

# IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group

2016-2017 Report



Michael Knight

## Chair

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<sup>(1)</sup> Park Planning & Development, South African National Parks, South Africa

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## Number of members

50



## Mission statement

To promote the development and long-term maintenance of viable populations of the various sub-species of African rhinos in the wild.

## Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

### Barometer of life

#### ■ Red List

i. Regional assessment and Red List of White and Black Rhinos (South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho). (KSR #1)

### Capacity building

#### ■ Capacity building

i. First meeting of the East African Rhino Management Group. (KSR #18)

#### ■ Scientific meetings

i. Chair the 20th Southern African Development Community Rhino Management Group Meeting. (KSR #28)

ii. Research paper presented at 2016 Symposium on Contemporary Conservation Practice.

#### ■ Technical advice

i. Paper at International RhODIS workshop on international cooperation in sharing DNA forensic information. (KSR #27)

### Communications

#### ■ Communication

i. Provided document to CITES Secretariat on the status of African rhinos for CoP17. (KSR #26)

ii. Reports in *Pachiderm* journal. (KSR #28)

iii. Response to queries from media and students improving understanding of rhino conservation issues.

#### ■ Documents review

i. Expert opinion on a number of scientific research papers.

#### ■ Research activities

i. Co-authors of a paper on trophy hunting. (KSR #32)

#### ■ Scientific meetings

i. Plenary paper at a Wildlife Veterinary Congress.

#### ■ Technical advice

i. Provided advice on proposals submitted for IUCN TRAFFIC analyses. (KSR #26)

ii. Provided advice at CITES Standing Committee Meeting 69. (KSR #26)

iii. Positive inputs to supporting documents, interjections and review of submissions at CITES COP17. (KSR #26)

iv. Presentation to the provincial and national security cluster on priority crimes in South Africa. (KSR #43)

v. Comments on Tipping Point – Transnational Organised Crime and the “War on Poaching”. (KSR #43)

### Conservation action

#### ■ Conservation activities

i. African Rhino Range State Conservation Plan accepted by all African range states. (KSR #15)

ii. Development of the Rhino Conservation Implementation plans. (KSR #15)

iii. Rhino Impact Investment Project: sites for impact investment gone through initial selection. (KSR #27)

iv. Kenyan national strategy for Black Rhino conservation revised. (KSR #20)

v. Participated in IUCN Species Conservation Planning Group workshop. (KSR #15)

vi. Report delivered on possible translocation of White Rhinos to Viet Nam. (KSR #24)



Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*), Critically Endangered  
Photo: Michael Knight

#### ■ Documents review

i. Review of report on reintroduction of Black Rhinos to Botswana.

#### ■ Proposal development and funding

i. Preparation of African rhino funding proposal.  
ii. Funding obtained for rhino proposals from MyPlanet Rhino Fund. (KSR #30)

#### ■ Synergy

i. Participation in Rhino Elephant Security Group and information sharing across African sub region. (KSR #29)

#### ■ Technical advice

- i. Quality report on introduction of rhinos to Rwanda using latest genetic information. (KSR #27)  
ii. Participation on committee instrumental in DNA fingerprinting of rhinos. (KSR #27)  
iii. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - Black Rhino Range Expansion Steering Committee. (KSR #27)  
iv. Affidavit opposing bail for rhino poachers to increase probabilities of successful prosecution. (KSR #27)  
v. Active participation in the Kenya Wildlife Service Rhino Steering Committee. (KSR #27)  
vi. Draft for rhino introduction and management plan for Chad. (KSR #27)  
vii. Review of hunting applications. (KSR #27)  
viii. Participation in South African Committee of Enquiry about the potential trade of rhino horn. (KSR #26)

#### Increasing diversity of SSC

##### ■ Membership

i. More diverse (skills, cultural, ethnicity) representation of group.

#### Acknowledgements

The AfRSG thanks the African Rhino Range States for their continued cooperation. Also the AfRSG would like to thank Save the Rhino International, International Rhino Foundation, WWF Netherlands via WWF ARP and WWF South Africa, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS RTC), Endangered Wildlife Trust, Peace Parks Foundation, African Wildlife Foundation, SANParks, UK's DEFRA, and Save the Elephants who have supported meetings, the Scientific Officer, Chair and Co-Chair in various ways.

#### Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

##### Barometer of life

Red List: Red List assessment for Black and White Rhinos.

##### Bolster work at national scales

Technical advice: (1) contribute to delivery of national plans; (2) official support for Rhino Management Plan for Chad.

##### Capacity building

Capacity building: East African Rhino Management Group capacity building.  
Technical advice: (1) biological management workshop; (2) attendance at workshops and government meetings as invited or presentations given; (3) assisting with implementation of Rhino Range State Plan.

##### Communications

Communication: (1) *Pachyderm* journal chair report, (2) respond to media requests and (3) improved communication of rhino issues to members, state and private sectors.

Documents review: scientific peer review of rhino papers.

Policy advice: (1) compiling of joint IUCN/TRAFFIC report for CoP18; (2) review range state proposals for IUCN TRAFFIC analyses.

Scientific meetings: (1) participating in Rhino and Elephant Security Group/INTERPOL Environmental Crime Working Group (ECWG) meetings; (2) hold biennial AfRSG meeting.

Technical advice: (1) attendance and technical role at CITES COPs; (2) Southern African Development Community Rhino Management Group and chairing; (3) participating in RESG/INTERPOL ECWG meetings; (4) participate in black rhino range expansion project; (5) attendance and technical role at CITES SC/WGs meetings.

#### Conservation action

Conservation activities: (1) review of South Africa Biodiversity Management Plan for Black Rhinos; (2) engage in Rhino Impact Investment Project (RIIP).

Proposal development and funding: (1) submit donor applications; (2) complete donors' reports.  
Synergy: establish new management partner for AfRSG.

Technical advice: (1) reviewing hunting applications; (2) engage with *ex situ* (EZA, TAG, etc.) conservation; (3) providing expert advice to range states and conservation authorities; (4) expert advice to MyPlanet fund.

#### Increasing diversity of SSC

Membership: Diversify AfRSG.

#### Policy

Technical advice: Participate on RhODIS advisory board.

#### Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020

The AfRSG envisions a state in which all African Range States are closely cooperating on the delivery of the African Rhino Range State Conservation Plan drafted in 2016, greater cooperation between East African rhino range states in implementation of a regional meta-population management of the species, the expansion of the rhino range states through the inclusion of Chad, successful implementation and acceptance of impact investment as a model for sustainable financing of protected areas, greater inter- and intra-government engagement in positively addressing rhino poaching, where DNA forensics plays an increasing international role in combating international wildlife trade of rhino horn.

#### Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 5/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (1 activity)
- Capacity building (4 activities)
- Communications (11 activities)
- Conservation action (18 activities)
- Increasing diversity of SSC (1 activity)

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 15, 18, 20, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 43