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# Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

## **WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU**

18th Session 4 - 9 July 1994 Paris, France

Agenda Item 5

## MONITORING THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

#### REPORT PREPARED BY IUCN

30 June 1994

## A. MONITORING PROCEDURES

The monitoring of the condition of natural World Heritage properties has emerged to be as important a procedure as nominating new sites to the list. IUCN began regular monitoring in 1984 using its facility at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and through its worldwide membership network. IUCN's role in monitoring is specifically requested in paragraph 57 of the Operational Guidelines. The monitoring procedure is as follows:

- 1. IUCN/WCMC receive information on the conservation status of a property through its reporting network and other sources (journals, project reports, news stories).
- 2. Relevant government authorities are notified and asked for further clarification.
- 3. WCMC reviews new information and updates data sheet on the site in question.
- 4. IUCN reports on threats and issues at selected sites to World Heritage Bureau in June.
- 5. Relevant State Party contacted by World Heritage Center and further clarification requested.
- IUCN and World Heritage Center prepare annual monitoring report for World Heritage Committee.
- 7. Committee takes action as appropriate including decision on follow-up action and possible inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Monitoring involves continual up-dating of the data base and a request fro all IUCN members and field offices to keep a watchiung brief on any serious threats that arise. Information is also shared for World Heritage sites that are also covered under the Ramsar Convention whose secretariat is also located at IUCN headquarters. As funds for monitoring activities are limited the procedure is kept simple and cost effective and is provided in a standardised format.

IUCN urges State Parties themselves to submit voluntary status reports as has occasionally been done and as is standard procedure on other international conventions (e.g. CITES, RAMSAR, Law of the Sea).

The reports below reflect the wide range of threats that natural World Heritage sites all around the globe are subject to. Over the past few years more than half of all natural sites have faced threats of one form or another and have been brought to the attention of the Committee by IUCN in a total of 138 conservation status reports over this period.

Monitoring (or "reporting" as it is more properly called) has been a productive exercise in promoting a number of corrective actions to be taken. Unfortunately, the resolution of serious threats to several other sites has not been forthcoming and the prospect for de-listing for several of these is real.

## B. MONITORING REPORTS FOR 1994

Much of the follow-up to IUCN's previous monitoring reports is now contained in the monitoring document prepared by the World Heritage Centre (WHC-94 CONF.001/3b). In addition, the following sites are being reported on this document:

Ecuador - Sangay National Park

India - Manas National Park

Bulgaria - Srebarna Nature Reserve

Tanzania - Ngorongoro Conservation Area

• Greece - Mount Athos

• Australia - Shark Bay

Australia - Willandra Lakes

Mauritania - Banc d'Arguin National Park

New Zealand - Te Wahipounamu

Zimbabwe - Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserves

Finally, verbal reports will be given on two additional sites for which documentation has come in too late for study: Tasmanian Wilderness and Bialowieza.

- 1. PROPERTY: SANGAY NATIONAL PARK (Ecuador)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1983. ii, iii, iv 1992 World Heritage in Danger
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: \$28,500 in December 1993. US\$925,000 from GEF.

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

A short up-date on the status of the park has been provided by the IUCN office in Ecuador. There has been a major restructuring of the park administration with a change in Superintendent and a reduction in personnel. There is now concern that with the significant resources being provided through the GEF, there is limited capacity to carry out the work.

The Macas-Guamote road construction continues at a slow pace with no attention to fulfilment of the conditions in the inter-institutional letter of Agreement (see December 1993 monitoring report).

Hunting activity inside the park has increased in the Alao area of the park.

#### 5. EVALUATION:

It is clear that Sangay National Park still deserves to be on the List of World Heritage in Danger and that very little progress is being made to rectify the situation. The continuing reductions in the size of the work force has further limited management capacity. There has been no response from the Ecuadorian authorities to letters sent from the Centre.

#### 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

It is time for higher level interventions to express concern over lack of action to safeguard this site. The Bureau will need to determine the best options for making high level contact with the Government of Ecuador.

- 1. PROPERTY: MANAS NATIONAL PARK (India)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1985. ii, iii, iv; 1992 World Heritage in Danger
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None

## 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

Since the last Committee meeting three news reports and one report from the Assam Forest Department (all cited below) confirm that the situation continues to deteriorate. Almost one third (22) of the parks remaining rhinos, were poached in 1993. The Bodo rebellion is still hampering management efforts and only a part of the area is considered safe. The Assam Forest Department is providing a group of elite commandos who will be trained and provided with modern weapons. This will not solve the problem with the local communities around the park but is one necessary step. WWF-India as well as the Forest Department are planning various activities but the security situation still does not allow resolution of the problem.

## 5. EVALUATION:

The Government of India has acknowledged the letter of concern sent by the World Heritage Centre but has not proposed any corrective measures or any cooperative action with the State Government. The conservation status of the park thus has not improved but it is likely not yet beyond hope. Both WWF-India and the Swaminathan Foundation are hoping to assist in monitoring the situation.

## 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau has few options but it could:

- endorse in principle a sum of \$25,000 to assist Manas if requested by the Government of India;
- offer to involve WWF-India and the Swaminathan Foundation in their efforts to help;
- consider sending a high level mission to Delhi and to Assam to impress the urgency of the situation on the authorities.

## 7. REFERENCES:

- Tigers on the Brink. TIME. 28 March 1994
- Subhani, S.Z. Militants Decimate Manas' Wildlife. WWF Features 34/93
- Manas Rhinos Routed by Bodos. 3 February 1994. Delhi Pioneer
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary. Report to Workshop on Indian Rhino by Forest Department of Assam. December 1993

Note: Further background on problems in the site are contained in ten IUCN monitoring reports beginning in June, 1989.

- 1. PROPERTY: SREBARNA BIOSPHERE RESERVE (Bulgaria)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1983. iv; 1992 World Heritage in Danger
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

IUCN reports on the status of conservation in this site have been made to the Bureau and Committee since December 1991. The June 1993 Bureau has recommended that the Committee defer a decision on whether or not to delete the property from the list until 1995. In the meantime, there have been assessments of the conditions in the site by various experts from the Ramsar Bureau, the USNPS and Bulgarian authorities. All of the subsequent reports have confirmed that serious degradation has occurred - even worse than was indicated in the 1991 IUCN monitoring report. Restoration was thought, however, to be possible and some efforts to attempt this are underway.

A current status report has been prepared by the Bulgarian authorities but a copy has not yet been made available to IUCN.

## 5. EVALUATION:

The report of the wetland experts from the USNPS has clearly outlined the events which have led to the "collapse of this once thriving lake" as well as the enormous effort that will be required to restore it. In light of the loss of the integrity of Srebarna and the periodic review clause called for in paragraph 29 of the Convention's Strategic Plan, it is unlikely that IUCN would recommend the inscription of the site today.

#### 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

Without having seen and studied the current status report on Srebarna by the Bulgarian authorities, IUCN cannot suggest what actions should be taken by the Bureau.

## 7. REFERENCES:

Government of Bulgaria. 1993. Environment Impact Assessment Report of Restoration of the Srebarna Biosphere Reserve Project. 29 p. plus annexes.

Van Lent T. and M. Soukup. 1993. Restoration of Srebarna World Heritage site. USNPS. 8 p.

- 1. PROPERTY: NGORONGORO CONSERVATION AREA (Tanzania)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1979; criteria not recorded
- 3. **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND:** \$79,000 to date plus \$275,000 IUCN support in 1994 (funded by Germany)

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

IUCN has previously reported on the impact that the illegal and random cultivation has had on this site. No official replies from the Tanzanian authorities have been received but independent information on farming activity shows it has not diminished. An NGO called the "Friends of Serengeti" have protested strongly to the Government and suggested alternative areas where cultivation could be encouraged. The Ngorongoro Board has not taken a strong stand on the issue.

## 5. EVALUATION:

With no improvement in the situation and no response from Government, IUCN is considering recommending that the site be considered for the List of World Heritage in Danger at the December meeting of the Committee. This recommendation will be considered during a field mission to the site proposed for October by IUCN HQ and regional office staff. As an IUCN management planner is due to begin work in the NCA in the near future, the progress on this project will also be reviewed. It has been suggested that the management planning process may be futile if the policy on cultivation is not sorted out first. A subsequent follow-up implementation project to be funded by KFW (Germany) is also expected but it has been recommended that this should be withheld until cultivation is phased out.

## 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau should again express its concern over cultivation in the site and lack of any response to its inquiries. At the same time it should welcome the preparation of the management plan and encourage the authorities to cooperate in the October mission to the site.

- 1. PROPERTY: MOUNT ATHOS (Greece)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1989, Cultural iii, iv, v, vi, Natural iii
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None

## 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

At the July 1992 meeting of the Bureau, IUCN noted concern over an increase in forestry activities and road construction and suggested a mission to review conditions in this mixed site. The Greek authorities at the time did not feel this was needed and the issue was dropped.

A new report, however, issued in September 1993 by WWF and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (EPC) on the ecological status of the area, suggests that this concern be raised once again. In fact, many new roads have been built and many trees cut. There were also reports of overgrazing, chemical pollution from increasing use of fertilisers and pesticides, proposed hydrodam construction, inadequate sewage disposal, open refuse dumps and planting of inappropriate tree species. Some of the monasteries surveyed were sympathetic to conservation but many others were carrying out activities that are inconsistent with its World Heritage Status.

## 5. EVALUATION:

There appears to be a need for impact studies, forest management plans and a system of reserve on Mount Athos. IUCN supports the recommendations made in the WWF/EPC report and would urge action before further damage is done.

## 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau should take note of the WWF/EPC report and request the authorities in Greece to contact the WWF office in Athens and report back to the next Committee on the status of the natural heritage of the site.

## 7. REFERENCES:

Oikononou, Dimitrios et.al. 1993. Final Report of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, WWF International and WWF Greece Team on the Ecological Status of the Monasteries of Mount Athos. 25 p. plus appendix. 66 p.

- 1. PROPERTY: SHARK BAY (Australia)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1992. i, ii, iii, iv
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: n/a

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

In response to the concerns expressed in IUCN's original technical evaluation, the Committee requested IUCN to report back on the progress with (1) implementation of the Commonwealth/State management agreement and (2) efforts to achieve more effective conservation of the site.

On the first issue, the agreement has not yet been implemented as the new government in Western Australia has stated that it wishes to revise it. This means that complementary legislation to provide for joint management structures including a Ministerial Council, Community Consultative and Scientific Advisory Committees have not been established. In the interim, the 1988 Shark Bay Region Plan is still the guiding document for management of the site.

On the second issue, substantial progress at the field level to strengthen management has occurred. This includes expansion of education and information services, removal of feral animals, construction of barrier fences and boardwalks, provision of improved visitor services, and reintroduction of burrowing bettong. A series of management plans for the marine reserves and Monkey Mia are underway as is a Fisheries plan and a Terrestrial Reserves plan. There is also evidence of much greater public support for the nomination but the number of CALM and Fisheries Department staff available to manage such a large area are still seen as insufficient. IUCN has indicated some other minor concerns (shell harvesting, dolphin feeding) to reserve managers during a site visit in April 1994.

## 5. EVALUATION:

In the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years since listing there has been reasonable progress by CALM staff at the field level in improving the conservation status of Shark Bay. The completion of the various management plans, however, has been delayed and there is concern in the local Shire Councils that not enough action has been evident. Certainly Shark Bay is well behind other World Heritage sites in Australia in terms of becoming a model of effective management. A main constraint on progress is the lack of implementation of the October 1990 Commonwealth/State agreement which the State Government now wishes to re-negotiate.

#### 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

IUCN suggests to the Bureau that internal issues between the Commonwealth and the State are not a matter for intervention by the Committee. However, as assurances were given that the October 1990 agreement was to provide the management framework, the Committee will be concerned that most of this has not been operationalised. A letter from the Bureau to the Australian authorities requesting positive and concrete action by the date of the next Committee is suggested.

## 7. REFERENCES:

Agreement between the State of Western Australia and the Commonwealth of Australia on Legislative and Administrative Arrangements for Shark Bay Western Australia World Heritage Property. October 1990. 9 pages.

DEST. 1994. Shark Bay 1992-93 Monitoring Report (pages 33-37).

- 1. PROPERTY: WILLANDRA LAKES REGION (Australia)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1981. Cultural iii, Natural i, ii
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: n/a

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

As no one from IUCN, ICOMOS or UNESCO had ever paid a visit to this "mixed" site, IUCN took the initiative and requested the Australian authorities to arrange a field visit in April. It has long been known that there have been some problems with landowners resident in the site, that aboriginal concerns were being raised and that no management plan was available 13 years after it was requested by the Committee. The conclusion of the two day visit which involved meetings with State and Commonwealth officials as well as representatives of the aboriginal groups, the Willandra Landholders Protection Group and the Wentworth Shire Council, was that Willandra has been the most neglected of all Australia's World Heritage sites and urgently needs attention.

Fortunately, this attention is now being given as the Commonwealth, through DEST, has recently increased its involvement in matters relating to the site and is cooperating with the State of New South Wales to resolve the many issues that are outstanding. A full briefing document has been provided to IUCN on the activities now underway which include the establishment of a Community Management Council, a Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee and the release of a Strategic Issues Document. A socio-economic impact study is now underway and the Commonwealth is making funds available to assist the State in management.

#### 5. EVALUATION:

IUCN was convinced that the goodwill now exists as well as the financial means to address the long overdue issues that relate to this "forgotten" site. All indications are that much progress will be made over the next 6 - 8 months.

One action that can be anticipated is a review of the appropriate boundaries of the site which were hastily and arbitrarily drawn up in 1980 without sufficient regard to location of the World Heritage values. A study of the region concluded that the whole southern third of the property contains little material of archaeological or scientific value. Also from the natural heritage point of view, the entire Prungle, Banoon and Turlee areas could be omitted from the site. Similarly the existing heritage boundary does not include the whole of Zanci station which is now a part of Mungo National Park. There is some valuable mallee vegetation occurring here which should be part of the site.

A second major issue relates back to the inscription of the site in 1981 on both natural and cultural criteria. IUCN's technical evaluation at the time was not convinced of the site's universal value and recommended deferral. Based on the brief visit made in April, IUCN would suggest that the site is predominantly a cultural one and a re-nomination should be considered on these grounds alone.

Finally, the Willandra Lakes experience illustrates several important lessons:

- private landowners resident in a site should always be consulted when preparing nominations;
- boundaries should be carefully determined to include only those areas with World Heritage values;
- advisory bodies should always undertake field inspections, especially on nominations where problems are anticipated;
- 13 years is too long a time lapse for monitoring such sites but the conduct of a monitoring mission can serve to initiate action.

## 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau should register concern with the Australian authorities that Willandra Lakes has not progressed to the normal high standard of management evident in other World Heritage sites. Current initiatives to achieve this, however, are underway and should be encouraged. The Bureau should also suggest the site be considered for re-nomination based on cultural criteria and a reduced overall size.

## 7. REFERENCES:

NSW. n.d. Extract from internal report on Heritage Area Boundaries.

DEST. 1994. Willandra Lakes Region. Strategic Issues Document. 52 p.

O'Shea. R. 1994. Background Briefing Document. 16 p. plus map.

Gostin, O. 1993. Accessing the Dreaming - Heritage Conservation and Tourism in Mungo National Park 116 p.

Spannerman, D. 1994. The Willandra Conundrum. Chas Stuart University Report (not seen)

- 1. PROPERTY: BANC D'ARGUIN NATIONAL PARK (Mauritania)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1989. iii. iv
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

The situation regarding the passage through the park by the Paris - Dakar motor rally has been dealt with in the monitoring report by the World Heritage Centre.

A much greater issue of concern to IUCN is the plan to capture six monk seals from the park (total population is between 100-130) and move them to Antibes in the south of France. The purpose for this is captive breeding and the project is being funded by the European Union and the French Environment Ministry. There are a number of logistical problems with this and critics say that the money spent on capture and re-location would be better used to protect the seals in situ. IUCN's marine programme has expressed some concerns over the captive breeding plan and the Species Survival Commission is also maintaining an interest in the project.

#### 5. EVALUATION:

Half of the remaining world's population of Mediterranean monk seals are found in the Banc d'Arguin World Heritage site. The capture operation, scheduled for this October, will take a significant proportion. It would be a serious blow to the viability of the herd if it does not go proceeding to plan.

#### 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau should write the implementors of the captive breeding project to remind them that Banc d'Arguin is a World Heritage site and urging them to keep IUCN and the World Heritage Centre informed of the planned removal of seals from the site.

## 7. REFERENCES:

Patel, Tara. 1994. Monk Seals to be Captured for Breeding Study. New Scientist. 11 June.

- 1. PROPERTY: TE WAHIPOUNAMU (South-west New Zealand)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1986. Extension 1990. i, ii, iii, iv.
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None
- 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

There are three issues relating to this site which merit action by the Bureau:

1. On 27 June, the New Zealand Minister of Justice was reported as saying that "small parcels of conservation of land may be returned to Ngai Tahu and other iwi (Maori tribes) to protect wahi tapu or sacred sites". While the Ngai Tahu iwi was associated in support of the New Zealand nomination, it has also pursued claims to land to the Waitangi Tribunal. This was set up by the New Zealand Government to consider Maori land grievances under the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) by which certain Maori leaders recognised British sovereignty and received various guarantees in relation to their interests. It is understood that the Ngai Tahu claims may include some land in the World Heritage site.

While it will be noted that Ngai Tahu supported the nomination and while the statement by the Minister refers to only small parcels of land sacred to Ngai Tahu, IUCN considers it would be helpful for the Bureau to invite the New Zealand Government to report on the any implication of the Ngai Tahu Treaty claims for the World Heritage site and to seek an assurance that the integrity of the site will not be jeopardised by any settlement of claims which might affect land within the World Heritage site.

- 2. It has come to IUCN's attention that continued cattle grazing is prejudicing natural values in parts of Mount Aspiring National Park including the Siberia area, the Wilkin Valley, Cattle Flat and Dredge Flat within the World Heritage site. New Zealand National Parks Policy is that cattle grazing in parks should be phased out and concern has been expressed that grazing continues and is causing damage to natural vegetation and preventing regeneration of forest edges. It is understood that the Department of Conservation as the management agency is aiming to implement the National Parks Policy. IUCN believes it would be helpful to strengthen the Department's resolve to do this as soon as possible if the Bureau drew to the State Party' attention concern at continued cattle grazing and invited them to report on proposals to end the grazing in the interests of maintaining the integrity of the site.
- 3. When Fiordland National Park was listed as a World Heritage site in 1986, IUCN's evaluation suggested that consideration be given to the inclusion in the site of the Waitutu forest along the park's southern boundary. When Fiordland National Park was incorporated into the larger Te Wahipounamu site in 1990, part of the Waitutu forest in Government ownership was included. However, the coastal section of Waitutu forest which is in Maori ownership remained outside the site. It is a cause of concern among conservation interests in New Zealand that the owners of the coastal forest recently entered into a contract for logging to take place. This was seen as threatening the significant natural values on the Maori land and prejudicing the integrity of the adjoining Waitutu forest land within the World Heritage site.

A decision under the Resource Management Act on the application to log the Maori land is still awaited but, in the meantime, the New Zealand Government has entered into negotiations with the Maori owners in an endeavour to save the coastal forest from logging.

Because of the key location of the Maori land on the coastal frontage of the World Heritage site and because of the land's potential for management compatibility with the site, IUCN recommends that the Bureau encourage the State Party to pursue its efforts to negotiate to seek an agreement which would maintain the integrity of the Waitutu forest land which adjoins the World Heritage site while recognising the interests of the owners of the land.

## 5. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

The Bureau is asked to send a letter to the New Zealand authorities with the actions suggested on each of the above issues.

- 1. PROPERTY: MANA POOLS, SAPI AND CHEWORE RESERVES (Zimbabwe)
- 2. DATE INSCRIBED AND CRITERIA: 1984. ii. iii. iv
- 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WORLD HERITAGE FUND: None

#### 4. CONDITION OF PROPERTY:

When this property was listed it was one of the three most important refuges in Africa for the black rhino with a population then of 500. By the end of this year there will be none as the last ten remaining in the wild are being captured and translocated to an intensive protection zone in another part of Zimbabwe. The Mana Pools site is not alone in suffering this drastic decline as Zimbabwe as a whole has lost 95% of its black rhino population over the past decade. Elephant poaching has increased in the site as well and although numbers are relatively low, animals with larger tasks are selected.

The gangs that have conducted the poaching are almost all based across the border in Zambia. From 1985 to 1993, 166 poachers, mostly all Zambians have been killed by the authorities and another 88 captured. Four Zimbabwean government personnel have been killed in this "war of the rhinos". The middle men who then take the rhino horn, supply it to an international network, primarily in North Korea, Taiwan and South Africa.

## 5. EVALUATION:

The Mana Pools site has lost a "flagship" species and much of its integrity. Many national and international conservation organisations were and are still involved in efforts to save the species but to no avail. The World Heritage Committee never received a request for assistance from the Zimbabwe authorities and Zambia has never acted on the Committee's invitation to nominate the adjoining Zambezi park. In any case, there was little likelihood that the Fund or the Committee could have made a large difference as the traffic in rhino horn throughout the world is underground. Pressure on the Zambian Government from other organisations was not effective and two of the three main sources of demand are countries that are not eligible to join the Convention. As the site was also inscribed for other values its inscription on the World Heritage list remains valid.

## 6. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU:

Other than recognise the loss and the lack of any effective means to prevent it there is little that the Bureau can now do as the species been extirpated from the site. The World Heritage Centre, however, could be asked to expand its linkages with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) in order to help the Committee play a more active role in other sites that are suffering similar pressures.

#### 7. REFERENCES:

Bradley-Martin, E. 1994. The Slaughter of Zimbabwe's Rhinos. Swara. January/February.