

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Black Rhino Conservation and Ecotourism Impacts in North-western Namibia.
Country	Namibia
Organisation	DICE
Project Ref. No.	162/11/005
Report date	<i>October 2003</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

In April the project officer supported the land use planning activities for a new tourism tented camp in the core rhino area, the Palmwag Rhino Camp. Protocols were also established for collecting data on the behavioural response of rhino to tourists, which began the following October (see below), as part of the study to examine the extent to which the rhino population is under impact from Human-induced Disturbance (HID).

Ground truthing of Ecological Land Units (ELU's) continued in April, as part of the habitat assessment, to refine the first draft of the habitat suitability model. In April, the Project Officer attended the quarterly planning meetings of the conservancies. The reason for attending was to follow up on previous meetings where the Project Officer introduced the Darwin Project goals to community members and issues of rhino conservation and its role in livelihood security. Positive feedback and acceptance of the project by the conservancies represents a considerable breakthrough in community relations.

The census of black rhino continued from March to May, and will supplement ongoing monitoring data for the final analysis. In May, the Project Officer liaised with in-country partners over rhino conservation efforts in Kunene, during the bi-annual meeting of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's (MET) Rhino Technical Advisory Group (RTAG).

Training with MET and conservancy field-staff focused on staff attending the March to May census. Experienced SRT staff, and materials and methods developed by the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG), were used in the training. Arrangements are being made with the MET to develop an accredited training programme for field-staff in the coming year.

In June the Project Officer attended the Southern African Rhino Management Group (RMG) meeting at Palmwag Lodge in Kunene as part of the Namibian delegation from the MET and the project's other in-country partner, Save the rhino Trust (SRT).

Arrangements were made to acquire clearance from the MET's training committee for the appointed Tourism Officer to undertake studies at DICE.

In June, the Project Officer assisted a consultant from the AfRSG who visited the project to refine methods to determine browse availability across the southern African region. This gives a regional focus to the assessment of habitat suitability and of carrying capacity of the black rhino range in Kunene being undertaken as part of this Darwin Project. SRT staff were involved and trained in the procedures used.

In July 2003 the BBC screened the activities of the project on the Really Wild Show. A press release

was issued by the University of Kent and tapes forward to the Darwin Secretariat. The Project Officer also returned to the UK to begin the preliminary analysis of census data on black rhino and to draft a survey to explore community attitudes to rhino and future management goals.

The Project Officer returned to Namibia to continue fieldwork in September 2003. In the same month, Namibian co-ordinators from in-country partners began their MSc training at DICE (Simson Uri-khob from SRT; and, Michael Sibatani from MET). A press release was issued by SRT and pick up in the local press in Namibia <http://www.economist.com.na/2003/12sep/09-12-15.htm#top>

Data collection on the behavioural response of rhino and other wildlife to human-induced disturbance commenced in October. This will allow the study to quantify how the interaction between HID and the varying land use practices impact behavioural response of rhino, and if this leads to any localised reduction in breeding.

In October, the Project Officer attended the quarterly planning meetings of the conservancies and confirmed dates with Torra and Sanitatas conservancies to undertake a pilot survey of community attitudes to test the first draft of the survey. This will be finalised at the steering committee meeting planned for December 2003.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Due to the strengthening Namibian Dollar, which is linked to the South African Rand, against the British Pound and a larger than anticipated increase in ticket prices for air travel from Namibia to the UK the travel budget has not been sufficient to meet all the project needs. Other sponsors have been found to cover some of the Project Officer, Project Leader and the trainee's travel costs. However, some delays have resulted, for example delaying the second steering committee meeting to December when the Project Leader, Nigel Leader-Williams will be travelling to Namibia to attend a meeting of the African Elephant Specialist Group. This has not been discussed with the department as no other significant delays to the project have occurred. Should any further delays be anticipated as result of limited monies for air travel the department will be notified and changes made to the agreement.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

All is progressing well with the project activities, and Darwin's management, monitoring and financial procedures.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk