

# Monitor

## The Black Rhino Conservation Potential in Tanzania

During the first quarter of this year I visited those National Parks in Tanzania which have been ear-marked for the establishment of black rhino sanctuaries. The purpose of the visit was to carry out preliminary surveys on the rhino status, gather baseline information on the areas and rank them according to habitat suitability. The potential sanctuaries in Tanzania are the Arusha, Lake Manyara, Tarangire and Rubondo Island National Parks; and the Ngorongoro Crater. The latter, although not a National Park, is the only place in Tanzania where one can easily see a rhino.

Using the criteria adopted during the IUCN African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG) meeting of September 1989 held in Nairobi, the potential rhino sanctuaries were ranked according to their habitat suitability. The results were:

National Park	Proposed sanctuary	Rank	Present rhino no
Arusha:	Ngurdoto Crater	1	0
Lake Manyara:	whole area	2	0
Tarangire:	Sirale area	3	5*
Rubondo Is land:	whole area	4	6*

\*Number unreliable.

The Ngurdoto Crater in Arusha National Park ranked highest due to its natural barrier/security, small size, former high rhino density and diversity of rhino browse plants. This Crater should be used as a breeding ground for rhinos. Lake Manyara National Park can be considered as an ideal area for re-introduction once rhinos are available. A small area in the Sirale region of Tarangire Park can be developed into a sanctuary like Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary in Tsavo West National Park in Kenya.

Rubondo Island National Park was ruled out as a potential rhino sanctuary because: -

- The Park never had rhinos prior to 1965.
- To date, the rhinos introduced in 1965 have not successfully bred and the causes for this failure have not been established.
- There is lack of security due to the closeness of the Park to inhabited areas and easy access for poachers from all sides by boat.
- The vegetation type and terrain makes proper monitoring of the introduced rhinos impossible and maintenance of security very difficult.

Ten rhinos were observed on the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater. However, the total population for the whole of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is estimated as being 10 to 30. No rhinos were sighted during the visits to potential sanctuaries although on Rubondo Island rhino dung piles and foot prints were seen. The Warden of Tarangire National Park said that five rhinos

were sighted in Sirale region late last year. The earmarked Parks have no rhinos which can be used for re-introduction and the Tanzania Government will have to acquire animals to establish a breeding stock from wherever they can.

Fred Waweru



Copyright Esmond Bradley Martin

An employee of a traditional medicine shop in Johannesburg holds up two rhino horns: Zulu men sometimes put rhino horn ash on their eyebrows to allure women.

## Further Notes on Pygmy and Forest Elephants

I would like to add some short notes that may be of interest complementary to the article by David Western, "The Pygmy Elephant: A Myth and a Mystery", *Pachyderm*, No 7, December 1986.

The elephant population of Garamba National Park appears to be an inter-grade between the savanna (*Loxodonta africana africana*) and the forest (*L. a. cyclotis*) types. Some groups show the predominately forest type characteristics of small size, small round ears and narrow straight tusks, while others are of the savanna type, larger, with thicker curved tusks, bigger ears and different body shape. The *cyclotis* type predominates although the Park is mainly long grass, open savanna in the guinea savanna belt, and the surrounding woodland is not forest but small mixed deciduous trees dominated by *Combretum* species.

Since 1927 the Elephant Domestication Centre of the previous Belgian Congo has been based here and the Belgians recognized the two types of elephants as separate sub-species: *L. a. cyclotis* and *L. a. oxyotis*. The *cyclotis* type was reputed to be much more tractable and favoured for domestication.

Offerman (1951) also talks of the small form of elephant which the Azande people called 'Abele' meaning 'those of the forest'. During extensive capture operations, Offerman observed that the small type was almost always found in dense stands of *Raphia* or swamp of difficult access. They captured a small male at Ango in 1925. He was then 1.30 m in height with tusks 0.65 m long. Thirteen years later, when estimated to be 25 years old, he was still only 1.60 metres tall with tusks of 11 m length. Normal *cyclotis* males of this age averaged 2.35 metres in height. A female captured in 1912 had also remained much smaller than her peers throughout life. The small type of 'pygmy' elephant may therefore not be exclusively juveniles of the forest type with premature tusk development, although this

phenomenon would certainly seem to account for some reports.

From his observations, Offerman concluded that large height variations exist in the *cyclotis* race of elephants and that the existence of a distinct pygmy race is not proven.

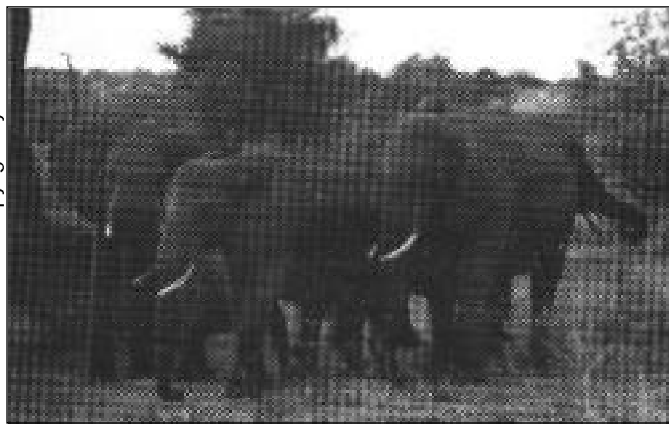
It is perhaps of interest that we have a similar situation among buffaloes in the Park. Individuals of distinctly forest characteristics (*Synceros caffer nanus*), with red coats and small thin upward-pointing horns are found mixed in herds with the normal black savanna type of buffaloes, though the horns of the latter are not usually quite as large as those of East African buffaloes, possibly due to inter-breeding.

**Kes Hillman Smith**

## Reference

P. Offerman, "Les éléphants du Congo Belge", *Corps des Lieutenants Honoraires de Chasse du Congo Belge*, III, 9 (1951), 85-95.

Copyright Cynthia Moss



A family group in Tarangire

## Black Rhinos in Lake Nakuru National Park

Before the translocation exercise of rhinos to Lake Nakuru National Park (LNNP) started, two rhinos, a male and a female, were already in the Park. The history of these two goes back to the late 1950s when three black rhinos used to be sighted by herdsmen on the former cattle ranch which today is a part of the Park. In 1987, when monitoring studies started, only two rhinos were located, the third was assumed dead. It is something of a mystery that the two have not bred in all this time.

By October 1987, when the exercise ended, a total of 17 black rhinos had been translocated to LNNP, 15 of which came from Solio Game Reserve, one male from Nairobi Park and another from Lewa Downs. This increased the population to 8 females and 11 males, a total of 19 rhinos. All the rhinos have settled with the exception of one female which was taken to Lewa Downs Rhino Sanctuary after having been attacked and seriously wounded.

One of the rhinos, which was pregnant when captured, gave birth in late 1989. Although there is a lot of browse in LNNP, monitoring indicates that most of it is unavailable to the rhinos due to plant heights of over 2.5 m. Dietary composition results indicate that some plants are not eaten at all, while others are heavily selected. All the animals are in the southern part of the Park. This distribution can be attributed to water scarcity in the northern as compared to the southern part of the Park where several bore-holes and shallow dams have been developed. The lake water is highly alkaline. The home ranges

during the dry season are significantly larger than in the wet season.

**F.K. Waweru**

## Unita Involved in Ivory Trafficking

Unita is involved in ivory trafficking, the South African newspaper, the *Sunday Times* reported in November last year.

The newspaper published an interview with a former officer of the South African Army, Col. Jan Breytzenzach, who confirmed that Unita is still involved in trafficking ivory and rhino horns to finance its military activities against the Angolan government.

According to the officer, all ivory and rhino horns obtained from indiscriminate killing of animals in southern Angola were transported via Namibia to South Africa, which has become an important exporter of these products.

Breytzenzach, who commanded battalion 22 of the South African Army in the invasion of Angola's Cuando-Cubango province, said he observed Unita killing elephants in that area with the use of AK-47's and other machine guns.

**Agencies: Kenya Times 24 November 1989**

## Kenya's Rhino Man Wins the Goldman Environmental Prize

Michael Werikhe, Kenya's rhino man, was one of six recipients of the First Annual Goldman Environmental Prize. Mr Werikhe received the prize for Africa in recognition of his walks to raise funds for rhino projects in East and Central Africa, and awareness of the plight of the rhino and the state of the environment in general.

Mr Werikhe and Janet Gibson of Belize who won the prize for South/Central America for her role in helping to preserve a coral reef were two of the Wildlife Conservation International's nominees for the awards. Other prize-winners included, for North America, Lois Gibson of the United States, who first warned that toxic waste was seeping into a residential area called Love Canal; for Asia, Harrison Ngau who suffered imprisonment and house arrest for his efforts to help Borneo's indigenous people to save their rainforests; for Australia and Oceania, Bob Brown of Tasmania, who left his medical practice to campaign for environmental causes; and for Europe, Janos Vargha of Hungary, who lost his job during his fight against construction of a dam on the Danube River.

In one of his speeches Mr Werikhe said, "... What we need most is public education, and for the governments of the world to exert influence on Arabia and the Far East, where people must be made to understand that the rhino is better alive than made into dagger handles, medicines and aphrodisiacs. Just as rhino horn has become a symbol of wealth and health for many cultures, it has long been a symbol of wildlife conservation in Africa. A metallic rhino greets you at the gates of our national parks. But if we can't take care of our symbol, what hope is there for the rest of the natural habitat, and ultimately for man himself?"

Michael Werikhe now plans to walk in the United States next year to raise further funds and support for the rhino. He will once again have the support of East African Wild Life Society and Wildlife Conservation International.

**Helen Gichohi Wildlife Conservation International, Nairobi**