

Botswana Rhino Reintroduction & Monitoring Project

Coordinators: Map Ives and Kai Collins (Rhino Conservation Botswana)

HERBIVORES



The successful reintroduction and monitoring of black and white rhino in northern Botswana thanks to collaborative conservation efforts between Wilderness Safaris, Wilderness Wildlife Trust, Botswana's Department of Wildlife (DWNP) and the Botswana Government

Towards the end of 2012 and through 2013 there was evidence of much dispersal of rhino from their core range. This has probably come about through the natural “coming of age” of many of the rhino born between 2003 and 2007, many of whom are now old enough to either breed calves of their own in the case of females, or to look at establishing a territory of their own if they are bulls.

This has resulted in a need for increased monitoring activity by Wilderness Safaris officers who spent considerable time on lengthy patrols to previously untravelled areas. What is of interest here is that the patrols continue to be fully integrated with the Botswana Anti-Poaching Unit and members of the Botswana Defence Force. Thus, on one patrol there are two members of each unit together with two members of the monitoring team. Their results are truly impressive given the high floodwaters of the last few years, and the large areas over which they have to move.

Although this dispersal is expected and completely natural, it is pleasing to see that the rhino are seeking out prime habitats and are breeding at an extremely high percentage per annum, with several calves located especially during the rainy season, which coincides with green grass and therefore the mothers' good condition.

