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## **The role of non-governmental organisations in black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* conservation in Africa**

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The role played by non-governmental organisation (NGOs) in conservation is important and there is a wealth of data testifying to the success of NGOs around the world. These organisations are often the bridge that spans the divide between funds available from the private sector and the financial needs of a project necessary to achieve success. Today, many government agencies are not always able to devote money to the full range of environmental issues that need attention.

Non-governmental organisation activity today is most obvious in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The NGOs in the countries mentioned have all to a greater or lesser extent been active in rhinoceros conservation during the past decade. In southern Africa, the NGO movement contributed to black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* conservation by

- providing vehicles and operating funds (as a joint project with the Directorate of Nature Conservation and Recreation Resorts in Namibia) for the establishment of the Auxiliary Game Guard System in the Kaokoveld;
- translocating black rhinoceros from the Etosha National Park to the national parks of Augrabies and Vaalbos;
- funding research for aerial surveys in the reserves of KwaZulu; and
- moving a number of animals from Zimbabwe to Swaziland.

However, NGOs, as a matter of urgency, must explore alternative avenues in order to reverse the imposition of alien cultural and social attitudes on the people of Africa which has resulted in much hostility towards conservation areas and wildlife. The NGOs have also avoided addressing the one burning issue which is probably the root cause of the decline of *Diceros bicornis* in Africa, i.e. the economic traffic in rhinoceros horn. The notable exception is the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which has worked in this field for many years.

How cost-effective have the NGOs been? There are many NGOs active in the conservation of the black rhinoceros and to put a figure on what has collectively been spent and how successful they have been since 1980 when the African black rhinoceros numbered 14 795 and to view the figure now of less than 3 700, is difficult. On a business balance sheet, we appear to be heading for insolvency. Just as the situation approaches crisis proportions for the rhinoceros and those charged with their safe-keeping, we in the NGO movement must rise equally to the challenge and if it is imperative for us to review our strategies, then we must do so, and do so quickly. A list of funding provided by NGOs to rhinoceros conservation projects, is shown in Table 1.

It is easy to be critical when you live in a country that has not had the same problems as other African states insofar as poaching is concerned, but let us take heed that the potential for poaching is here and so too is the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn. I have no doubt that support from the NGOs will increase. Whilst it could be argued that money has been wasted, this must be viewed in the light of placing most of the money into the traditional methods of protecting rhinoceros. Against this background, the Kaokoveld project must stand out as a good example as mentioned earlier, not only in the approach taken through the Auxiliary Game Guard System, but in the relatively low cost expended to achieve results. It is, however, fair to say that circumstances will vary from area to area and one should not draw any definite conclusions from this example. I merely use it to illustrate what can be achieved

by way of a different approach. The black rhinoceros in the Kaokoveld is, as we know, increasing as a result.

Table 1  
*Rhinoceros projects undertaken by NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa as at 22 March 1988. Data supplied by WWF. Expenditure expressed in USA\$*

Country	Project title	Expenditure	Extension
Uganda	— Conservation of white rhinoceros	190,495	0
Zimbabwe	— Reintroduction of white rhinoceros	1,212	0
Kenya	— Introduction of white rhinoceros in the Meru ADC Game Reserve	36,300	0
Zimbabwe	— Ghona-Re-Zhou Game Reserve, Black rhinoceros protection	33,800	0
Tanzania	— Support for Tanzanian sub-group of IUCN/SSC	8,945	0
Zambia	— Save the Rhino Trust	839,464	0
Uganda	— Ajai Sanctuary, conservation of rhinoceros	8,778	0
Tanzania	— Anti-poaching equipment for national parks	113,418	0
Tanzania	— Lake Eyasi, anti-poaching camp	48,134	0
Zaire	— Garamba National Park, protection of rhinoceros	1,046,526	0
Botswana	— Translocation of white rhinoceros	15,314	0
Africa	— Support to the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group	25,022	25,000
Kenya	— Development of Nakuru Rhino Sanctuary	234,546	25,000
Kenya	— Lewa Downs Ranch, Ngare Sirigon Rhino Sanctuary	51,179	50,000
Kenya	— Laikipia Ranch, black rhinoceros conservation	137,724	60,000
Zimbabwe	— Black rhinoceros conservation	40,500	850,000
Zimbabwe	— Research on components of black rhinoceros conservation strategy	16,500	0
Total:		2,847,857	1,010,000

## **Development of an intelligence/information network to counter poaching and the illegal trade in trophies**

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To counter and control poaching and the illegal trade in trophies within a country or between countries, implies constant liaison among the various law enforcement agencies concerned and the nature conservation bodies affected by these illegalities. An effective network to counter such activities can not be established on an ad hoc basis, but should be planned and coordinated thoroughly.

Trafficking of, dealing in, and smuggling of rhinoceros horn (and other trophies) are problems usually dealt with by means of cooperation and joint action by police and customs departments. On their own, nature conservation agencies can never succeed in countering these problems. Neither can police and customs departments expect a high rate of success if they operate without the cooperation of the nature conservation bodies. Without information, which is the key to success, and without willing participation and liaison, the creation of an intelligence/information network to counter poaching and the illegal trade in trophies will be impossible. Various ways of procurement and evaluation of information are discussed. It should be kept in mind that information, and especially information of a sensitive nature, is not cheap. Therefore, it is necessary to place a monetary value on the objective, in this case to save the rhinoceros from extinction.