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The role players in rhinoceros conservation
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National government

In general, the national government does not currently play a large role in the broader hunting industry although the Norms and Standards are in the process of development by the former Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). The Department is also responsible for legislation on the implementation of threatened and endangered species (TOPS).

Provincial government

Currently, provincial governments play the leading role with the hunting sector falling under the department of nature conservation in each province. These bodies are responsible for regulating the industry in terms of the applicable Acts and Ordinances. Most provinces have guiding policies and regulations to enable the implementation of the Acts and Ordinances.



Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA)

The Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA) is the official mouthpiece of the professional hunting industry in South Africa and is the largest professional hunters association not only in Africa, but also in the world. Currently PHASA has over 1300 registered members.

PHASA was established in 1978 and its main objectives are the following:

- To foster the conservation of South Africa's wildlife and flora resources.
- To support proper wildlife management and utilisation.
- To assist and promote ethical hunting in South Africa.
- To promote and market hunting in South Africa.
- To promote high quality services and ethical standards among PHASA members.

PHASA states that South Africa has become one of the hunting world's greatest destinations, attracting about 7500 foreign hunters in 2005, mainly from Europe and the United States of America. South Africa offers the greatest variety of animal species that can be hunted in one country, including Africa's "Big Five" – lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhinoceros. The value of animals harvested by trophy hunters (overseas hunters) is approximately R410 million per annum. Together with secondary expenditure (e.g. accommodation and travel) of approximately R100 million, the value of the trophy hunting industry is estimated at over R500 million per annum. In 2005, professional hunters hunted about 40 000 animals in South Africa.

PHASA established a Conservation Trust in 2003, funded through placing a small levy on each trophy exported from the country, to ensure that the industry is financially sustainable. They were instrumental in exposing the medicinal hunts of white rhinoceros during 2005/7.

Taxidermy industry

The South African taxidermy industry is serviced by two bodies, namely the Taxidermy Association of Southern Africa (TASA) and Commercial Taxidermists and Game Skin Tanners of South Africa (CTGSTSA). Taxidermy Association of Southern Africa was established in 1980 and currently has 70 members. CTGSTSA was established in 1994 (when it broke away from TASA) and has 20 members. TASA represents the so-called smaller taxidermists while CTGSTSA represents the so-called bigger taxidermists. Each of them has a market share of approximately 50%. The contribution of the taxidermy industry towards the South African wildlife economy is estimated at R200 million. Some of the wildlife hunted elsewhere in Africa is also processed in South Africa, but the extent of this is unknown.

Vleissentraal

Vleissentraal (Pty) Ltd has been synonymous with game and livestock marketing in South Africa for the past 75 years. The company boasts a rich history that emphasizes its role as an active participant in organized agriculture. Vleissentraal consists of five subsidiaries that work closely with farmers and the farming community in various regions in the country. The company undertakes between 40–50 game auctions per annum.

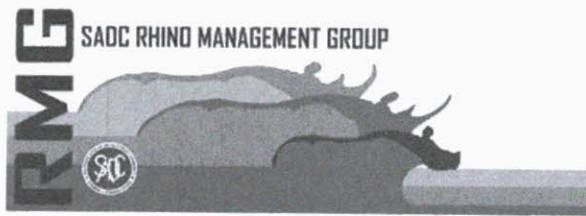


Wildlife Capture and Translocation industry

The Wildlife Translocation Association (WTA) is a voluntary association of professional wildlife capture entities and associated role-players in South Africa that was established in the early 1990's. It currently has 53 registered members and represents more than two-thirds of the active game capture units in South Africa. Its members are drawn from both the private sector and government service and it is the only organisation in South Africa that represents wildlife capture operators. The association is recognised at both national and provincial levels by conservation authorities and anyone who wishes to tender for government contracts must be a member of the WTA.

Wildlife translocation operates locally and internationally. Local role-players include the private sector capture teams, SA National Parks, provincial capture teams, zoos, private wildlife veterinarians and wildlife ranchers are all involved in the movement of live wild animals internationally and locally. South Africa exports wildlife to the rest of the world and imports indigenous and exotic wild animals into the country from other countries. The estimated turnover generated by capture operations varies between R750 million to R900 million per year.

Research, Management and Conservation Agencies of rhinoceros



The SADC Rhino Management Group (RMG), operational since 1989, consists of representatives from national (Swaziland, Namibia & Zimbabwe) conservation authorities, national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), all nine South African provincial conservation

authorities, South African National Parks, private owners of black rhinoceroses, members of the conservation organizations and the SADC Rhino & Elephant Security Group.

The SADC RMG is an advisory body, aimed at furthering the conservation of primarily black rhinoceroses. The focus was placed upon this species given its endangered status and the importance of southern Africa in its continued conservation. However, of late with the increase in importance of private owners in white rhinoceros conservation, and the recent pressure on these populations from poaching, the RMG has begun to place more emphasis on the white rhinoceros situation in South Africa.

The RMG has been instrumental in collating status reports of black rhinoceros populations once every two years for the last 19 years. These reports have been critical in furthering our understanding of individual population performance and have provided the critical biological information for the conservation authorities to make informed decisions. These reports have relied upon the provision of population information by all conservation authorities and private land owners alike for all our black rhinoceros populations in southern Africa. The information is maintained as highly confidential. In addition, the RMG provides information and support to DEA on rhinoceros-related issues, as well as the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, the SADC Regional Programme for Rhinoceros Conservation (RPRC), and also towards reports for CITES. The RMG was instrumental in developing the hunting selection criteria for black rhinoceros for DEA which all provinces are using.

African Rhino Specialist Group

The IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG), like its counterpart in the Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG), is among the 100-plus Specialist Groups in the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of IUCN – The World Conservation Union. Its mission is to promote the development and long-term maintenance of viable populations of the various sub-species of African rhinoceros in the wild. Its membership consists of official country representatives from the main range states and a number of specialist members covering a wide range of skills. The AfRSG routinely develops and promotes recommended best practices for a range of rhinoceros conservation activities and has produced an Action Plan for the conservation of rhinoceros species. The Group has also developed a system for priority rating both populations and potential projects for their continental importance to assist donors in spending their money effectively. AfRSG



members have for many years been actively involved in a number of regional rhinoceros conservation bodies, such as: the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation, the SADC Rhino Management Group and the SADC Rhinoceros and Elephant Security Group, and the AfRSG has been promoting the formation of an East African Rhinoceros Management Group. AfRSG members have to date assisted conservation agencies in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe to develop national or organizational rhinoceros conservation plans, strategies and policies.

Every two years, the AfRSG meets to share knowledge and information, collate and update rhinoceros numbers at a continental level and workshop specific issues. These meetings build capacity through sharing information and lessons learned, as well as developing guidelines and strategies. The meetings (and AfRSG members' participation in regional and national rhinoceros conservation bodies/agencies) also contribute to fostering and building an effective network of rhinoceros conservationists throughout the continent.

CITES

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Widespread information nowadays about the endangered status of many prominent species, such as the tiger and elephants, might make the need for such a convention seem obvious. But at the time when the ideas for CITES were first formed in the 1960s, international discussion of the regulation of wildlife trade for conservation purposes was something relatively new. In hindsight, the need for CITES is clear. Annually, international wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars and to include hundreds of millions of plant and animal specimens. The trade is diverse, ranging from live animals and plants to a vast array of wildlife products derived from them, including food products, exotic leather goods, wooden musical instruments, timber, tourist curios and medicines. Levels of exploitation of some animal and plant species are high and the trade in them, together with other factors, such as habitat loss, are capable of heavily depleting their populations and even bringing some species to extinction. Many wildlife species in trade are not endangered, but the existence of an agreement to ensure the sustainability of the trade is important in order to safeguard these resources for the future.



TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC is governed by the TRAFFIC Committee, a steering group composed of members of TRAFFIC's partner organizations, WWF and IUCN. A central aim of TRAFFIC's activities is to contribute to the wildlife trade-related priorities of these partners. TRAFFIC employs around 100 staff members, based in nearly 30 countries, worldwide. TRAFFIC also works in close co-operation with the CITES Secretariat. TRAFFIC has an enviable reputation as a reliable and impartial organization, a leader in the field of conservation as it relates to wildlife trade. TRAFFIC was established in 1976 and has developed into a global

network, research-driven and action-oriented, committed to delivering innovative and practical conservation solutions based on the latest information.

OIE

In 1920, rinderpest occurred unexpectedly in Belgium, as a result of zebu cattle, originating from India and destined for Brazil, transiting via the port of Antwerp. Despite the inevitable slowness of the negotiations undertaken through diplomatic channels, 28 States reached an “international agreement” on 25 January 1924. The ratification of this 1924 Agreement creating the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) based in Paris reflects a desire clearly expressed by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. Recently it was decided that all countries must report wildlife diseases to the OIE on an annual basis.



Anti-poaching (Private sector)

Private courses for the training of scouts to protect rhinoceros against poaching are compiled by the private sector. These courses should be accredited and used to train the staff of rhinoceros owners in the private sector. The overall objective of the above-mentioned training courses is to upgrade field intelligence gathering, improve area coverage, counter any armed threat, develop junior leadership skills and build capacity of wildlife conservation staff.

WWF



In 1961 the IUCN was instrumental in creating the independent World Wildlife Fund (WWF), now known as the World Wide Fund for Nature. Since its formation the (international) WWF has raised hundreds of millions of dollars to finance its operations. In the process it has helped save many plants and animals from extinction and create hundreds of national parks, both large and small, throughout the world. Over the years countries around the world have established their own (national) WWF offices to raise funds for their own wildlife projects – buying into what amounts to the WWF franchise by being permitted to use the well-known panda logo. Although the international WWF offers the national offices advice on dealing with wildlife issues, especially the more controversial ones, the national organisations are not obliged to follow that advice and are independent.

Wildlife Ranching Association of South Africa (WRSA)

The National Game Organization (NWO – *Nasionale Wildorganisasie*) was launched in Kimberley in 1983. There were four provincial bodies affiliated to a national body. Recently the name was changed to Wildlife Ranching SA and there are members in all nine provinces (of the new South Africa). The membership is currently about 1000, representing only about ten percent of the game farmers.



Their objectives are to:

- Maintain a mouthpiece promoting the game ranching industry.
- Promote products, tourism, activities and services offered by the game industry.
- Act in a resource-sensitive and conservation-conscious manner.
- Eliminate restrictions that have an adverse effect on game ranching.
- Promote tourism, prosperity, job creation and community development.

REFERENCES

Anon. (2006). Report of the investigation to identify problems for sustainable growth and development in South Africa wildlife ranching. Report number 2006-03, National Agricultural Marketing Council, Pretoria.

