

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 – 28 August 2019

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THE CITES COP18 PROPOSAL
TO AMEND SOUTH AFRICA'S EXPORT QUOTA FOR BLACK RHINOCEROS HUNTING TROPHIES

This information document has been submitted by South Africa in relation to agenda item 48. ¹

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August 2019



1. Introduction

South Africa has submitted a proposal (CoP18 Doc. 48) to amend the export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies from five adult male black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*), as approved in Resolution Conf. 13.5 (Rev. CoP 14), to “a number of adult male black rhinoceros not exceeding 0.5% of the total black rhinoceros population in South Africa in the year of export”. The percentage will be equally applied across all three subspecies, i.e. 0.5% of the total population of each of the three subspecies. This cautious or conservative adjustment in the export quota aims to improve the ability of South Africa: 1) to continue expanding the species’ range in South Africa through incentivizing the keeping and protection of viable populations of black rhinoceroses; 2) to increase or maintain productive population growth rates of black rhinoceros through the effective management of surplus males; and 3) to promote sustainability and resilience in the national meta-population of black rhinoceros. In addition, given that the current system is in a state of flux as a result of ongoing poaching, adjusting the trophy hunting quota to 0.5% of the total black rhinoceros population allows for flexibility and an adaptive management approach.

The purpose of this document is to provide supplementary information in support of this proposal.



According to survey data from the IUCN/SSC African Rhinoceros Specialist Group (AfRSG), the total South African black rhinoceros population comprises approximately 1,924 individuals (as at the end of 2018) (Fig. 1); 1,291 and 633 individuals occur on state-owned and private land respectively. It is estimated that the private game industry currently manages about 33% of the national black rhinoceros herd, meaning that the private sector in South Africa now conserves more rhinoceroses than there are black and white rhinoceroses in the whole of the rest of Africa.

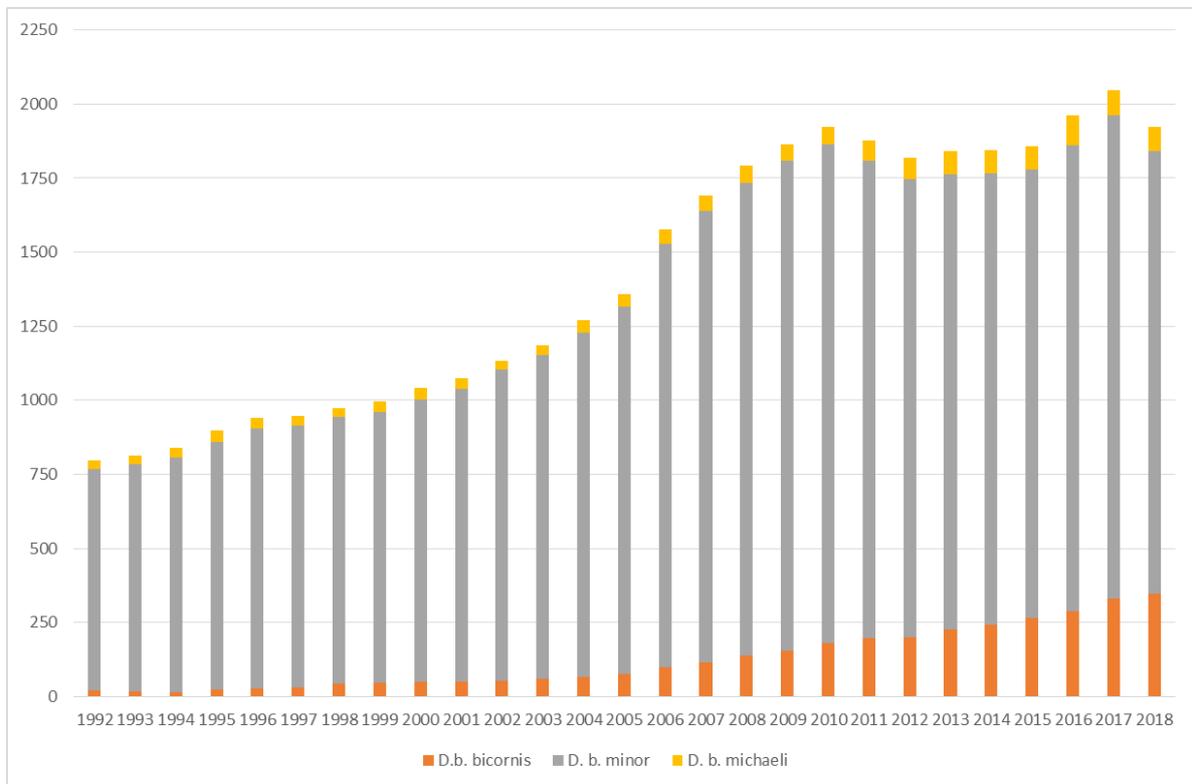


Figure 1: The estimated number of black rhinoceroses in South Africa from 1992 to 2018 (Source: IUCN SSC AfRSG).

Ongoing loss of animals to poaching for their horn is currently the most immediate threat to South Africa’s black rhinoceros population. Poaching of black rhinoceroses increased each year from 2010 (when 12 animals were poached), and peaked in 2015 and again in 2017 when 62 and 65 black rhinoceroses were respectively poached in the country (around 3.3% of the wild population). Poaching has since declined slightly, with an estimated 43 black rhinoceroses poached in 2018 (Fig. 2). On average, approximately 2.2% of the black rhinoceros population is poached annually (an average of 42 individuals per year between 2010 and 2018). The poaching offtake combined with the proposed 0.5% trophy hunting offtake is thus still easily accommodated, assuming an underlying growth rate of approximately 6% (as observed between 2012 and 2014).

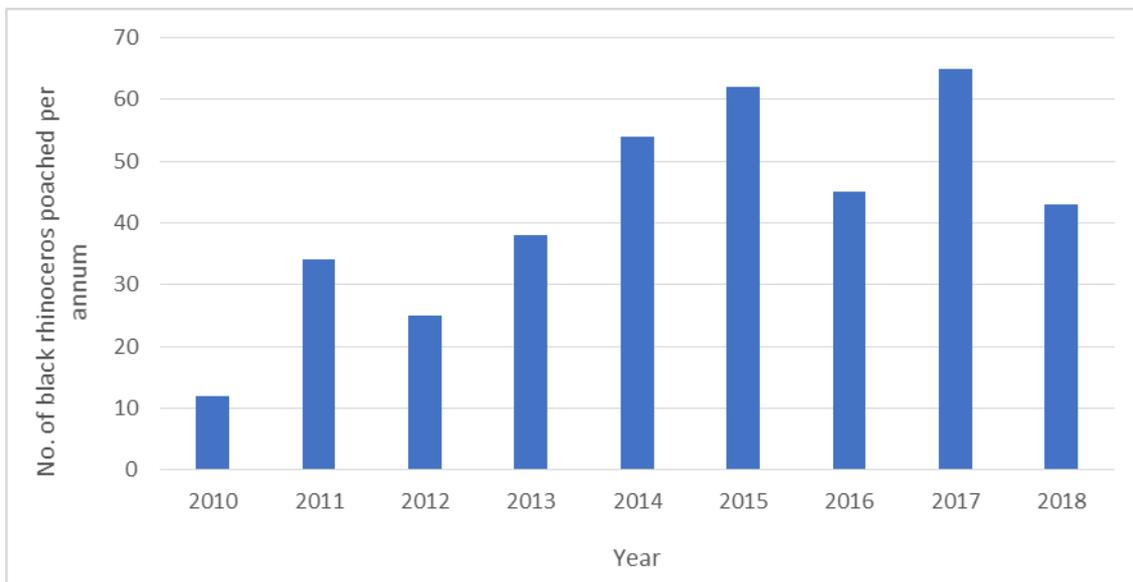


Figure 2: The number of black rhinoceroses poached annually from 2010 to 2018 (Source: IUCN SSC AfRSG and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries).

3. Possible reasons for South Africa not utilizing its full current quota of five male hunting trophies for the period 2005 to 2015.

3.1 Growing populations

As many populations are recently founded, there has not been as much demand for trophy hunting as there is likely to be in future. As populations grow, and the male component increases in age and size, the potential and need (to ensure long-term sustainability) for hunting will increase across the meta-population. An increasing quota aligned with increasing population sizes will provide the flexibility for individual reserves to fully implement their approved population management plans, enhance their sustainability, and ensure that each population is retained within the meta-population as an increasingly robust and contributing component.

3.2 Restricted hunting markets

At present not all available hunting markets allow for the import of black rhinoceros hunting trophies. The USA, for example, is an important trophy hunting market for South Africa but currently does not allow the import of black rhinoceros hunting trophies without an enhancement finding (since the species is listed as Endangered on the Endangered Species Act). It is hoped that this process to amend the export quota will demonstrate the importance of trophy hunting as an adaptive management tool for the conservation of black rhinoceros in South Africa, and more markets will in time be opened up to further South Africa's conservation efforts.

3.3 Current system cumbersome

It is the perception of the game farming industry that the current application and approval system for black rhinoceros hunts is cumbersome. Permit allocations are often lengthy, impacting negatively on potential trophy hunts. It is therefore necessary to streamline this process so that trophy hunting can be better employed as a conservation tool; this could be addressed when the national Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) for the Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) (Knight, Balfour & Emslie, 2012) is revised in 2020. It is vital that the BMP continues to provide important safeguards in relation to trophy hunting offtakes, but at the same time should ensure that the private sector is sufficiently incentivized to keep black rhinoceros so that the expansion of the species' range within South Africa continues.

4. Timeline for monitoring and determination of annual export quotas

Due to the lengthy process of acquiring and analysing population data, it is anticipated that the export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies would be determined the year after the data are collected. Population estimates as well as applications for trophy hunts would be submitted by private landowners in year 1 (Fig. 3). The population data would be analysed and the applications processed as per the black rhinoceros BMP in year 2. The CITES Secretariat would be notified of the export quota no later than 1 December of year 2, and the approved hunts would commence in year 3, followed by the trophy exports (Fig. 3). As population data are collected on an annual basis on all properties between July and September, there would still be sufficient time to retract a permit in year 2 should new scientific or management data emerge to indicate that the population can no longer sustain the quota.

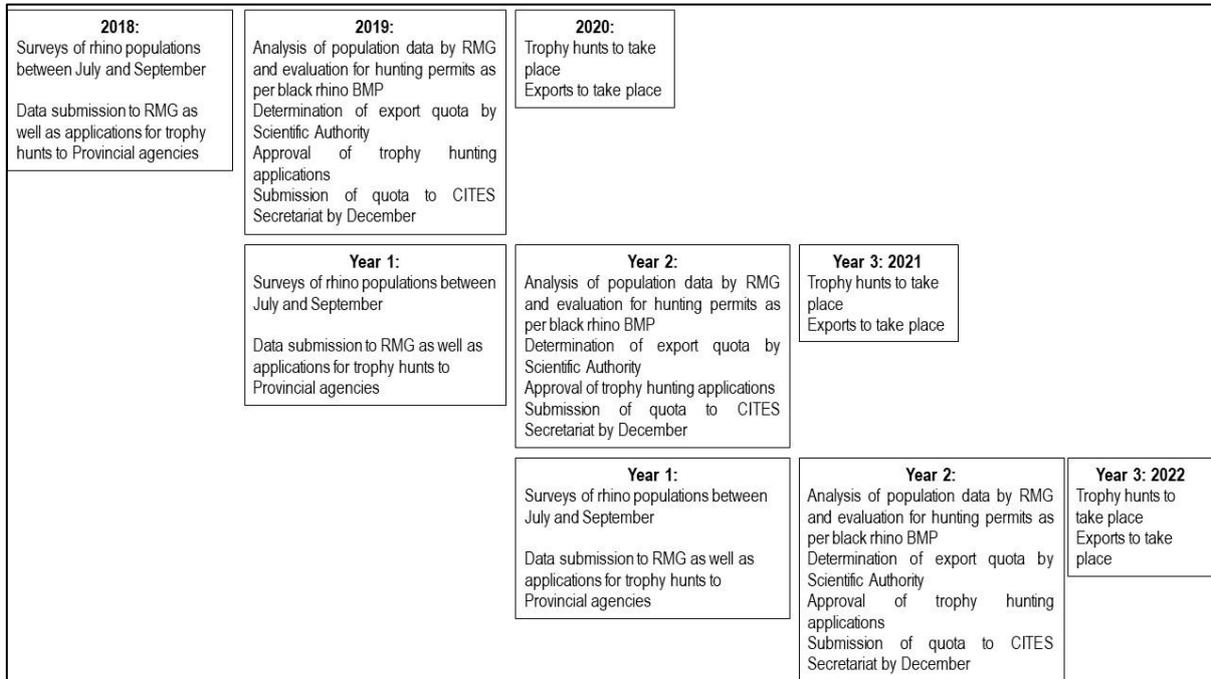


Figure 3: A schematic diagram of the process to be followed and timeframe for black rhinoceros population data collection, trophy hunt permit allocation and notification of the CITES Secretariat. (RMG = Southern African Development Community (SADC) Rhinoceros Management Group.)

Using the above-mentioned framework in conjunction with the criteria set out in the black rhinoceros BMP, South Africa would be able to satisfy the requirements of Article III paragraph 2 (a) of CITES, i.e. ensure the offtake for export purposes is not detrimental to the survival of the species. Figure 4 illustrates what the annual export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies would have looked like for the period 2005 to 2018 if it was set on the basis of 0.5% of the subspecies population estimates. Table 1 shows the anticipated export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies for 2020, based on the proposed 0.5% offtake of the total population of each of the three subspecies. The quota is restricted to male black rhinoceroses as per the black rhinoceros BMP.

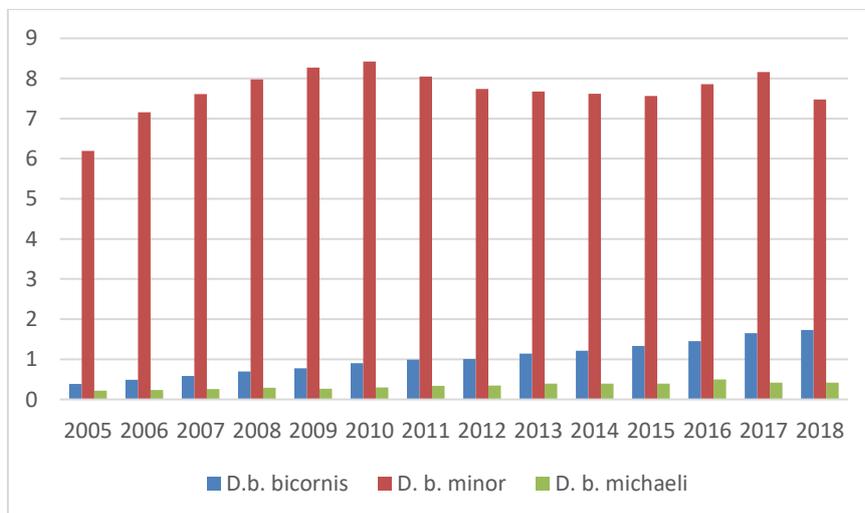


Figure 4: Annual export quotas for black rhinoceros hunting trophies from 2005 until 2018 if the quotas had been based on the proposed 0.5% of the subspecies population sizes. (NB For illustrative purposes only.) Note that the quotas shown in the above graph would have only been implemented two years later as per Figure 3 above.

Table 1: South African black rhinoceros population estimates for 2018 on a subspecies level and the proposed 2020 export quota for hunting trophies based on 0.5% of the subspecies population totals.

Subspecies	2018 population size	2020 export quota for hunting trophies
<i>D. b. bicornis</i>	346	2
<i>D. b. minor</i>	1495	7
<i>D. b. michaeli</i>	83	0
Total	1924	9

5. Case study: Contribution of trophy hunting to white rhinoceros conservation in South Africa.

Despite the translocation of significant numbers of white rhinoceros out of the country to stock protected areas in other African countries, as well as zoos and safari parks worldwide, the white rhinoceros population in South Africa is approximately 10 times larger since trophy hunting was introduced in 1968; a clear demonstration that this approach is sustainable and provides a positive contribution to conservation (Emslie, *et al.*, 2016; Cooney, *et al.*, 2017) (Fig. 5). Due to the significant economic benefits of hunting to game farmers (worth approximately \$19 million over the period 2004 – 2008), together with live sales and ecotourism, the private sector has increasingly stocked these animals. This has contributed to the expansion of the species' range and has maintained a rapid population growth of the national population. Hunting continues to play an important role in white rhinoceros conservation through the revenue it generates (Emslie *et al.*, 2019). South Africa is hoping to repeat this successful strategy with the black rhinoceros, and hence the proposal to amend the export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies (CoP18 Doc. 48).

It has been demonstrated that trophy hunting can be sustainably managed in South Africa (Cooney *et al.*, 2017; Emslie, *et al.*, 2016). Legal trophy hunting occurs mainly on private land, while within State protected areas, which currently manages more than half of the white rhinoceros population and 67% of the black rhinoceros population, trophy hunting is generally not allowed. Average trophy hunting rates have been very low and sustainable (Emslie, *et al.*, 2019).

Emslie *et al.*, (2019) further highlights that measures that have been introduced to restrict trophy hunting, such as trophy hunting import bans by some countries and refusal of certain airlines to transport trophies, has the potential to negatively impact on African rhinoceros conservation by reducing revenue generated through this source.

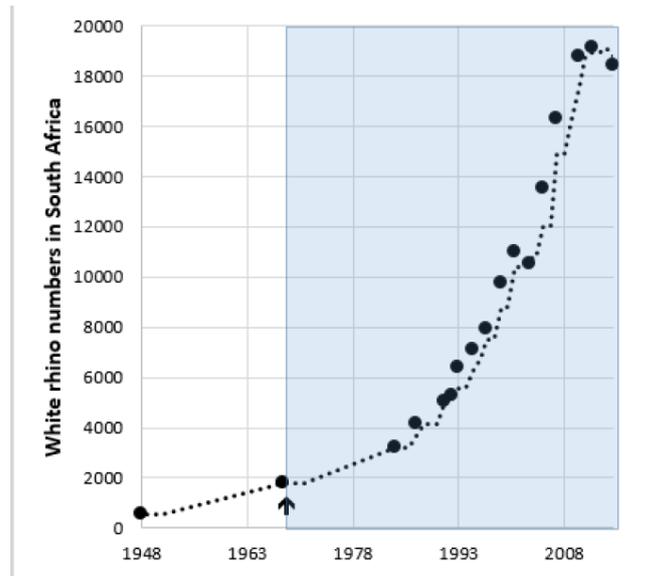


Figure 5: Growth of the white rhinoceros population in South Africa before and after trophy hunting started (↑) in 1968 (Emslie, *et al.*, 2016).

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