tz">director@wildlife.go.tz</a> | Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism –Wildlife Division |
| Dr. Patrick Atimnendi       | Uganda Wildlife Authority<br>Plot 7 Kira Road Kamwokya<br>P.O. Box 3530, Kampala<br><a href="mailto:uwa@uwa.or.ug">uwa@uwa.or.ug</a>  | Uganda Wildlife Authority   |
| Mr. Patrick Omondi          | Senior Assistant Director SAD-Biodiversity<br>Research and Monitoring<br><a href="mailto:Pomondi@kws.go.ke">Pomondi@kws.go.ke</a>   | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Mr. Peter Leitoro           | Deputy Director Security<br><a href="mailto:leitoro@kws.go.ke">leitoro@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |
| Dr. Rajan Amin              | Conservation Programmes Zoological<br>Society of London<br>Regent's Park<br>London NW1 4RY<br><a href="mailto:Raj.Amin@ioz.ac.uk">Raj.Amin@ioz.ac.uk</a>  | Zoological Society of London  |
| Dr. Richard Kock            | Zoological Society of London<br>Regent's Park<br>London NW1 4RY<br><a href="mailto:Richard.Kock@zsl.org">Richard.Kock@zsl.org</a>   | Zoological Society of London  |
| Dr. Rob Brett               | Regional Director, Africa<br>Fauna & Flora International<br>Cambridge, CB1 2JD, UK<br><br>Fax: +44 (0) 1223 461481<br><a href="mailto:rob.brett@fauna-flora.org">rob.brett@fauna-flora.org</a>  | Flora and Fauna International   |
| Dr. Samuel Kasiki           | Deputy Director<br>Biodiversity, Research and Monitoring<br><a href="mailto:skasiki@kws.go.ke">skasiki@kws.go.ke</a>  | Kenya Wildlife Service  |

**EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY - RHINO MANAGEMENT GROUP (EAC-RMG):  
Stakeholders Briefing Document**

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**Introduction**

There are five species of rhino worldwide, three of them living in Asia and two (the black and the white rhino) in Africa. The browsing black rhino used to be widely distributed across the African continent, adapted to a range of habitats and climate but estimated to have suffered a 96% decline from c.65,000 to c.<2,500 animals between 1970 and early 1990s mainly due to illegal horn trade and habitat loss. Currently, 2008, the number in situ has slowly recovered to c.4,200 animals and are classified by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as critically endangered. East African region is home to the *Diceros bicornis michaeli*, the least well recovered of the 3 surviving black rhino subspecies. Its historical distribution is assumed to be limited to southern Kenya, southern Ethiopia, northern Tanzania, northern Uganda and Rwanda, but currently only c. 700 *D.b.michaeli* exist in the wild distributed in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and out of range in South Africa. Kenya conserves ~85% of this subspecies. Illegal hunting and the resulting trade in rhino horn has been the main reason in recent years for this drastic decline. Heightened protection was therefore and still remains a main focus in the black rhino conservation. However, in the longer term, sound science (through biological management) and regional co-operation will play a pivotal role in the faster recovery of black rhino numbers as desired by all African rhino range States.

A working group was set-up at the 2004 IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) meeting in Kenya, to assess the conservation and metapopulation<sup>1</sup> management needs of the eastern black rhino subspecies. The primary recommendation made by the working group was the establishment of an East African Community (EAC) Rhino Management Group (RMG). The purpose of the EAC-RMG would be to enable collaborative and coordinated management of the East African metapopulation of *D. b. michaeli* by the participating country rhino management agencies towards achieving viable population goals. A concept paper to institutionalise EAC-RMG under the political and institutional umbrella of the existing East African Community Natural Resource and Environment Secretariat (EAC-NRES) was subsequently developed and sent to the National Wildlife Authorities of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. A working group comprising of the National Rhino representatives of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, IUCN AfRSG chairman and key partner organisations then discussed the setup of the EAC-RMG and its implementation timetable at the 2006 AfRSG meeting in Swaziland. The National wildlife authorities of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda formally agreed to the formation of the EAC Rhino Management Group.

At the 9th meeting of the IUCN-SSC-AfRSG held in Arusha, Tanzania in May/June 2008, it was reported that little progress had been made to get the EAC-RMG setup under the EAC-NRES. The main reasons given for the lack of progress included lack of quorum at the EAC-NRES meetings hence difficulties in decision making and lack of a wildlife strategy for EAC-NRES. The group therefore recommended that the Director of KWS write to wildlife directors of Tanzania and Uganda to initiate a core working group. The core working group and any collaboration will strive to share information and technical expertise and collaboration; and will not be hinged on the EAC-NRES. However, it was envisaged that this core group will need political support which should be introduced in future in a gradual manner. All wildlife sectors were urged to assist in facilitating the process. The need to convene the first meeting where among others, a Chairperson would be elected to steer the whole process forward was proposed and agreed upon. Rwanda and Burundi were not represented at the meeting, but it was recommended they should be invited to join EAC-RMG.

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<sup>1</sup> Metapopulation refers to a number of populations of a species considered collectively as one big “herd”. A metapopulation is made up of discrete subpopulations in different geographic locations, and animals are sometimes moved from one population to another to ensure genetic and demographic health.

## **Background and rationale**

Over the last two decades, it has been acknowledged at the global level that the loss of biodiversity implies a tremendous and cumulative damage for humanity in bio-ethical terms and major economic consequences. The latter is of particular significance for developing countries, where important opportunities for social and economic development are jeopardised by the loss of fauna and flora resources with local value. The rhinoceros is one of the few remaining terrestrial mega-herbivores. It can be considered a flagship taxon for biodiversity conservation, but at the same time its disappearance constitutes an important cultural and economic loss for the countries concerned. Rhinoceros, like other charismatic megaherbivores, require large areas to support viable populations. They act as umbrella species for the ecosystems they inhabit because their conservation requirements, by default, encompass those of other smaller species. If rhinoceros can be successfully conserved and protected within an area, then the other species in the area will also benefit. Experience also shows that breeding rhinos can become an important source of income through connected tourism activities.

Through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, African rhinoceros species have been brought to the verge of extinction by killing for trade in its horn, sport and meat. The demand for rhino horn in markets in the Middle East and Asia has been the major cause of rapid depletion or extinction of rhino populations over the last few decades. Most illegal horn from eastern Africa has been smuggled by traders into Yemen. However, threats to rhino populations often have deep roots. The loss of habitat has also contributed to its demise and illegal killing of rhino is not only due to the demand for rhino products in the Far East and in the Gulf, but it is also linked to a complex set of factors among which widespread and deep poverty plays a major role.

Nowadays, all of the surviving populations of Eastern Black rhinos live in Protected Areas and the majority within intensively managed fenced sanctuaries. The fragmentation of rhino populations presents unique conservation challenges requiring an in-depth knowledge of their ecological and conservation needs, including the distributional pattern of genetic diversity and population dynamics. Other key factors in successful recovery of black rhino populations are the following:

- effective field protection and surveillance through intense patrolling, intelligence, detection and control of poaching activities, maintenance of infrastructures and human resources and effective engagement with neighbouring human populations.
- ensuring genetic viability of populations: small and fragmented populations need to be linked through controlled exchange of breeding individuals to form genetically and demographically viable metapopulation.
- promoting rapid and sustained population growth rates, through adaptive management of populations and their habitats well within the limits of ecological and social carrying capacities of rhino populations. This demands continuous estimation of populations and stocking densities, as well as the means and expertise to remove surplus animals to establish new rhino populations, or supplement existing ones.

As well as a conducive and enabling policy and legislative foundation, the management of rhino populations requires significant technical expertise and know-how, institutional capacity, financial resources, and specialised equipment. Without this capacity and motivation within management authorities, efforts to conserve remnant rhino populations are often frustrated and the recent (2006) extinction of black rhino in Cameroon and near extinction of the Northern white rhinoceros in the Democratic Republic of Congo are cases in point. However, where adaptive management and sound conservation measures can be implemented, they not only conserve rhino but invariably boost the general conservation of biodiversity within the areas of rhino project activity, where rhino conservation can act as a potent catalyst for conservation land use.

The EAC Rhino Management Group is conceived as a regional coordination body mandated to advice on the conservation of Eastern black rhino populations in order to maximise growth rates within the constraints of available and secure habitat, while reducing or spreading risk to the taxon across its range. The body will provide guidelines on scientific and technical

aspects of rhino conservation, assistance with sourcing and exchange of dedicated expertise, specialised logistical and technical support and training, and help in sourcing of rhinos to create and enhance viable populations. It will also be able to leverage funding for rhino conservation projects through a coordinated regional mechanism, in close cooperation with relevant regional and national bodies. This mechanism is expected to review progress, ensure adequate participation and coordination and advise on regional priorities for rhino conservation. By establishing regional coordination in the management of black rhinos, a precedent will be created within EAC, so that this coordination can be extended to other rare and valuable wildlife species, whose conservation needs to be managed at a regional rather than at a local level. The regional coordinating structure includes the national agencies responsible for rhino management in each country with ad hoc representation from other regions and international agencies where appropriate.

### **Status of eastern black rhino in East African countries**

Presently (2008) Kenya conserves about 85% (c.600) of eastern black rhinos, mostly within sanctuaries in both protected areas and on private land, and a free-ranging population on county council land; Tanzania, a former stronghold has ~50 animals, most in free-ranging populations in protected areas and one protected area sanctuary. The two countries have each set a meta-population target of 2000 eastern black rhinos for their respective countries. Rwanda has one rhino and aspires to build the population, while Uganda intends to reintroduce *D. b. michaeli*, which went locally extinct around 1980.

### **EAC-RMG goal and objectives**

The goal of the programme is to ensure a well distributed, rapidly growing eastern black rhino population, aiming at establishing 2000 animals by 2030, which is considered a viable meta-population for the long term.

The purpose of the group is to coordinate and provide technical support for the conservation of rhino and its habitat and promotion of the related development of sustainable livelihood processes conducive to rhino, its range and related biodiversity therein.

The programme's specific objective is to implement a pragmatic regional rhino strategy within the East Africa region following the acquisition of sound information on, firstly, the constraints and opportunities for rhino conservation within each country and secondly, the constraints and opportunities for rhino metapopulation management at the regional level. The short-term objective is to increase the regional population of *D.b. michaeli* by at least 5% per annum to 900 individuals by 2015.

### **Range states and collaborating partners**

**Kenya:** Kenya Wildlife Service, Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries, Local Authorities (County Councils) and the Communities.

**Tanzania:** Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (Wildlife Division), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA), Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), private sector and the Communities.

**Uganda:** Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Rhino Fund and the Communities.

**Rwanda:** Office Rwandaise du Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux (ORTPN).

**Burundi:** National Institute for the Environment and Conservation of Nature Burundi.

**Ethiopia:** Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority.

### **Expected outputs**

The expected key outputs at both regional and individual country level include:

1. Institutional arrangements to achieve adequate coordination of rhino conservation efforts within and between EAC range States, and between EAC regional and international initiatives.
2. A standardised monitoring and status reporting GIS database system for all rhino populations in EAC range States.

3. Enhanced technical capacity for rhino management within EAC, concerning the management, monitoring and protection of rhinos.
4. Prioritisation of rhino areas at national and regional level; creation of viable populations / and improved mechanism for sourcing of rhinos.
5. Enhanced participation and/or awareness of local communities in rhino conservation in pilot areas.
6. Improved knowledge about the technical, economic and socio-political factors that are relevant to rhino conservation within the region.
7. Leveraging of funds for rhino conservation projects.
8. Established effective rhino programme management, reporting and review system.

### **Terms of reference**

The following terms of references for the EAC Rhino Management Group were proposed in the IUCN-SSC-AfRSG meeting in Swaziland 2006.

1. Facilitate and assist with the development of regional rhino management policies, strategies and plans.
2. Assist EAC-RMG countries with undertaking assessments of potential areas and identify sourcing of rhinos for reintroductions and meta-population management.
3. Facilitate building of capacity in EAC-RMG management agencies, including targeted training and development of appropriate tools and techniques.
4. Disseminate information on best practices between EAC-RMG members.
5. Assist in evaluating progress towards achievement of regional rhino conservation goals.
6. Assist EAC-RMG countries in the development of project proposals for funding based on identification of common needs.
7. Promote and facilitate standardisation of rhino monitoring and compilation of national and regional status reports.
8. Identify and prioritize research needs for regional rhino conservation.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of current management programmes (e.g. security, monitoring, population management and re-establishments) as described in annual status reports submitted by the management authorities.
10. Provide advice, on request, to relevant conservation authorities for improved management of *D.b. michaeli*.
11. Facilitate sharing of expertise and monitoring data (e.g. for monitoring of cross border Mara – Northern Serengeti animals).
12. Facilitate and coordinate regional cooperation on rhino anti-poaching and eradication of rhino product trade activities.
13. Liaise closely with all relevant conservation and law enforcement bodies including IUCN-AfRSG and SADC counterpart groups, Lusaka Agreement, Wildlife Protection Units, TRAFFIC, CITES, and others.
14. Identify principles, approaches and incentives for exchange, partnership, ownership or co-management of rhinos that promote achievement of regional goal.
15. Explore the possibility of expansion of the national representation as the potential for reintroduction into other range states improves.

### **Mode of operation**

1. The group will comprise of at least one official representative from the identified stakeholders and appropriate number of experts as the range states deem necessary.
2. Initially the group will meet at least once a year and will gradually be incorporated into the umbrella of EAC-NRES.
3. The geographic area of reference will not be strictly limited, but will generally encompass the rhino range states in East Africa.

### **Implementation and Funding**

**Stage 1:** Stakeholder workshop - to be held in Kenya in on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009

The goals of the workshop are:

1. Establish the principles for an EAC protocol on the conservation of eastern black rhino sub-species.
2. Agree specific objectives and modalities for e.g.
  - the establishment of a technical committee for rhino meta-population management
  - protocol on administrative procedures of EAC-RMG;
  - MOU on technical framework for EAC-RMG;
  - development of EAC Rhino Recovery Group - principles and guidelines for the establishment of new rhino populations or for the consolidation of remnant populations;
3. Agree principles of structure and function of the EAC-RMG.
4. Agree in principle funding levels from range states and identify possible external funding sources for the EAC-RMG and its activities. Initial external funding has been received from Fauna and Flora International (FFI); Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL),

**Stage 2:** Formation of the EAC Rhino Management Group 2009.

**Stage 3:** Review of progress of EAC-RMG and formulation of regional strategy 2009/2010.

### Annex 3: Sample of News articles on EAC-RMG

#### **Saving the rhino as an EA icon: The experts are game**

<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/602550/-/item/0/-/10msefjz/-/index.html>

**By JULIUS BOSIRE (email the author)**

**Posted Monday, May 25 2009 at 00:00**

Conservationists from six countries in East Africa converged on Nairobi last week to discuss ways of protecting the endangered black rhino. The East African Community Rhino Management Group discussed how regional players could coordinate the management of the one-horned herbivore. Representatives from wildlife authorities in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as managers of private and community rhino sanctuaries in these countries, attended the meeting.

The Kenya Wildlife Service, which has a yearly budget of Ksh4.04 billion (\$60.4 million), mainly for conservation, has already bought surveillance equipment and cars. It has also recruited rangers to implement the plan. KWS seeks to increase its budget to Ksh7 billion (\$104.6 million) by 2010. The launch of the rhino strategy comes ahead of similar programmes next year for the elephant, the Grevys zebra, the lion, the spotted hyena and the wild dog.

Last year, Kenya launched its national strategy, which envisages regional collaboration on rhino conservation. The strategy sets a precedent for the East African Community for other endangered wildlife whose conservation is better managed at regional rather than at national level. The 2007-2011 Conservation and Management Strategy for the Black Rhino in Kenya, with management guidelines for the white rhino, seeks to raise the number of black rhinos from the current 540 to 700 by 2011.

KWS director Julius Kipng'etich said: "Our immediate goal is to conserve at least 700 black rhinos by 2011 in Kenya and manage the southern white rhino species for community conservation, education, tourism and restocking." Mr Kipng'etich said the current approach to security will be swapped for "direct engagement" with poachers through capture and interrogation. "The earlier 'shoot-to-kill' policy missed opportunities to gather intelligence. And in the current political climate, it attracts criticism. More important is close engagement with communities and private sector groups that are willing to place land under conservation efforts," he said.

Under the strategy, the number of rhinos in Kenya should rise to 2,000 in the next 25 years after they were nearly wiped out by poachers in the 1970s and 1980s. Kenya will also explore regional cooperation through a proposal seeking the establishment of an East African Rhino Management Group. The group will set protocols for exchanging and managing black rhinos in East Africa.

Since a presidential decree in 1985 to establish a rhino conservation programme, Kenya has become a major player in Africa. It has the third largest black rhino population after South Africa and Namibia. The target of 2,000 rhinos will require extension beyond protected and fenced areas to rangelands and habitats in Meru, Tsavo and the semi-arid northern Kenya.

Resources to realise the ambitious plan will come from KWS's internal revenue, the government and development partners. Among Kenya's wildlife species, the rhino suffered the most from poaching and destruction of its habitat. So small was the population that a major calamity like disease outbreak could easily have wiped out the species. Survival of the rhino in the longer term will depend on good science, intensified protection, sustained monitoring, community engagement and learning from previous lessons. In addition, private, community and county council lands will continue being used to increase rhino numbers.

KWS plans to introduce white rhinos to community areas to boost tourism as they are easier to view than are the black rhino, which usually runs away from humans. KWS and its conservation partners have developed guidelines to improve the management of white rhinos introduced to Kenya from South Africa. The southern white rhino could also serve as a reservoir for restocking efforts in northern Africa.

Fidel Ruzigandekwe, Burundi's wildlife director, said the country has only one rhino at Akagera National Park.

Tanzania's National Rhino Co-ordinator of Protected Areas, Mohammed Hemed Madehele, said the country had 67 black rhinos.

Mr Lakew Berhanu, Ethiopia's Deputy Director of Wildlife, said there was no confirmed sighting of even a single rhino in the southern region in the past 15 years. "But there have been rumours of rhino presence since 2004, though a two-week field visit in 2005 by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority yielded no sighting."

Patrick Atimnendi and Moses Mapesa, Director of Uganda's Wildlife Authority, said the organisation, jointly with Rhino Fund Uganda, were working on a programme to reintroduce rhinos to the country.

### **Conservationists hope to move and breed rare rhino**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/11/AR2009051101929.html?referrer=emailarticle>

By TOM ODULA

The Associated Press

Monday, May 11, 2009; 3:24 PM

NAIROBI, Kenya -- Kenya and Tanzania could relocate black rhinos to neighbouring countries under a plan to increase the endangered species and boost tourism in the region, wildlife officials said Monday.

Kenya has 603 of the 709 rhinos in eastern Africa and hopes to move some of them to Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. Tanzania has virtually all the other rhinos.

"If you have them (the rhinos) in one basket, for example, when a disease strikes or there is political instability in one country then you can lose them all," said Benson Okita, a senior scientist with the Kenya Wildlife Service. "If you spread them across the region then when something happens then you have a chance of rebreeding and increasing the population."

The six eastern African countries hope to raise the black rhino population to 3,000 by 2039, Okita said.

Wildlife authorities and other conservationists agreed to the plan after a one-day meeting in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi on Monday. They will hold further meetings over the next two years to pin down the details.

Moving rhinos is a complicated process because of the animals' weight \_ an adult can weigh more than a ton \_ and the distance to be covered among the six countries will be vast.

Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda also hope to boost the black rhino population by pooling together money for conservation as well as working together on anti-poaching programs and scientific research, said Okita. He also said countries like Burundi and Ethiopia, whose black rhino populations are extinct, can offer to swap animals with other countries that still have black rhino populations.

"We are reducing our risk and we are spreading our risk. When you do this, you have a high chance of success," Okita told The Associated Press.

The black rhino is only found in eastern and southern Africa. It is labeled one of the big five, a category of must-see animals while on safari \_ the buffalo, elephant, leopard and lion being the others.

The black rhino, which is actually gray, is hook-lipped and has a thick, hairless hide. It has two horns, the longer of which sits at the front of the nose.

Rampant poaching decimated the black rhino population from a high of 65,000 across Africa in the 1970s. Southern Africa now has a population of 3,600 black rhinos.



**Annex 4:** Selected pictures of the meeting and dinner

(Attached as separate pdf document)

**Annex 5: Power point presentations at the meeting**

(Attached as separate pdf documents)

Kenya presentation

Tanzania presentation

Uganda presentation

Overview of SADC-RMG presentation