

news

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World Association of
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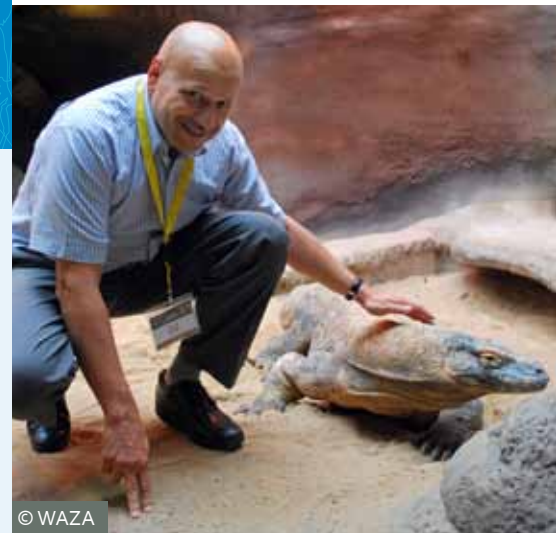
Gerald Dick

Editorial

Dear WAZA Members!

The 66th WAZA Annual Conference was a big success and accompanied by many important decisions and a fascinating programme. I would like to start with a big thank you to our host, the Prague Zoo! The whole team of the zoo made all participants feel well and we were all taken care of perfectly well. The beautiful city of Prague was a perfect venue and the participants enjoyed Czech hospitality together with the famous beer.

In this edition of WAZA News you will find a selection of the photos which are presented on the WAZA website, they illustrate work and fun at the same time. Animal population management, animal welfare, business and marketing and the UN decade on biodiversity were the big topics of this year's conference. WAZA endorsed the decade on biodiversity by adopting the resolution 66.1 and a project will now be developed in order to provide support to WAZA members in implementing public awareness within this 10 years' framework. WAZA committees changed a bit in composition and the handover of presidency concluded the conference.



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Gerald Dick with Komodo dragon at Prague zoo.

I wish to thank all members for their ongoing support of WAZA and especially the WAZA Council under the leadership of Mark Penning for supporting me personally and the whole executive office team.

Being on the cusp of WAZA's 77th Anniversary year in 2012, I hope you are all enjoying the 2012 WAZA calendar.

Season's greetings and best wishes for a successful and prosperous Year 2012!

Gerald Dick
WAZA Executive Director ■

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Richard H Emslie & Michael H Knight

African Rhino Status and Trends

from IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG)



Rhino numbers

IUCN SSC AfRSG held its ninth meeting at Mokala National Park, South Africa in March 2011. At this meeting continental numbers and trends of African rhino were updated to produce provisional revised continental estimates as of 31 December 2010.

Despite increased levels of poaching since the 2008 AfRSG meeting, numbers of white (*Ceratotherium simum*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) have increased at a continental level reaching an estimated 20,160 (496 populations) and 4,880 (134 populations) respectively by the end of 2010 as shown in Figure 1.

Since 1991 white rhino numbers in Africa have increased by an average net 6.8% per annum. South Africa remains the major white rhino range State conserving 93.2% of this species with numbers increasing to 18,800 by the end of 2010. Numbers of southern white rhino in other range States have also increased from an estimated 831 in 1997 to 1,365 by the end of 2010 (up from

1,225 in 2007) with over 300 in each of Namibia and Kenya. However, due to poaching, white rhino numbers in Zimbabwe have dropped below 300 (although indications are numbers are starting to slightly increase again). Numbers in Botswana, Swaziland and Uganda continue to grow and more white rhino have been introduced to a Zambian Park. The last four potentially breeding northern white rhino have been translocated from Dvůr Králové Zoo in the Czech Republic to a reserve in Kenya in the hope this will stimulate breeding.

Since black rhino numbers bottomed out at 2,410 in 1995, numbers have doubled increasing to 4,880 in the wild during the last 15 years (an average annual increase of 4.8%). Updated subspecies totals (and strongholds) as of the end of 2010 were 2,200 *D.b. minor* (South Africa and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe), 1,920 *D.b. bicornis* (Namibia) and 740 *D.b. michaeli* (Kenya). Black rhino also occur in Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Swaziland, Angola and Mozambique.

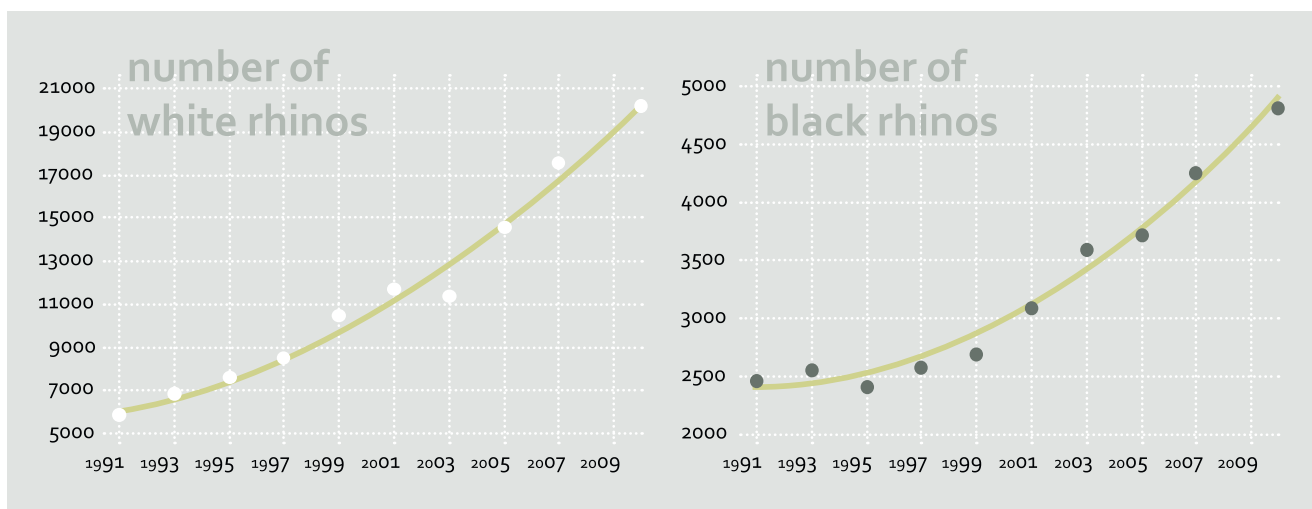
98.3% of Africa's (black and white) rhinos continue to be conserved by four range States: South Africa, Namibia, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Botswana, Tanzania and Swaziland each conserve over 100 rhinos with smaller numbers in Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique and Angola.

Poaching

The rise in poaching in certain range States continues to be of concern. Point 26 of the Secretariat's report (SC61 Doc 45.1) on the implementation of Res Conf 9.14 (rev CoP15) indicated it was likely that the total number of rhinos (both species) poached in South Africa in 2011 is likely to exceed 2010's 333 animals. This year (as of the 3rd August 2011) 239 rhino have been poached in South Africa. Extrapolating (assuming a similar rate of poaching for the rest of the year), gives an estimated possible 2011 poaching total of 406 animals.

Figure 1. White Rhino and Black Rhino population trends 1991–2010

Changes in estimated numbers of white and black rhino in Africa since 1991 with fitted second-order polynomial trendline (IUCN SSC AfRSG data).





© Keryn Adcock
White rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*).

The slight decline in poaching in 2011 since peak levels at the end of 2010 (Figure 2) suggest that in South Africa the increased law enforcement effort, formation of the National Wildlife Crime Reaction Unit, elevation of rhino crimes to top priority crimes, appointment of advocates to prosecute cases, increasing use of DNA evidence, use of the army in Kruger National Park, a number of well pub-

licized arrests, some convictions and other initiatives might be starting to have an effect.

Current poaching levels in South Africa in 2011 (extrapolated for the full year) represents 1.96% of the current number of rhinos in the country and as this is well below the maximum potential population growth rate for rhinos with a stable age structure

(of around 8–9%), and below actual underlying metapopulation growth rates (which tend to be less than this level). Current levels of poaching are therefore sustainable and numbers are continuing to increase in South Africa. Reported poaching levels in Kenya in 2010 were similar at 2.29% and these poaching levels, although of concern, are also sustainable.

What would not be sustainable would be for the rate of poaching to continue to escalate at the rate it did in South Africa from 2007 to the end of 2010 or as it did in Zimbabwe from 2006 to 2008 (with the latter causing rhino numbers in that country to decline). For example, the loss of 333 rhino in South Africa in 2010 represented a poaching level 2.73 times greater than 2009. If that trend were to continue for just two years, the annual number of rhino poached in South Africa would increase to 12.0% of total numbers of rhino in South Africa (at the end of 2010) which would be unsustainable, and numbers would start to decline.

While numbers continue to increase at a continental level, there is absolutely no room for complacency. The escalation of poaching in recent years is a crisis needing a major effort to bring it under control before it threatens to reverse the successes achieved.

Figure 2: Rhino poaching/day (both species) in South Africa

Figure shows 1) the escalation in reported poaching from 2008 to date, and 2) the slight decline in poaching in 2011 (up to 3rd August) compared to peak recorded poaching in the last four months of 2010. While the current 2011 poaching level is 21.6% higher than average 2010 levels, the poaching rate in the first seven months of 2011 is 8.4% lower than the peak rate recorded in the last 4 months of 2010.

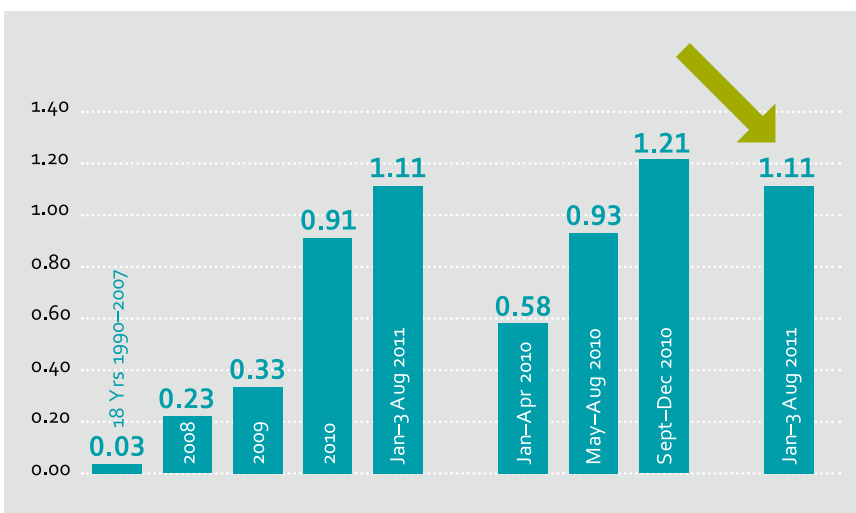


Table 1: Poaching in the four main African rhino range States for the period 2006–2011

Values expressed as a % of rhino numbers in each country in 2010. These figures represent minimums as additional rhino may have been poached and been undetected. (Based on AfRSG and TRAFFIC data).

	Reported number poached 2006–2011 to date	Reported number poached 2006–2011 to date as % of 2010 rhino numbers	Reported number poached 2010	Reported number poached in 2010 as % of 2010 rhino numbers
Kenya	62	6.47%	22	2.29%
Namibia	4	0.18%	2	0.09%
South Africa	826	3.99%	333	1.61%
Zimbabwe	321	44.52%	45	6.24%

Table 1 shows that in recent years, in terms of absolute numbers, rhino poaching has been highest in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Poaching (as a proportion of rhino numbers) has been most severe in Zimbabwe with current rhino numbers in Zimbabwe now lower than they were in 2007 as a result. The recorded numbers of rhinos poached in Zimbabwe have declined since peak levels in 2008, and there are signs that rhino numbers are starting to slowly increase again. However, the level of poaching in Zimbabwe in 2010 as a percentage of current rhino numbers remains very high. Poaching would not need to increase much more to once again cause numbers to decline. Although a cause for concern, current poaching levels in Kenya and South Africa will not lead to population decline. Poaching remains low in Namibia.

Pseudo-hunting¹ appears to have increased again in a couple of South African provinces. There has been a recent well publicised arrest and investigations are also underway into this issue. The South African government is currently investigating the best ways to deal with this issue. Plans are also being made to revise the country's white rhino conservation strategy.

Warning – Increased thefts of rhino horn worldwide – Need for vigilance

Zoos worldwide need to be on their guard to protect their rhinos and especially secure any rhino horn they may have (on display or from natural mortalities) given increased thefts of horn internationally. It is recommended that only models of horn and not real horn are put on display.

Appropriate Penalties for Rhino Crimes

Res 9.14 (revCoP15) calls upon range States *"to be vigilant in their law enforcement efforts including ... the application of appropriate penalties to act as effective deterrent"*. In the case of Kenya, penalties are currently in the process of being reviewed and revised. As was highlighted in the joint IUCN/TRAFFIC report on rhinos to CoP14 (CoP14 Doc 54), legislated penalties in Mozambique are inadequate to act as an effective deterrent. This issue has increased in importance given that intelligence and investigations have revealed that many of the poached horns from South Africa are being couriered via Mozambique, with many of the poachers (especially in Eastern Kruger National Park) also coming from there.

Acknowledgements

This is an edited version of an information document prepared for CITES Standing Committee Meeting 61. The AfRSG would like to acknowledge the cooperation and provision of information by range States on which much of this information document is based. The AfRSG also would like to acknowledge sponsorship of the Mokala AfRSG meeting and the core support being provided to the Scientific Officer by WWF's African Rhino Programme, Save the Rhino International, US Fish & Wildlife Service's Rhino & Tiger Conservation Fund and the International Rhino Foundation. Endangered Wildlife Trust is thanked for administrative support. ■

News Box

BBC reported on 25 October 2011: A critically endangered species of rhino is now extinct in Vietnam, according to a report by conservation groups.

The WWF and the International Rhino Foundation said the country's last Javan rhino was probably killed by poachers, as its horn had been cut off.

¹ Pseudo-hunting refers to the suspicious hunting of a rhino by someone who doesn't appear to be a normal or proficient hunter and who comes from countries not previously known to have a culture of big game hunting and who is prepared to pay high prices to hunt rhino and seems primarily interested in getting the horns rather than undertaking the hunt.

To find out more:

www.rhinos-irf.org/afrrsg/



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Dear Dr Dick

SOUTH AFRICA'S RESTRICTIONS ON THE EXPORT OF LIVE WHITE RHINOCEROS TO CAPTIVE FACILITIES

This letter serves to inform you about restrictions South Africa has placed on the export of live Southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) to captive facilities. These restrictions were briefly discussed at the recent Standing Committee meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The export of live Southern white rhino from South Africa will only be considered if:

- A letter from the CITES Management Authority of the importing country includes a statement that the country has adequate legislation to ensure that live specimen will only be used for the purpose as indicated on the CITES export and import permit;
- The CITES Scientific Authority of the importing country confirms, in writing, that the destination is appropriate and acceptable and that the facility is able to house and care for the rhino in accordance with Resolution Conference 11.20;
- The zoo or captive facility in the importing country is a member of WAZA or a member of an association member of WAZA;
- The export is for re-introduction purposes.

Furthermore, a special condition will be included on all export permits indicating that the rhino horns may not be used for commercial purposes. The rhino horn will be micro-chipped and DNA samples will be taken from the horn prior to export.

South Africa would appreciate it if WAZA could assist and support it in implementing the above mentioned requirements.

Yours sincerely

Ms Nosipho Ngcaba
Director-General
Department of Environmental Affairs
Letter signed by: Mr Fundisile Mketeni
Designation: Deputy Director-General: Biodiversity and Conservation
Date: 14/09/2011

Comment from the Chair of the Committee for Population Management, Dave Morgan:

The stipulation by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs that White Rhinos may only be exported from South Africa to WAZA members is indeed a privilege and a clear demonstration of the level of credibility and standing that WAZA enjoys with international licensing and permitting authorities. However the responsibilities that ensue from such a licensing condition and the

onus of its implementation may have far-reaching consequences for the Association. Whilst the rationale behind this stipulation is fully recognised and understood, WAZA Council is concerned that the membership screening procedure presently utilized by WAZA is not sufficiently robust to the extent of these responsibilities. Communication with the South African Department of Environ-

mental Affairs going forward will recommend very strongly that this proviso be limited to current and present institutional members of WAZA and to members of WAZA regional associations where a recognised membership screening protocol or accreditation programme is in effect.