

Liwonde Rhino Protection Project

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Research & Conservation



Like many others in Africa, Liwonde National Park's small population of black rhino is severely threatened by poaching. This, coupled with the limited resources of Malawi's Department of National Parks in continuing its protection, necessitated a rhino darting operation, which took place over November/December 2012. The aim was to dart and collar as many rhino as possible so as to monitor and record their movements. A rhino monitoring team was subsequently set up, with a vehicle donated to assist Malawi National Parks in ongoing monitoring and anti-poaching patrols.

The Trust provided both VHF and satellite collars, while Dr Pete Morkel, one of Africa's most highly respected wildlife veterinarians, darted and collared the rhino, taking DNA samples as well. Krisztián Gyöngyi, a graduate student with experience in monitoring and studying black rhino, is stationed in Liwonde to monitor the animals. Bentley Palmer from Blantyre organised funding for a temporary three-strand fence to replace the current damaged sanctuary fence, African Parks provided trackers and a dart gun and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife supplied a team of scouts to assist in finding the rhino. In a three-week spell of intense tracking and hard work in the blistering heat, seven rhino were darted and collared, putting them under constant satellite surveillance.

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