

Stakeholder Workshop on Biological Management Options for the Black Rhino in North-west Namibia

Final Workshop of the Darwin Initiative Project

Grootberg, Kunene Region

1-2 September 2005



Draft Programme

1st September 2005

09:00	Welcome (Honourable Governor of Kunene Region, MET & SRT)
09:15	Keynote Address (Chief Justus Garoeb)
09:45	Introduction of participants (Facilitator)
10:00	Recap of previous workshop and orientation (Facilitator)
10:30	Tea/Coffee
11:00	<u>Research findings</u> : Population performance of the black rhino population in Kunene (Nigel Leader-Williams).
11:30	<u>Research findings</u> : Community attitudes and perceptions towards the reintroduction of rhino into their historical range (Simson Uri-khob).
12:00	<u>Research findings</u> : Potential of safaris to track desert-dwelling rhino as a form of community-based tourism in northwest Namibia (Michael Sibalatini)
12:30	Keynote address by Ministry of Environment and Tourism
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Preparation for group work
14:30	Group work
15:30	Tea/Coffee
16:00	Group work continues
17:00	End of day 1

2nd September 2005

08:30	Recap of Day 1
09:00	Feedback of group work to plenary
10:00	Tea/Coffee
10:30	Major Recommendations
11:00	The way forward
11:30	Closing remarks
12:00	Early lunch and departure of delegates

Welcome addresses

Honourable Governor's Welcome

Distinguished delegates

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of my Regional Councilors. A meeting on rhinos was held in Windhoek earlier in the year that I could not attend, and I am very pleased to be here today. First, however, I would like to raise a general issue. Plans to proclaim a National Park in various tourist concessions have not been submitted to the Governor of Kunene. Personally, I welcome such an idea. However, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism need to be aware that Etosha National Park has failed, because it has not taken care of people locally. In formulating such plans, MET must recognise the contribution of the local community in conserving the area, and especially its rhinos.

Rhinos were once all over the Kunene area, and there have been some losses in the past to the army. However, rhinos are now restricted only to the north-west, where local leaders and communities have made considerable efforts to conserve rhinos and other wildlife. It is no coincidence that Hobatere Tourist Concession was founded on local initiatives with local, rather than government, money. I would like to see a situation where the proceeds from tourism and conservation come to the traditional authorities across the whole of Kunene, as well as to help establish a trust fund for developments in the region. Some traditional authorities still operate within towns, and they too need some funds to support their development. This is only an idea, and not a blue print, but how can we come up with a plan to strengthen institutions in our region? This region is well endowed with nature and scenery. We need to earn from this and in turn be leaders in conservation and tourism.

I am also concerned about the allocation of tourism concessions. It is good to have a black empowerment policy in Namibia. However, this policy is being misused to allocate concessions to people from outside the region. It is not good to see multi-nationals being offered concessions in place of people from within the region. Existing concessions should co-opt locals as partners on the basis of mutual agreements. In such a way, we will strengthen our development. Local people are already good conservators, but they are not good businessmen. Who better to teach them business skills than existing concessionaires through joint management arrangements?

A further concern that could impact upon our plans for conservation and development is the decision by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, to prioritise the Kunene Region as an area for resettlement of people from outside the region. The zoning of conservancies as areas of state land for communal use through conservation may help prevent some resettlement within northwest Kunene. However, we need to be on our guard to ensure that land so important for our regional priority to develop through conservation and tourism, are not affected by land clearance that will inevitably follow on any large resettlement that might occur.

Rhinos are a major factor in attracting tourists to our area. We need to guard these animals fearlessly. I urge conservancies and all people involved in conservation to strengthen their planning processes and work out how to convert conservation into a business venture for community development.

I look forward to the cooperation of all of you in helping us in this task.

Director of Parks and Wildlife Management's Welcome

In welcoming you, I have very little to say, as the Honourable Governor has captured so much. There have been great achievements in conservation in Kunene, and he is right to be proud of what has been achieved. Equally, he is right to be concerned about the Cabinet decision to proclaim three tourist concession areas as a National Park. Indeed, my Ministry remains concerned about the status of the area and wished for some form of legal status for the Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere concession areas. Therefore, my department has worked hard over three years to build consensus for establishing a contractual conservation area. We did eventually achieve agreement, and the proposed area was given the name of ****. However, politicians need to make their mark, and it was a Cabinet decision to investigate the option of proclaiming a National Park. This meeting is the first opportunity to begin a negotiation with local stakeholders on this decision.

Approaches to conservation in Namibia have changed a lot over the decades. We have moved away from fenced national parks that exclude people. We have an example in the Namib Nakluft National Park where people remain inside the boundaries. Other national parks have towns and mining. National parks need no longer be exclusive areas. Therefore, I welcome the remarks of the Honourable Governor. On behalf of the Ministry, I assure him he has no need for concern, because we will consult as the process to proclaim this area proceeds. Nevertheless, we must recognise that the Cabinet decision to proclaim a National Park was taken in the national and international interest. Rest assured, however, we will negotiate.

Finally, I would like to ask that we stand for a minute's silence in memory of Blythe Loutit and Mike Hearn, whom we have so sadly lost this year, and who made such important contributions to conservation in this area.

Chief Executive Officer of Save the Rhino Trust's Welcome

Save the Rhino Trust is very proud of its work over the past 23 years. We have been greatly helped in our work and decisions by the Ministry and the local people. We have also been very pleased to be part the joint Ministry and SRT project funded by the Darwin Initiative. We hope to be around for many years to come to serve the people and the rhinos of Kunene.

I would like to offer one thought before the workshop begins. Please can we give the rhinos our best shot in the face of our own needs? The black rhino is a species that faces many difficulties in modern times. We need to look after their future.

Keynote address by Chief Justus Garoeb

I have the honour of being leader of all eight groups of the Damara, and strictly I am their King. Therefore, it is my pleasure to welcome all delegates from the traditional side. I would also have liked to welcome the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, who paid his first official visit to our area yesterday. I would like to thank the Ministry for all its contributions to the Kunene Region. Conservancies are key to the future of conservation in this region. I would also like to thank SRT for all their contributions over the years to conservation of Kunene and Erongo regions. I was greatly saddened at the loss of Blythe Loutit, who loved nature here and who was rightly proud of the increase of rhinos in our area. This increase represents a great story in conservation that needs also to be credited to the local people who held unselfish intentions to ensure we achieved success for this area. And SRT played a key role here. When I came to this area in the late 1960s, there were many rhinos in the area and they were only regarded as an ugly nuisance, and we wanted to get rid of them. However, local concerns for the value of all forms of life allowed us to keep them and now the eyes of the world are upon us.

Three tourism concessions were established in the 1980s, to serve as source areas in difficult years, allowing wildlife to recover in drought years. With the heavy poaching over the years, this proved the right decision as people need to benefit from wildlife. When we need to restore wildlife to the historical range, we need core areas without relying on national parks. Also when we needed meat for a traditional festival, it was easy to get this from Hobatere. Since 1987, cropping of wildlife has been implemented, first by the Ministry, and then by communities through conservancies. Tourism concessions were established for exclusive tourism activities, and these remain the least spoilt areas of Kunene and the only places where one can see good populations of many species, including rhinos, elephants, cheetahs and lions, breeding well outside a national park. However, as it is in life, there are always good things and bad things, which is why we have experienced rhino mortality. However, the main aim of creating the tourism concessions, to ensure a wildlife heritage for the Damara people, was achieved. Such concession areas are now bearing fruit, and we really need to thank the second tier government for their foresight. The three concession areas remain the jewels in the crown, the most pristine areas in Kunene. But let me remind you, the land of the concession areas falls under the management of the Damara people. Mention of our role in managing our land is made in the Land Reformation Act and this still remains valid.

Our people only requested that the Ministry manage our wildlife for our benefit, but not make decisions without our authority. The Cabinet decision to proclaim a National Park is just such a decision. Therefore, I am pleased that the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management has told us the decision is under reconsideration. I accept that we agreed that a special status was needed for the area, and further accept that we agreed that

a contractual national park might provide a better status. We agreed to this, even though some conservancies were not happy, because the traditional leadership saw this as the only way out. We agreed that concessions should not be a National Park under total government control. We did not agree to this and do not want such ideas imposed on us, as happened in previous colonial regimes. If the concessions become only a National Park, we will not be best friends in conservation. We only agreed to a Contractual National Park, where both government and community together are jointly responsible for management of the area. In this way, we will be free to call on NGOs and others for advice. Neighbouring conservancies should also benefit from a Contractual National Park.

I hope this meeting respects our efforts. I wish to affirm our willingness to work for conservation, and the meeting is well represented by all stakeholders. However, regarding future proclamation of a National Park, we need an exclusive meeting with the Minister and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to discuss this very important issue before any proclamation is formalised. Having heard that the proposals made so far are not a blueprint and that there is still room for negotiation, we will be happy to give our cooperation.

Let us focus on Hobatere as an example. My people sought benefits from Hobatere to enhance their development. Originally, the now defunct second tier government did not have a conservation function. Consequently, it could not offer funds towards conservation. Instead, through volunteer work, the local community built Hobatere. We could build schools and clinics through the functions of the second tier government. When this became defunct, we gave over these facilities. While on state land, these buildings are our property. Why should we hand them over to the state? Why should we still be willing to cooperate if the buildings and area are not given back to us? It is quite unfair if these go to the central Namibian government, who did not contribute anything to the tourism concession. What the local leadership wishes to see is close cooperation between traditional communities, conservation and government, and to be involved because we are an inseparable part of the system. Conservancies and local institutions are vital, and we urge government to work together and consult with us on deciding the future of these concessions.

Thank you once again for this meeting, and the opportunity to speak our minds.

Director of DICE's summary of conclusions

I would like to begin by setting what has been achieved with black rhinos in Kunene against a wider international setting. The African Rhino Specialist Group has established a sub-group to look at how communities are involved in rhino conservation across Africa. The Kunene rhinos have been the driving force in much of the thinking in this group. It is probably unique globally to find in the same room, making recommendations on how to proceed with the conservation of a globally important population of rhinos, the director of the national wildlife authority, the regional governor and traditional leaders, and an NGO

that has employed local people to so successfully recover the population under consideration.

The conclusions of our deliberations can be quite easily summarised. This meeting has accepted the need to biologically manage the Kunene rhinos. Reaching this recommendation so quickly has been made much easier by the previous workshop held on this topic in March 2004. However, we have taken this thinking much further forward based on the new research presented at this workshop.

Here, we have agreed to recommend that biological management of breeding groups to seed new sub-populations of rhinos within the historic range of Kunene rhinos should be preceded by testing the system with male as probes. This would not only address the issue of excess males, but would allow the technology of translocation to be tested in this difficult terrain, as well as to test the willingness of conservancies to actually accept rhinos as opposed to giving positive answers to questionnaires. Having achieved such success in recovering Kunene rhinos, the worst thing possible would be to lose a female group, either to translocation difficulties or to direct conflicts with people.

We have also agreed to recommend that opportunities for communities to gain benefits from rhinos should be explored and expanded. Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), there are no options to engage in the legal commercial sale of horns or other rhino products. However, Namibia has recently gained agreement for taking five black rhinos per year as hunting trophies. Nevertheless, this is a very controversial form of use. On balance, we considered it as a less appropriate form of use in Kunene for now, than further developing the novel forms of high end rhino tracking tourism that have proved so successful at the Palmwag Rhino Camp over the past couple of years.

The key to taking rhino management, conservancy initiatives and proposed proclamations forward will be a comprehensive regional management plan. Such a plan will need to marry local and national planning levels into one unified plan for moving forward. Individual conservancies are required to produce local area management plans but in some cases, this has produced inconsistencies. For example, one conservancy has zoned a hunting area next to an area zoned by its neighbour as a non-use area to which it would wish to re-introduce rhinos. Likewise the plan must marry national planning, for example the National Rhino Action Plan, to regional objectives across communal land in Kunene. All this stresses the need for ongoing consultation between the Ministry and local communities in Kunene, which was stressed as so important in the welcome addresses to this workshop.

Finally, I would like to stress what a privilege it has been to be involved in this project. I remain greatly saddened by the losses of both Blythe Loutit and Michael Hearn, who have both made massive contributions to linking the recovery of rhinos in Kunene to local community development. I hope they will be looking down on our deliberations with a smile at the progress made so far.....

Closing remarks

Chief Haraseb. Thank you for the opportunity to make a few short remarks. I would especially like to thank the Ministry and the Director of Parks and Wildlife Management for their support. Thank you for the fence around Hobatere, which has helped resolve the major issue of conflict with lions. However, I am not sure yet if we can thank the Ministry over the proposed contractual national park. Consultation is important, and this has not so far happened. I am not against the idea of giving the area some form of legal status. But the local community feels that Hobatere is part of their communal land. I apologise for mentioning this, but if there are problems, they need to be aired. These tourism concessions are not ours. We are their custodians for future generations. Traditional authorities are mentioned in the legislation as custodians of communal land, and it is very good that it is this way. We need to be consulted, and we are willing to work together.

Chief Justus Garoeb

Thank you very much for the privilege of closing this meeting. I would like to express my thanks for the invitation and for what we have achieved in this very historic workshop. The importance of the meeting resides not only in what was covered in the formal agenda, but also in those issues identified by stakeholders as important in this process. We have enjoyed the opportunity to learn from each other, and of our obligations to look to the future of our rhinos. We have also come to terms with the need for a special status for parts of this area if it is to protect rhinos. Some communities claim a vested interest in this area. However, I was very struck by comments made earlier that it is so unusual to have a director of wildlife, a regional governor, and a traditional leader in the same room discussing the future of rhinos.

What is very important about this meeting is the drafting and implementation of the management plan that we have agreed upon. The planning for this will bring all the stakeholders together again. We need to marry all the conservancy's management plans into a master plan so that we have a uniform approach. If we can clear this hurdle, more meetings will bring us together as a family of stakeholders. When you all go back to your conservancies, please focus on the positive things that can be done. If we focus on the positive first, this will allow us to deal with difficult issues in future.

The history of Namibia is so distorted that certain traditional groups were treated as if they did not exist. After the San, my own Damara people were the worst treated. In this new era, we do not wish to be left behind and we remain open to new ideas. In this area, we can move mountains.

I would like to thank all the individuals, and the institutions they represent, for being here. I would especially like to thank the Ministry, Save the Rhino Trust and other NGO's for their work. There were rumours about SRT ending its operations, and I was very concerned. SRT is an integral part of the bigger Kunene family, and we wish to ensure you go all the way with us. I would also like to especially thank the Darwin

Initiative and the Director of the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology for their funding and input. There is still a long way to go, and we would like to use your help again. We are particularly grateful for the opportunities you have afforded our young men to improve their education.

Finally, I must now address our young people. I am a self-made man who had no opportunity for education. You, in contrast, have all the opportunities. But if you feel this not to be the case, I will take the issue to parliament. It is now a time for technology and a time for young people to get involved.

Politicians usually cannot stop talking, but I would now like to close this beautiful meeting. I wish you all a safe journey home.

WORKING GROUP 1:

Management of Kunene rhinos in their current range

- Chairman:** P. du Preez, MET
Facilitator: N. Leader Williams, DICE
Reporter: J. Kasaona, IRDNC
Members: R. Namubeb, Doro-!Nawas Conservancy
V. Tjai-Tjai-Mau, Tsiseb Conservancy
R. Tjipombo, Sesfontein Conservancy
T. Hango, Uibasen Conservancy
S.T. //Naobeb, Traditional Authority
A. Ndjitezeua, ≠Khoadi-//Hoas Conservancy
I. /Gomeb, Traditional Authority
I. Eiseb, Community Member
A. Karaisl, GEF/SGP/NNF
J.M. Haraseb, Traditional Authority/Aio-Daman
F. Tourob, MET
S.D. /Gawiseb, MET
B.Kazahe, Ehirovipuka Conservancy

Rationale

The Kunene rhinos have shown a remarkable recovery through a unique partnership between government, NGO and local community support. However, their current rate of increase is below that desired in Namibia's National Rhino Action Plan. Furthermore, there is a bias towards males, as seen naturally in most other black rhino populations, and there is emerging evidence that density-dependant factors may be operating in areas where rhino densities are high. Equally, the rhinos only occupy some 6,500 sq km out of the 20,000 sq km making up their current range. Therefore, the question arises as to whether Kunene rhinos are in need of biological management.

Topics to consider

1. Are Kunene black rhinos in need of biological management within their current range? Why or why not?
2. Are there priority areas within Kunene from where black rhinos need to be moved? If so, which?
3. What are the most important social and economic issues for the ongoing management of black rhinos within their current range?

Conclusions

The group agreed that the Kunene rhinos need biological management within their current range. The group considered the bias towards males within the Kunene rhino population, the likely problems of moving rhinos in this remote and difficult terrain, and uncertainty on the reaction of host communities to the reality, as opposed to the possibility, of seeing rhinos returned to their areas. As a result, the group gave support to translocating a few males initially, as a probe to test the likely success of moving rhinos within Kunene. Once the translocation of males has resolved possible difficulties that

could be encountered with translocation technology and with the success of reintroducing rhinos within their historic range, only then should the translocation of females to establish breeding groups be considered. The group also agreed that a comprehensive regional management plan should be developed to guide and evaluate the biological management of rhino and set this within the dual context of achieving rhino conservation and development objectives.

Discussion and recommendations

1. Biological management options for Kunene rhinos

- Initial translocations should involve only males, both to mimic natural patterns of dispersal of males away from natal areas, and to test the technology of translocation in this remote and difficult terrain, as well as the willingness of host conservancies to live again with rhinos in their areas.
- Moving females to establish breeding groups in new areas should only be considered at a later stage, after the success of the initial translocations of males have been evaluated.
- The high costs of translocating rhinos, which amount to some N\$ 40-50,000 (equivalent to *c.* US\$ 7000) per rhino, depending on transport costs and the distances rhinos have to be moved, is also an important consideration.

2. Identifying priority areas within the current Kunene rhino range from which black rhinos could be moved

- The group agreed there was some evidence of density-dependence within the current range, but that underlying patterns were difficult to determine because of complicating factors like the effect of varying rainfall on calving rates.
- Based on the research to date, the priority areas for taking off the first male rhinos that will serve as probes for testing likely translocation success, and later the nuclei of new breeding groups of black rhinos, were identified as ecological zones 3 and 6, within the Palmwag Concession.

3. Social and economic issues for managing rhinos within their current range

- Mechanisms should be established that allow communities to accept full responsibility for black rhinos living in their conservancies, for example through a modified version of the agreement used for Namibia's custodianship programme for black rhinos on private land.
- Capacity should be built to enable conservancy members to effectively monitor their rhinos to meet biological management and security objectives for rhinos.

- Conservancy members should be empowered to control access of tourists within their areas, particularly to core wildlife areas zoned for black rhinos.
- Awareness and outreach programmes should be run within conservancies to educate community members about black rhino biology and behaviour, as well as about the newly emerging costs and benefits that can be attached to the species, including their existence values.
- As rhinos do not use all the areas within the current Kunene range, more rhino-friendly environments should be created in neighbouring conservancies to allow rhinos to disperse through, and settle in, such areas.
- Consultations should be held between the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and the local leadership over proposals to proclaim the tourism concessions of Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere with an appropriate legal status. The final status should recognise both the need to conserve core areas for black rhinos and other wildlife, as well as to respect the wishes of local people.

Notes

The importance of Save the Rhino Trust, in training conservancy rhino monitoring staff, in maintaining a centralised database for rhinos in Kunene, and in distributing rhino information to conservancy members, was further discussed and emphasised. Monitoring teams from conservancies that are due to receive (and currently have) rhinos should be encouraged to undertake in-service training with SRT monitoring patrols.

If the tourism concession areas were to be proclaimed with national park status, land use and tourism regulation would fall under the jurisdiction of central government. However, community access to, and benefits from, these lands would also be compromised. Hence, the meeting gave the Director of Parks and Wildlife Management support in his efforts to consult with local communities, and seek contractual status that would allow for co-management of the areas.

WORKING GROUP 2:

Considerations for re-introducing Kunene rhinos within their historical range

- Chairman:** D.T. Murorua, Kunene Region Governor
Facilitator: S. !Uri-≠Khob, SRT
Reporter: J. Muntifering, Roundriver Conservation/ SRT
Members: P. //Eiseb, Doro-!Nawas Conservancy
L. Uises, Tsiseb Conservancy
J.E. !Aibeb, //Huab Conservancy
F. !Aseb, Traditional Authority/ ≠Ao-Daman
S. Le Roux, MET
B. ≠Guibeb, ≠Khoadi-//Hoas
D. //Garoës, Community Member
H. Awoses, Sori-Soris Conservancy
S. Nangolo, GEF/SGP/NNF
L.M. Ganaseb, SRT
N. Howoseb, MET
J.Sakaria, MET

Rationale

The Kunene rhinos may be in need of biological management within their current range. Furthermore, within their current range of 20,000 sq km, the rhinos are unevenly distributed across land use units, with more rhinos occurring within tourism concessions and fewer rhinos occurring within conservancies, where communities have the right to benefit directly from wildlife on their land. In addition, a further 50,000 sq km of historic range, mainly comprising conservancies as the predominant form of land use, could form reintroduction sites. Surveys within some of these conservancies show strong support for re-introducing rhinos, as well as areas of suitable habitat with open waterholes. Therefore, the question arises as to what considerations should be paramount in setting priorities for reintroduction.

Topics for discussion

1. Do local communities support the reintroduction of black rhinos within their historic range in Kunene? Why or why not?
2. Are there priority areas within West Kunene to which black rhinos should be moved? If so, which?
3. What are the most important social and economic issues for the future management of black rhinos within their historic range?

Conclusions

The group agreed that most conservancy members across the historical range of black rhino in Kunene are very supportive of restoring black rhinos to their conservancies. However, a major concern centred on the lack of rights of conservancies to control tourist movements within their conservancy lands, and this should be addressed by amending the current sections on communal conservancy rights and responsibilities within the Land Act of 1996. In terms of suitable areas for reintroduction, a protocol should be developed

for prioritising the choice of candidate areas. The group also agreed that a comprehensive regional management plan should be developed to guide and evaluate the reintroduction of rhinos and set this within the dual context of achieving rhino conservation and development objectives.

Discussion and recommendations

1. Reasons for community support and concern over re-introducing Kunene rhinos within their historic range

Community support for re-introduction arises for many reasons, as follows:

- Black rhinos are a classic flagship species, and restoring them would provide an economic incentive for host conservancies through boosting tourism, especially for areas lacking other key attractions such as desert elephants or spectacular scenery.
- Restoring rhinos would allow community members unfamiliar with free-ranging rhinos an opportunity to better understand and value the importance of rhinos on their lands, while also providing for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations living on conservancy lands.
- The wider restoration of rhinos across the historic range in Kunene would contribute to boosting the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), through increased and diversified tourism opportunities in north-west Namibia.
- Establishing new sub-populations of Kunene rhinos should encourage the goals of biological management, by facilitating dispersal throughout the historic range, and by improving rates of population increase, in line with the National Rhino Action Plan.
- Establishing additional sub-populations should safeguard the Kunene rhino against future local catastrophes, such as drought and/or disease outbreaks, while also restoring a vital component to the wider Kunene ecosystem.
- Continuing the successful recovery of desert-adapted black rhinos (*D. b. bicornis*) within Kunene would bring further recognition to Namibia as a country at the forefront of rhino conservation and of deriving community benefits from wider conservation initiatives.

Nevertheless, the community expressed some concerns about re-introducing black rhinos across Kunene:

- Re-introduced rhinos may pose a threat to the livelihoods of community members, through direct conflict with humans as well as with livestock.
- Community members may lack knowledge of rhino behaviour, and nor believe in the projected benefits that might arise from restoring rhinos.

- Without such benefits, conservancy members may be unwilling to accept the responsibility of monitoring rhinos effectively.
- Without the legal right to control tourist access to sensitive core areas for wildlife, conservancies may feel unable to fulfill their responsibilities for conserving black rhinos on conservancy lands.

2. Priority areas where rhinos should be moved within Kunene

- A rapid knowledge-based evaluation protocol should be developed for prioritising possible candidate conservancies, and candidate areas within conservancies, that could be considered for reintroducing Kunene rhinos within their historic range.
- Possible sites should first be ranked on the basis of the prevailing ecological conditions, of previous and existing threats, and of conservancy support for restoring black rhinos. Further filtering of candidate conservancies should include the logistical ease or difficulty of translocation, the zonation of other activities such as hunting, livestock rearing, and use of waterholes, which might disturb rhinos, as well as considerations of security and competence of existing conservancy staff to monitor rhinos.

3. Socio-economic issues for future management of rhinos in their historic range

- Conservancies should work closely with the Regional Governor's Office and develop management plans that discourage the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement from resettling people from outside the Kunene Region within the historic range of the Kunene rhinos.
- Constructive engagement of all current and future stakeholder groups should be fostered from the outset of consultations on when and where to reintroduce rhinos.
- An equitable model should be developed for distributing costs and benefits of conserving rhinos among local community members, in relation to the role of communities in safeguarding a national asset.
- The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders should be defined, to allow each to institute effective and transparent management decisions.
- A highly competent staff complement should be trained within recipient (and existing) conservancies to monitor rhinos (see also Group 1).
- Competitive salaries and effective working equipment should be provided to enable conservancy staff to complete their assigned tasks.
- Comprehensive rhino outreach and awareness programmes should be developed for local community members (see also Group 1).

- Tourism courses should be integrated into local schooling curricula.
- Conservancies should gain the right to control the access of tourists on conservancy lands (see also Group 1), particularly within sensitive, core areas of the conservancy designated as candidate sites for the reintroduction of black rhinos.

Notes

As with Group 1, a major issue raised was that conservancies do not have the right to control access to their lands. This raises the issue of whether or not enough protection for rhinos is in place to give Ministry of Environment and Tourism officials confidence to proceed with translocations, especially of females in future breeding groups.

WORKING GROUP 3:

How can Kunene Rhinos best provide benefits from tourism?

Chairman: Chief J.//Garoëb, Traditional Authority/Member of Parliament

Facilitator: M.M. Sibatani, MET

Reporter: J. Lalley, Wilderness Safaris – NIGEL TO CONFIRM

Members: D. van Smeerdjik, Wilderness Safaris
A. Haraëb, Uibasen Conservancy
M. Tjiyaura, MET
A. Ilonga, //Huab Conservancy
G. Pieters, Doro-!Nawas Conservancy
B. Beytell, MET-Director
A. ≠Guruseb, ≠Khaodi-//Hoas
J. Morse, GEF/SGP/NNF
S. Hoëb, SRT
D.M. ≠Guibeb, WDT
M. Gurirab, MET

Rationale

The Kunene black rhinos are recognised as a flagship species for conservation, that can provide an important tourist draw card, especially when set in the context of the unique story of their recovery since the 1980s, as well as in Kunene's amazing desert scenery. Within the tourism concessions where most rhinos currently occur, little revenue from rhino-based tourism has benefited the conservancy movement. The most common form of tourism within the concessions has involved traditional vehicle-based safaris, while unregulated vehicle-based tourism has heavily disturbed rhinos in several areas of their current range. More recently, novel and focused rhino tracking safaris have been successfully piloted at Palmwag Rhino Camp. Furthermore, a quota of black rhinos that can be trophy hunted within Namibia has been internationally agreed. Therefore, the question arises as to which forms of rhino-based tourism could best provide short- and long-term benefits to Kunene conservancies now and in the future.

Topics for discussion

1. Is rhino-based tourism important for the general development of tourism in Kunene?
If so, which forms of tourism?
2. How can any impacts of tourism on black rhinos be minimised?
3. What are the key conditions necessary to ensure that tourism on black rhinos benefits local communities as well as tour operators, and contributes to the conservation of Kunene black rhinos?

Conclusions

The group agreed that rhino-based tourism is educational and informative, and can provide benefits to communities. The novel rhino tracking safaris piloted at Palmwag Rhino Camp hold promise for generating economic benefits for many stakeholders, including local communities, government, private sector and NGOs, as well as contributing positively to rhino conservation. While a diverse suite of potential rhino

tourism options could help achieve conservation, as well as local, regional and national development objectives, on balance the group concluded that consumptive use of black rhinos should not feature in Kunene within the near future. Furthermore, more in-depth research is needed on the impacts that human induced disturbances pose to rhinos, even though preliminary measures and strategies to identify, assess, and mitigate these threats were agreed. The group also agreed that a comprehensive regional management plan should be developed to guide and evaluate rhino tourism activities and set these within the dual context of achieving rhino conservation and development objectives.

Discussion and recommendations

1. Tourism options for the Kunene black rhinos

- Both consumptive and non-consumptive tourism options could be offered for black rhinos in Kunene. Both options can promote long-term benefits for re-using the resource. Furthermore, both options can offer ways to maintain low volumes of high paying tourists, which in turn help to minimise direct impacts on rhinos and on remote and fragile desert areas.
- Non-consumptive forms of tourism could offer novel safaris tracking rhinos on foot or on camel, using the traditional skills of local trackers, and or night watches for rhinos at waterholes, while also offering wider employment opportunities and benefits locally.
- Consumptive forms of tourism could result in high trophy fees of up to US\$250,000 per rhino, and utilise old or injured males that are not contributing to the breeding population. However, this form of use is highly controversial for many, and would need strict regulation and zoning in areas away from those where non-consumptive tourism is practiced, as well as the monitoring capacity to identify animals that could be hunted.
- On balance, the group proposed that only non-consumptive forms of tourism should be promoted in Kunene in the short-term, until the recovery of black rhinos has encompassed successful biological management, and in order to allay any anger on the part of viewing tourists.

2. How can any impacts of tourism on black rhinos be minimised?

- Existing and future rhino areas should be zoned to separate subsistence and trophy hunting, from proposed rhino viewing areas, which could include measures such as road closures and no-go zones.
- Rhinos should be monitored closely to determine the breeding performance and movement patterns of individuals in relation to different types and levels of tourism intensity, and to continually refine and adapt tourism protocols, whether on foot, on camel or by vehicle.

- Rhino-tracking parties should be restricted to small numbers per group, with appropriate viewing protocol measurements in place, to minimise impacts on tracked rhinos.
- Furthermore, monitoring should also explore whether or not individual rhinos habituate towards viewing groups, in order to determine whether safaris should concentrate on a rotational viewing strategy to track less frequently observed individuals, or on a few easily accessible, and possibly, habituated rhinos.
- When trophy hunting is proposed, only old and non-breeding males should be trophy hunted in areas zoned for consumptive use, while trophy fees and daily rates should be set very high for trophy hunting of black rhinos.
- Self-drive vehicle parties should be subject to regulation by conservancies, as to where and when they can drive and camp, while expecting to pay entry charges when entering conservancy land.

3. Key conditions necessary to ensure that tourism on black rhinos benefits all stakeholders

- In the long-term, existing conservancy and land use legislation should be amended to empower conservancies to control tourist movements within their boundaries (see Groups 1 and 2), either through possible exclusive tourism lease agreements, and/or to charge and regulate self-drive tourists for entering conservancy land.
- The distribution of benefits from different forms of rhino tourism should be determined through the involvement of all stakeholders. This discussion should build on rights to direct benefits from wildlife encompassed within conservancy legislation, should consider conditional ownership rights over rhinos on conservancy land, and the future status of the current tourism concessions.
- All beneficiaries, whether tourist operators, hunting parties, communities, should be prepared to contribute, or continue to contribute, an appropriate and agreed share of funds from rhino tourism back into rhino protection and monitoring.
- Research should be conducted into the carrying capacities, or limits of acceptable use, of each rhino tourism area, as well as into possible future off-takes of rhinos through trophy hunting.

Notes

An additional point regarding hunting was that some conservancies promote subsistence hunting for meat. Possible disturbance from this form of hunting may have more serious effects than limited trophy hunting on other resident wildlife, particularly for sensitive species such as black rhino. Disturbance of rhino behaviour from subsistence hunting has already been informally noted in Torra Conservancy. Furthermore, the areas that Torra Conservancy has zoned for subsistence hunting border the zone that its neighbour,

≠Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy, has set aside for exclusive wildlife use, including possible rhino re-introduction, and photo tourism. Such mismatches in the local area planning required of conservancies through the Conservancy Act of 1996, further emphasises the need for regional planning across all the conservancies that make up the current and historic range of Kunene rhinos.

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