Abstracts

Finances: the vital factor in rhinoceros conservation

STUART FICHAT

Stuart Fichat, Rhino and Elephant Foundation, P.O. Box 381, Bedfordview, 2008 Republic of South Africa.

The use of land in any way whatsoever, involves intrinsic costs for both individuals concerned and society as a whole. The appreciation of this cost factor, however, is absent from most conservation literature and discussions to date. This glaring omission is illustrated by means of a brief historical overview of the founding and development of Africa's important national parks, which came into existence in the early years of the 20th century, without taking the then prevalent demographic and economic pressures into consideration. Failure to appreciate the importance of these pressures (especially financial) has contributed to the false belief that conservation can be undertaken without regard for cost. Under present-day circumstances, the cost of conserving wildlife must obviously be related to the cost of the land and the resources involved. Failure to meet the minimum funds required means that all expenditure less than that minimum is wasted.

Towards a black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* translocation strategy to meet the aims of the conservation plan for the species in South Africa and the TBVC states[1]

R. H. EMSLIE and P.S. GOODMAN

R.H. Emslie, Black Rhino 2000[2], Hluhluwe Game Reserve, Box 25, Mtubatuba, 3935, Natal, Republic of South Africa; P.S. Goodman, Natal Parks Board, Mkuzi Game Reserve, Private Bag X550, Mkuze, 3965 Republic of South Africa.

Black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (Linnaeus, 1758) population growth must be maximised to meet the goals of the South African conservation plan for the species. Translocation forms the key to achieving increased growth, and this paper outlines a suggested translocation strategy to meet the goals of the conservation plan. Improved data on population size, age and sex structure are prerequisites for scientific management. Changes in the annual rate of population increase, after the effects of rainfall and birth-lag effects have been statistically removed, will provide the best indicator of when animals should be moved. We propose that in the absence of heavy poaching, captive breeding should only be considered in South Africa for orphaned animals, injured animals with little chance of survival in the wild, and treated injured animals whose condition deteriorates after being re-released into the wild. Removals in future should be more selective for age class.

Animals younger than six years old are the prime animals for translocation. The use of a microlight aircraft to search for specific animals may reduce capture costs in future. Re-estab-