

lishing populations should be given preference until the desired number of founders have been introduced. Only then should new populations be established. If the principles of the conservation plan are adopted, new populations will only need to be founded in about six years.

¹ Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei.

² A joint project of the Natal Parks Board, the Southern African Nature Foundation (representing the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in southern Africa), the Endangered Wildlife Trust, and Total (South Africa).

Status, history and performance of black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* populations in South Africa, the TBVC states¹ and Namibia

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The widely publicised decline of the black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (Linnaeus, 1758), and the battle to save it from extinction, has centered on rapidly dwindling populations of Zimbabwe, Central and East Africa. It is not widely known that one third of the world's remaining 3 000 black rhinoceros now occur in the region comprising South Africa, the TBVC states and Namibia. The majority of these populations have increased in recent years. However, no-one actively concerned with rhinoceros has any delusions about the seriousness of the threat facing the region's rhinoceros, black and white. Recent poaching of black rhinoceros in Namibia, and white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (Burchell, 1817) in Swaziland is cause for grave concern.

Three of the four recognised subspecies *Diceros bicornis bicornis* (Linnaeus, 1758), *D.b. minor* (Drummond, 1876), and *D.b. michaeli* Zukowsky, 1964 occur in the region. A knowledge of each population's status and relative performance is a precursor to improving management of these populations on a strategic, rather than on a parochial single reserve or conservation organisation basis. Comparisons between the performances of various populations are of particular management interest. To allow such comparisons, the mean annual rates of increase of the various populations were estimated using standard methods. It was generally not possible to compare population performance between areas using the literature. Quoted performances either used different measures and calculation methods, or did not exist.

For this paper, Brooks (1989) was used as a major source of census information. The census method used, and an indication of the precision of the estimate are given where possible. Much of the data on the history of the different populations is scattered throughout the literature. By including a brief history of each population, it was endeavoured to make this information accessible in a synthesised form.

BROOKS, P.M. 1989. Proposed conservation plan for the black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* in South Africa, the TBVC states and Namibia. *Koedoe* 32(2): 1-30.

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