



An Update on Hunting Black Rhino in Namibia

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This unique creature was named after the Black Umfolozi River, the area in which it was discovered by William Burchell, and given the scientific binomial of 'Diceros bicornis.'

The desert black rhino sub-species of *Diceros bicornis bicornis* is more adapted to the arid and semi-arid savannahs of Namibia, occurring in this harshest paradise in big sky country.

Black rhinos have been one of the most heavily persecuted species on our planet. Just 100 years ago, Africa's savannahs teemed with rhinos; biologists estimate that there were likely more than one million rhinos in sub-Saharan Africa. With the arrival of European settlers, rhino numbers and distribution quickly declined. Poaching escalated during the 1970s and 1980s as Asian and Middle Eastern demand grew for rhino horn. As a result, black rhino numbers declined by a staggering 96% between 1970 and 1992.

Today there are an estimated 4,180 black rhino in the world. Nowhere are they more abundant, widespread, and increasing faster

than in remarkable Namibia. There are now 850 black rhinos in Etosha National Park alone, and they have become so abundant that for two decades the government of Namibia has facilitated black rhino range expansion into historical habitats managed by communal conservancies and private land. What is remarkable in Namibia is that rhinos are coming back on protected lands run by communal conservancies. Namibia's black rhino population has recovered from 90 in 1967 to an estimated 1,300 individuals today.

In 2004, CITES approved applications for an annual quota to sport hunt five post-productive male black rhinos to further genetic and demographic conservation management goals in the two range states with biggest black rhino populations - Namibia and South Africa. When utilized, this quota allocation will account for just

0.4% of the total Namibian population annually. (There is a 4.5% annual population growth of the black rhino population.) Comparatively, 0.5% of the total white rhino population is trophy hunted annually in South Africa and Namibia.

The Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) is imminently to announce the Game Products Trust Fund concession auction, and part of this anticipated event is an annual black rhino trophy-hunting quota in Namibia's pristine protected areas.

Income generated from the auction goes towards the Game Product Trust Fund, created to channel revenues from wildlife products into conservation and community development programmes. The right to hunt individual animals will further overall conservation objectives for the greater good of a population, sustainably using wildlife