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OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

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THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF RHINOCEROSSES IN ZIMBABWE

The attached document\* has been submitted by Zimbabwe.

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF RHINOCEROSES IN ZIMBABWE

### 1. Distribution of Rhinos

Both species of rhinos (black and white) are found on State (safari areas, national parks and recreational parks) and private land (conservancies) in Zimbabwe (Figures 1a-b).

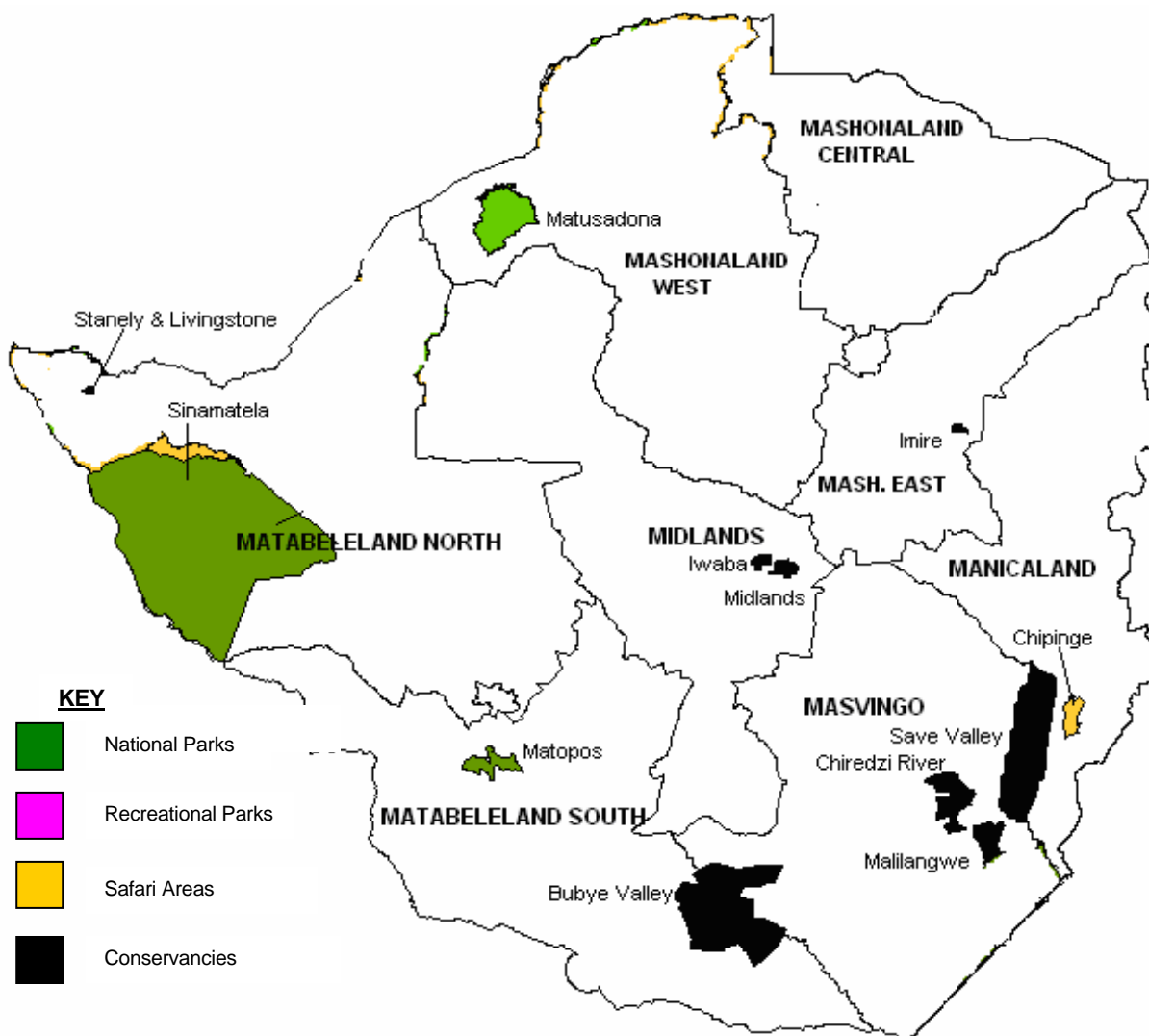


Figure 1(a). The distribution of black rhinos in Zimbabwe

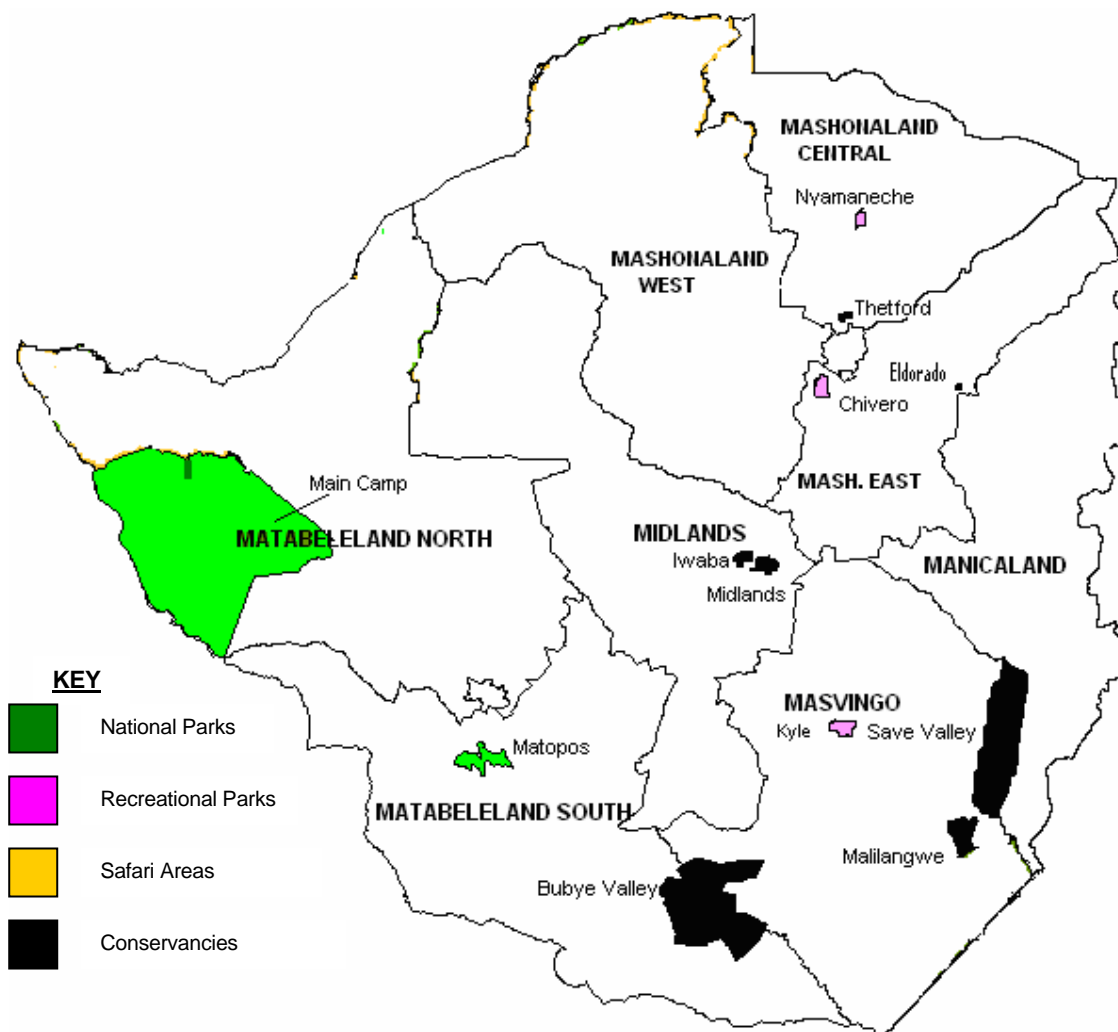


Figure 1. The distribution of white rhinos in Zimbabwe

## 2. Population Sizes of Rhinos

A total of 724 rhinos of both species (424 black and 300 white rhino) were present in the country as at 31 December 2009 (Table 1) and more rhinos (333 black and 164 white rhinos) were on private land than on stateland. About 70% of both species of rhinos was on private land.

Table 1. The numbers of rhinos in different land tenure systems of Zimbabwe

LAND TENURE	SPECIES		TOTAL
	BLACK	WHITE	
State	91	136	227
Private	333 (79%)	163 (55%)	497 (69%)
Total	424	300	724

### 3. Changes in rhino population sizes

The changes in rhino population sizes from 2000 to 2009 are shown in Table 2. There were 464 black and 207 white rhino in 2000. The highest figure for black rhinos of 576 heads was reached at in 2002 while for white rhino was 346 in 2007 in the past decade. Thereafter the two rhino species declined to 424 and 300, respectively, as at 31 December 2009.

Table 2: Population sizes of black and white rhinos in Zimbabwe: 2000-2009

Year	Black rhino	White rhino
2000	464	207
2001	524	218
2002	576	260
2003	536	250
2004	550	262
2005	571	289
2006	553	317
2007	558	346
2008	479	301
2009	424	300

### 4. Population trends of rhinos

Black rhino population increased during the first three years of the past decade and there after started to decline (Figure 2). Black rhino numbers declined by an average of 1% per annum during the past decade. On the other hand white rhinos increased steadily during the first seven years of the past decade and thereafter started to decline (Figure 2). White rhinos increased at an average rate of about 4.5% per year during the past decade. Each rhino species did not reach the average benchmark growth rate of 5% in the past ten-year period. The decline in rhino populations of both species is attributed mainly to poaching, and to a lesser extent to other causes of mortality and to adjustments to numbers based on improved monitoring.

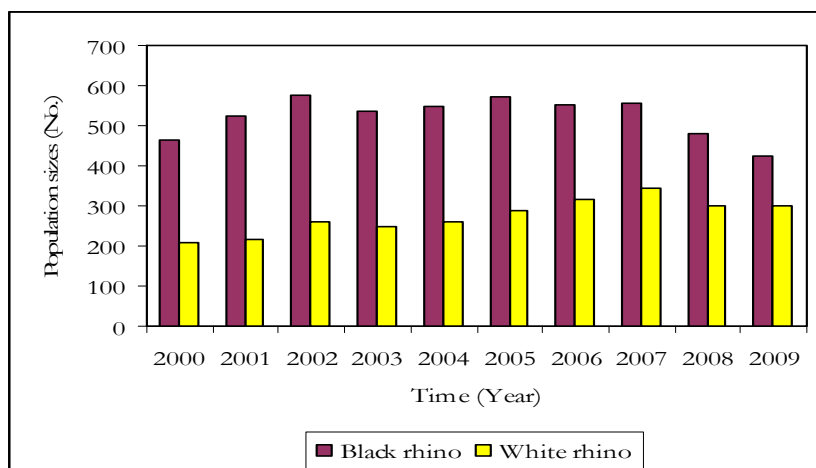


Figure 2: Black and White Rhino population sizes; 2000-2009

### 5. Mortality and Poaching Levels

A total of 323 black rhino died between 2000 and 2009, inclusively, and out of these deaths 235 individuals were poached (Table 3). About 88 black rhinos died due to other factors such as intra-specific fighting,

diseases, old age, and predation, exposure of orphaned calves and unknown causes (Figure 5). In 2008 over 49 black rhinos could not be accounted for meaning that mortality could be as high as  $96+49^*=145$  individuals.

Table 3: Black rhino mortality due to poaching and other factors: 2000-2009 (\* Figures not included in the totals)

Year	Total number of rhinos that died	No. of Poached rhinos	No. of rhinos that died due to other factors
2000	6	3	3
2001	9	2	7
2002	11	2	9
2003	37	37	0
2004	25	23	2
2005	20	8	12
2006	36	21	15
2007	47	34	13
2008	96 (145*)	76	20
2009	36	29	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>88</b>

A total of 74 white rhino died between 2000 and 2009, inclusively, and out of these deaths 41 individuals were poached (Table 4). About 33 white rhinos died due to other factors such as intra-specific fighting, diseases, fighting, old age and unknown factors (Figure 5). In 2008 about 20 white rhinos could not be accounted for meaning that mortality could be as high as  $23+ 20^* = 43$  individuals.

Table 4: White rhino mortality due to poaching and other factors: 2000-2009 (\* figures not included in totals)

Year	Total number of rhinos that died	No. of poached white rhino	No. of rhinos that died due to other factors
2000	0	0	0
2001	3	0	3
2002	6	0	6
2003	5	5	0
2004	3	2	1
2005	8	2	6
2006	7	0	7
2007	6	4	2
2008	23 (43*)	19	4
2009	13	9	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>

*In summary at least 397 black and white rhinos died and out of these 276 were definitely poached between 2000 and 2009, inclusively.*

There were 49 black and 20 white rhinos that were not accounted for in 2008. Depending on the author the animals may be recorded as mortalities and placed either in 2008 or 2009 or are split between the two years. National Parks records take the missing rhinos as dead and poached. *Assuming that 49 black and 20 white*

which were not accounted for in 2008 were poached, total mortality=372+94=466; and total poached=284+61=345 during the past decade (Table 5)

Table 5. Numbers of rhinos poached when assuming that missing rhinos were poached

PERIOD/ YEAR	TOTAL DEATHS	TOTAL DEATHS	POACHED NUMBERS	POACHED
	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE
2008	96+49=145	23+20=43	76+49=125	19+20=39
2000-2009	323+49=372	74+20=94	235+49=284	41+20=61

## 6. Poaching trends

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the trends in rhino mortalities including those due to poaching and other decimating factors. In black rhinos there was an increase in mortality, poaching and mortality due to other factors per year over the ten-year period. There was low overall mortality and poaching of black rhinos during the first three years of the past decade. 2003 marked the year of increased mortality that peaked in 2008. Although mortality and poaching were low during the first seven years of the reporting period, white rhino poaching was also heaviest in 2008. The patterns of total mortality (Figure 2) and of mortality due to poaching (Figure 3) are more similar to each other compared to those between total mortality and mortality due to other factors (Figure 4), especially for black rhinos. This implies that poaching had more influence on mortality patterns compared with the other decimating factors singly or combined, and was the factor causing the decline of the rhino population. Poaching was responsible for 73% deaths in black rhinos and 55% deaths in white rhinos between 2000 and 2009. Poaching was heaviest in a given year when the country's economy was in its worst state in 2007-2008 period and the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority was weakest in terms of resourcing its field operatives. However, there was an improvement in terms of the numbers of rhinos that were poached in 2009 compared to 2008.

There is an observed positive relationship between the numbers of black rhinos that died due to other causes (Figure 3) and those that were poached (Figure 4) during the past decade. This can be partially explained that probably some animals were shot, wounded, fled and died at a distance out of the poachers' sight. Their carcasses were located sometime later, decomposed and with the horns intact. Field people, in the absence of an expert postmortem, could not establish the cause of death; hence the relationship observed. In shot some of the carcasses that were included into the category of deaths due to other factors might have been due to undetected poaching.

In January and February 2010, 6 rhinos have been poached, i.e. 5 white rhinos and 1 black rhinos, all on state land.

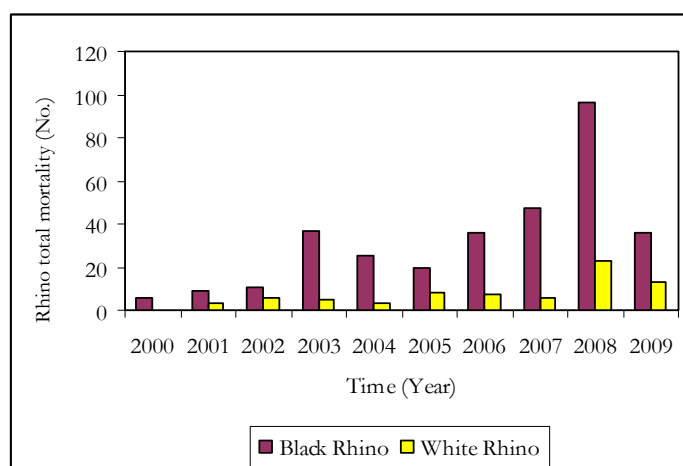


Figure 2: Total mortalities of Black and White Rhinos; 2000-2009

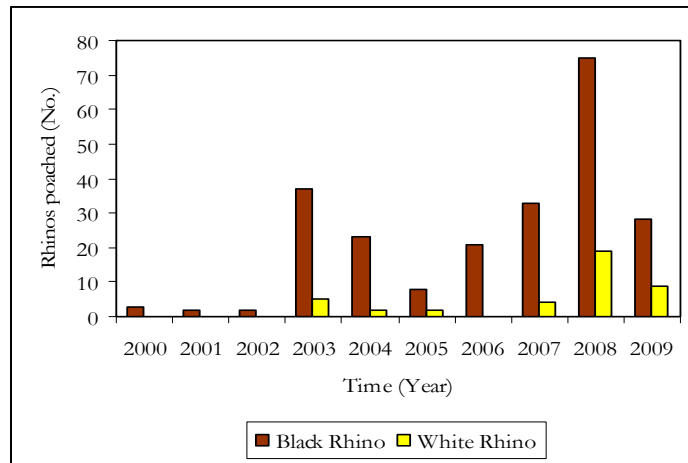


Figure 3: Total numbers of Black and White Rhinos poached; 2000-2009

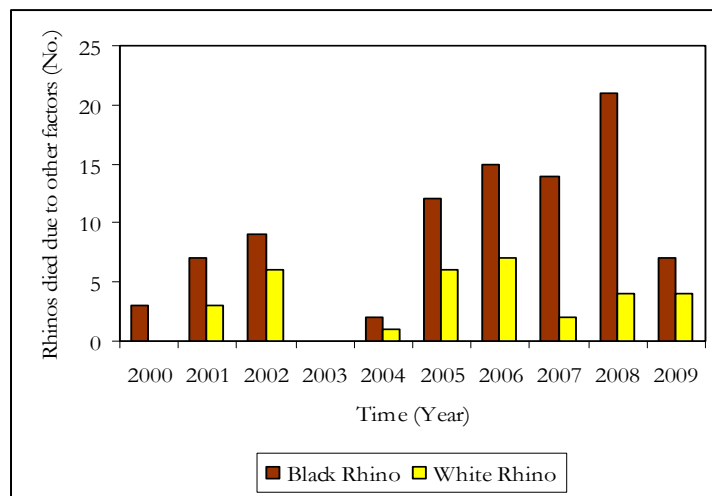


Figure 4: Total mortalities of Black and White Rhinos due to other factors (excluding poaching); 2000-2009

## 7. Crime analysis

Both species of rhinos have been negatively impacted by poaching irrespective of the land tenure system on which they are found in the country. Rhino poaching is being undertaken by highly organized criminals, involving international syndicates and being supported by some locals.

A total of fifteen serious cases involving rhino poaching were investigated during the period from 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2009. In these cases, twenty-three (23) accused persons were arrested for poaching of rhinos and taken to court. Eleven cases were thrown out of court for lack of sufficient evidence. Four cases resulted in four people being convicted. Only two people were acquitted. Nine cases are still pending in courts of law. Nine poachers were killed during exchange of gunfire with parks rangers and the Zimbabwe Republic Police. An assortment of ten rifles, various types of ammunition, twelve rhino horns and other wildlife products were recovered.

## 8. Rhino Protection Measures

- Strengthening the Intensive Protection Zone and Private Custodianship**  
 Zimbabwe has continued supporting the existence of black rhino Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) on stateland since the early 1990's. Black rhinos were captured from areas of high risk of poaching and relocated to four IPZs in throughout the 1980's and in the early 1990's where resources for conservation were concentrated. During the same time some rhinos were moved onto private properties where there are being conserved on custodianship basis.

- **Joint anti-poaching patrols.** Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) singly and or jointly with the rhino custodians and other State law enforcement agents such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police are carrying out rhino anti-poaching patrols in high security risk areas. Each region of the ZPWMA has a specialized anti-poaching unit for pro-and re-active response to serious wildlife poaching.
- **Formulation of conservation strategies** through stakeholder participatory approach. The strategies that were crafted between 2000 and 2009 are contained in the following documents.
  - Rhino Emergency Action Plan of 2008
  - Short term strategies for rhino protection
  - Review of rhino policy and management plan
  - Formulation of new rhino policy (In progress)
- **Deterrent sentences and fines.** The compensation value for poaching a rhino has been reviewed upward to US\$120 000-00. Recommendations for a mandatory sentence for anyone convicted of poaching a rhino was submitted to the Attorney General's office for consideration.
- **Resource mobilization** by Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, NGOs and private rhino custodians. Resources for rhino conservation include funds, fuels, field equipment, vehicles etc. For example all state areas with rhinos were bought new vehicles for wildlife protection in the last two years. The Authority has facilitated the importation of semi-automatic weapons for some rhino conservancies.
- **Rhino operations.** Every year ZPWMA holds stakeholder consultative meetings to map out annual operations work plans. Implementation of the plans is substantially supported by NGOs to immobilize and ear-notch, insert implants or transmitters in order to facilitate individual identification and monitoring. Rhino are also captured to relocate surplus animals, to start new populations, to remove rhinos from areas of low to high security, to remove snares and or treat wounds and for dehorning to create disincentive to poachers.
- **Crime awareness campaigns and meetings** are being carried out or attended with different stakeholders. Zimbabwe is a signatory to CITES and has a national law to implement such international treaties or agreements to control and regulate trade in wildlife, including rhinos and their products. At regional level ZPWMA attends the African Rhino Specialist Group meetings to exchange notes on rhino research and protection. In September 2009 ZPWMA hosted a workshop (Hwange workshop) on wildlife crime prevention targeting prosecutors, magistrates, police officers and other State law enforcement agents. The results of the workshop are beginning to bear fruits as evidenced by successful prosecutions and deterrent sentences being handed to wildlife poachers. There is now closer cooperation and investigation of wildlife cases between Parks and Police officers. The Attorney-General's office undertook to oppose bail and to appeal against granting of bail to suspects arrested for serious wildlife crimes.
- **Intelligence gathering and exchange.** ZPWMA has its own Investigations branch that works with other law enforcement agents within and outside the country. The Branch gathers intelligence of poacher incursions and illegal trade in wildlife products. Regular meetings are held with neighbouring countries in order to share intelligence, conducts joint patrols and general collaboration. For example the branch attends regional meetings on wildlife poaching such as the SADC Rhino and Elephant Security Group meetings, and Interpol's Environmental crime meetings. Last year two cross-border workshops/meetings on rhino poaching were held between Zimbabwe and S. Africa, and between Zimbabwe and Zambia.
- **Skills development.** ZPWMA offers various types of skills training programmes to its staff ranging from field related and paramilitary courses, leadership courses to equipment repair and maintenance. ZPWMA works with the Zimbabwe Republic Police and Zimbabwe National Army to continuously upgrade its staff with regards to paramilitary and legal skills development for rhino protection. An 8-day rhino monitoring training was conducted by the African Rhino Specialist Group at Kyle Recreational Park from 22 to 29 September 2009.
- **Officers appointed for specific rhino duties.** Zimbabwe parks and Wildlife Management Authority appointed two officers, one to deal with rhino biological issues and the other officer deals with security matters. The Director of Public Prosecution appointed a Senior Wildlife Law Officer whose duties shall



- **Border control and compliance with CITES regulations**

The Authority has officers deployed at Major airports and selected border posts where they work in collaboration with the newly established Zimbabwe Republic Police Border Control Unit. A number of seizures have been made and virtually all did not relate to rhinos.

- **Rhino research and monitoring** are on-going activities focusing on aspects including feeding and breeding ecology, spatio-temporal behaviour etc. Information from research and monitoring is useful for management decisions in the areas of habitat management, re-introductions, patrol deployments and protection.

Zimbabwe has been challenged to (1) target and bring to book both the 'big and small' persons driving poaching in the country, (2) approach the international community at various fora and lobby for the closure of international rhino markets, (3) to lobby reputable research institutions to carry out research to find substitute for medicinal and other uses; in place of rhino horn, and (4) lobby the international community to continue with sustained awareness campaigns to save the rhinos.

**APPENDIX 1. RHINO POACHING CASES AS FROM JULY 2007 TO DECEMBER 2009**

	<b>Suspect/Accused</b>	<b>Nature of Offence</b>	<b>Place of Occurrence</b>	<b>ZRP,CID CR.RRB</b>	<b>Recoveries</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Case 1	<p>1. Diswani Bonda. 2. Gadreck Nziramasanga. 3. Brian Gahadza. 4. Innocent Masocha.</p> <p><b>(All Zimbabwean nationals)</b></p>	<p>1. C/S 45 of the Parks and Wildlife Act Chapter 20; 14 of 1996. C/S of the Firearms Act. 3. Armed robbery.</p>	<p>1.Thetford Estate 04/07/07 2.Thetford Estate 07/11/07 3.Nyamaneche Sanctuary 4.Imire Game Park 5.Chivero Recreational Park 16/5/08 6.Chivero Recreational Park 17/6/08 7.Kyle Recreational Park 7/6/08</p>	<p>Marlborough CR04/07/07 CR56/08/07</p> <p>Guruve CR90/06/07 Marondera DR10/11/07 Hwedza CR30/11/07 Norton CR132/6/08 Marlborough CR56/08/07 Masvingo Rural CR36/06/08</p>	<p>2 F.N rifles 3 A.K47 rifle 2 rhino horns 230 rounds ammunition</p>	<p><b>Case pending at court.</b> <b>Accused 1 Diswan Bonda is now late.</b> <b>Accused 2 &amp; 3 Gadreck Nziramasanga and Brian Gahadza are the ones who are currently appearing at the Rotten Row Magistrate court where the matter is still pending.</b></p> <p><b>Accused 4 Innocent Masocha is on a warrant of arrest.</b></p>
Case 2	<p>1. Alfred Moyo. 2. Dalubuhle Ncube. 3. Bekimpilo Ncube. 4. Xolani Sibanda.</p> <p><b>(Zimbabweans)</b></p>	<p>C/S 45 of the Parks and Wildlife Act Chapter 20:14 of 1996. (Unlawful killing of a specially protected Black rhino.)</p>	<p>16. Matopo National Park. 13/05/08</p>	<p>ZRP Matopos CR 10 / 05/08</p>	<p>Horns were not recovered suspect escaped.</p>	<p><b>Pending at court.</b> <b>Accused 1 Alfred Moyo escaped on the date of arrest and is still at large. Accused 2 Dalubuhle Ncube committed suicide soon after release from remand on bail.</b> <b>Accused 3 Bekimpilo Ncube and Xolani Sibanda are the ones still to appear at court.</b></p>
Case 3	<p>1. Shonhiwa Simon 2.Dumisani Moyo</p> <p><b>(Zimbabweans)</b></p>	<p>C/S 45 of the Parks and Wildlife Act. Poaching rhinos in the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy</p>	<p>18.Midlands Conservancy</p>	<p>KweKwe Central DR16/02/08 CRB377-8/02/08</p>	<p>No recoveries.</p>	<p><b>Acquitted due to lack of evidence.</b></p>
Case 4	<p>1. Innocent Masocha 2. Diswani Bonda</p>	<p>Illegal killing of one male adult rhino.</p>	<p>7 September 2008 Nyamaneche Sanctuary</p>	<p>Mvurwi ZRP RRB0331545</p>	<p>Full rhino carcass</p>	<p><b>Pending at court.</b> <b>Accused 1 Innocent Masocha is on a warrant of arrest as he absconded. Accused 2 Diswani Bonda is now late. Take note he was linked to case No. 2.</b></p>

	Suspect/Accused	Nature of Offence	Place of Occurrence	ZRP,CID CR.RRB	Recoveries	Outcome
	<b>(Zimbabweans)</b>					
Case 5	1.H. Museka 2.L.Mutsogo 3.Unknown deceased  <b>(Zimbabweans)</b>	C/S 45 Parks and Wildlife Act. Chapter 20:14. Poached a rhino.	18/11/08 Involved in an accident at 44km peg Masvingo-Beitbridge Road.	Masvingo Investigations A845/7/F8/11/08 Chivi CR30/11/08	3 rhino horns 1 x A.K rifle S/No. 899 - 197 4 magazines 108 rounds	<b>Warrant of arrest issued on 25/3/09 for accused No. 1 and 2 H.Museka and L. Mutsogo.</b>
Case 6	1. Patricia Chinemo 2. Anold Gondongwe  <b>(Zimbabwean nationals)</b>	C/S 45 Parks and Wildlife Act.Chpt.20:14	9/1/09 Bulawayo	CID Minerals Bulawayo DR 09/1/09 ZRP Hillside CR123/1/09	1.6kgs rhino horn 47.4kgs tusks Value: US\$7110 18 zebra skins 12 ostrich eggs	<b>Convicted and paid USD 800.00 fine</b>
Case 7	Carry Forward Chigwanda  <b>( Zimbabwean)</b>	Poaching of a female adult rhino	08/3/09 Chipinge Safari Area	CR28/03/09 ZRP Middle Sabi		<b>Acquitted</b>
Case 8	1.Webster Stanley 2. Three other deceased persons including <b>Police Officer.</b>  <b>(Zimbabwean)</b>	Illegal rhino poaching	9/05/09 Malilangwe	Masvingo CR30/05/09	1x .303 rifle 1x 3006 hunting rifle Red single cab Toyota Hilux & live rounds.	<b>Webster Stanley was convicted and sentenced to US\$2000.00 fine. A motor vehicle Toyota Raider Pick Up they were using was forfeited to the state is now attached to the Masvingo Magistrate court.</b>
Case 9	1. Innocent Mudzviti 2. Marvelous Mahlauro <b>(deceased )</b> <b>(Zimbabweans)</b>	Illegal rhino poaching in Save Valley	04/06/09	ZRP Chiredzi CR34 /06/09	2 FN pistols 10 live FN rifle rounds 13 pistol rounds	<b>Case pending . Innocent Mudzviti and Marvelous Mahlauro were killed at the scene of the incident.</b>

	Suspect/Accused	Nature of Offence	Place of Occurrence	ZRP,CID CR.RRB	Recoveries	Outcome
Case 10	1. Starford Machirori (deceased) (Zimbabwean)	Rhino poaching at Kyle Recreational Park)	18/04/09	Masvingo Rural RRB0522654	1 .303 hunting rifle	Starford Machirori was killed during the contact with Parks Rangers and case is still under investigations to establish the identity of the poacher who escaped during the shoot out.
Case 11	1. Life Mbedzi (deceased) 2. Jan Johannes George Roos 3. Hardlife Nkomo (injured and captured) 1 .South African national) 2.Zimbabweans, 1 deceased and 1. wounded)	Illegal rhino poaching in Bubyeye River Conservancy	1/08/09	Makado CR 03/08/09	.303 rifle fitted with silencer and telescopic sight	Pending at court. Life Mbedzi was shot and killed. Accused Jan Johannes George Roos, a South African national did not have any charges leveled against him due to lack of evidence. Accused Hardlife Nkomo is still appearing in court, and his last remand court date was 17/02/10.
Case 12	(1) Sister Nyathi (Police Officer) (2) Isaac Matingarare (Zimbabweans)	Found in possession of one rhino horn	9 October 2009 Chiredzi	Masvingo CR.23/10/09	1 rhino horn. Value:	Accused Sister Nyathi a Police Officer based at Chiredzi Traffic section was acquitted due to lack of evidence. Accused 2 Isaac Matingarare was convicted and sentenced to 4 years imprisonment.
Case 13	1. Tichaona Mutyairi (Arrested) 2. Samson Mazhongwe 3. Ishumael	Illegal rhino poaching	Devuri Conservancy 27/10/09	Bikita RRB0657114	1.One black rhino horn 2.1 x A.K rifle 3. 60 rounds ammunition. 4. 1 x Axe. 5. Several	Tichaona Mutyairi was sentenced to 17 years imprisonment. Accused No. 2 Samson Mazhongwe and others who escaped at the point of arrest are being sought by the Police.

	Suspect/Accused	Nature of Offence	Place of Occurrence	ZRP,CID CR.RRB	Recoveries	Outcome
	4. Evans 5. Magetsi  (Zimbabweans)				pairs of shoes.	
Case 14	Suspects escaped. Believed to be from Makabuli Area.	Poaching of a rhino Name of rhino: MAZ 8yrs old.	4/12/09 Jompempe Block, Buby Valley Conservancy.	5/12/09 ZRP Makado RRB 0710068	2 rhino horns ZNA Uniform 1 x 30 calibre bullet head.	<b>Case pending.</b> <b>All suspects in this matter were not identified during contact with anti-poaching units and efforts are being made to establish their identity.</b>
Case 15	Suspects still outstanding	Poaching of a rhino	04/12/09 Buby Conservancy	Makado CR12/12/09	2 rhino horns and ZDF uniforms	<b>Case under investigations as two unidentified suspects escaped at the time of contact with anti-poaching patrol unit.</b>

1. The above cited cases mainly denote cases that were investigated by Zimbabwe Parks Law Enforcement Officers and the Zimbabwe Republic Police.
2. Where there are no suspects to the case it is due to the fact that carcasses from poaching incidents are discovered well after the poaching with no leads to be pursued.