

posed with a dead rhino for a fee.

Below is an excerpt from a document which describes the views of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Wilderness Foundation, the Private Rhino Owners' Association and the Rhino Management Group on a moratorium on rhino hunting in South Africa.

"Implementing a moratorium on hunting may have unintended and negative consequences which are prejudicial to southern white rhino conservation. The Endangered Wildlife Trust does not support a hunting ban on white rhino trophy hunting. To address the pseudo-hunting issue, current permitting and hunting protocols must be strictly implemented, with extra attention paid to the current transgressors (land owners and professional hunters), especially in the North West Province.

"There should be a move towards a national white rhino hunting quota (building poaching into this number), with incentives to be offered to those rhino owners helping with metapopulation biological management and who are compliant with legislation. There should also be a move towards a nationally managed hunting permit system. A biodiversity management plan for white rhinos must be developed as a matter of urgency."

Further points in this document include the following information:

- White rhino hunting has contributed to increasing live sale prices. A moratorium on hunting may result in a reduction in prices, and more rhino owners may sell their animals. This would mean a big reduction in the estimated 22 274 km<sup>2</sup> of conservation land that private land owners currently contribute.

*"The increase in poaching has led to some private rhino owners viewing their animals as a liability. This could reduce land availability for rhino."*

- Live sales, eco-tourism and limited sport hunting provide economic incentives for the private sector and communities to conserve rhino. This has led to an increase in rhino range and the number of rhinos being managed by the private sector. There are approximately 4 500 white rhinos conserved on private land in South Africa.
- State conservation agencies use funds raised from live white rhino sales to subsidise conservation or in the case of SAN Parks, to buy conservation land.
- White rhino sales have been the biggest contributor to total turnover at KZN Wildlife game auctions, accounting for 74.9% of total turnover from 2008 to July 2011. Any decline in demand and hence price will negatively affect state conservation agencies' ability to execute their conservation mandate.

- The increase in poaching has led to some rhino owners viewing their animals as a liability. This could result in reduced demand for live rhino and a drop in prices. There has been a drop in the average price achieved for white rhino from 2008 to 2010.
- In the past, it was not necessary to have a national hunting quota for rhino, as the number of top dollar hunters from traditional hunting countries such as the United States was limited and market forces dictated that only a limited and sustainable number of white rhino were hunted every year. With the rise of pseudo-hunting and so-called 'hunters' from non-traditional hunting countries, the number of rhino now being hunted is increasing.

## PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

Private land owners with rhino have found themselves caught up in the poaching issue as the poachers are increasingly targeting private land. The majority of game reserves are aimed at ecotourism and offer an experience for tourists to experience the bush and wild animals. When rhino are killed by armed poachers on these reserves, and the information is widely publicised, it could have a negative impact on that reserve's tourism. It has been said by well placed sources that the real number of rhino deaths are not reported, perhaps for this very reason.

With the situation being as critical as it is publications may have to think twice before publishing photographs of rhinos on game reserves in order to avoid giving photographic evidence of rhino population size, location, or horn size. Reserves themselves may in due course ban people from photographing rhino.

Private land owners are fighting back. Chairman of the Private Rhino Owners

Association, Pelham Jones, says that the Association has an excellent working relationship with authorities directly involved in combating the rhino poaching including the Hawks, National Prosecuting Authority, and the National Wildlife Crime Reaction Unit. The interaction includes a spectrum of activities from investigations, to intelligence gathering, and the implementation of anti-poaching measures and campaigns.

Pelham said that the requirements to reduce poaching cover four parallel and supporting actions:

- Better policing, arrests and prosecution. The higher the risk to criminals of arrest and asset loss, the lower the reward and accordingly the viability to poach.
- Allow for legal trade in rhino horn. The current CITES ban has not protected rhino. In the last 45 years 100 000 rhino have been poached throughout Africa.



The cause advert on the right was conceptualised and designed by Ogilvy, Durban. We pay tribute to the advertising agencies for voluntarily contributing their time and talent to support the drive to stop rhino poaching.

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