

TX10742

Annual Report

DEPARTMENT

OF

AGRICULTURE

AND

NATURE

CONSERVATION

1986

DIRECTORATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION AND RECREATIONAL RESORTS

Introduction

This Directorate's main functions are divided into the Divisions Nature Management, Research and Recreational Resorts.

One of the outstanding events was the enlargement of the Namib Naukluft Park to 4 976 800 ha by the proclaiming of 2 665 700 ha of Diamond area I and II and adjoining state land as game park. This park is now the fourth largest in the world.

The Directorate's participation at shows in München and Bonn on tourism and hunting opportunities in SWA/Namibia was a great success.

The Kaudom Game Park was opened to the public on April 1.

Nature Management

The main functions of this Division are the scientific management, conservation, development and utilisation of the natural fauna and flora of SWA/Namibia.

Development

Various developments were completed during the report year.

Some of the main events were the building of a rangers base in Damaraland with the aim to extend control over the black rhino population and a self-guided nature trail in the Namib Naukluft Park which includes the Moonlandscape, Welwitschia plain and the Swakop river.

The maintenance section was responsible for various other development projects which included the erecting of electrified and gameproof fencing, installation of boreholes and solar powered pumps, building of roads, buildings, gabions and other maintenance work in rest camps and game parks.

The Division controls mining activities in conservation areas according to the relevant ordinance.

Problems

Despite the closing down of the northern section of the Skeleton Coast Park for security reasons, unauthorised access by members of the security forces and the public occurred. Various forms of vandalism occurred sporadically in conservation areas. Serious environmental damage was caused by off road vehicle tracks in the ecologically sensitive desert areas.

Continuous complaints were received about game falling into the Grootfontein-Omatako canal to die cruel deaths.

Approximately 3 500 gemsbok were chased onto farms bordering the Diamond areas. These were unlawfully killed for commercial purposes.

Rainfall and grazing

Although the countrywide rainfall was less than in 1985, it was widespread. The Tsauchab river which feeds Sossusvlei came down for the first time in ten years. Water remained in the vlei for the rest of the year.

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General grazing conditions in conservation areas were average to below average. Good grazing areas were East Caprivi, southern Owambo, northern Kaokoland and north-eastern Damaraland. Good grazing conditions were experienced in Etosha National Park.

Review on game

Numbers

A general game decline was noted in Eastern Caprivi. Aerial censuses were also carried out in the Mahango Game Park, West Caprivi and Von Bach Recreational Resort with a helicopter. The assessment of game numbers in Owambo was not possible due to security problems.

A successful aerial survey in Damaraland showed a definite increase in game numbers. This is due to strict law enforcement, better rainfall and the closing of the hunting season over the past five years.

Condition

The general condition of game in all the conservation areas was good.

Rare and endangered animals

A definite decline in the number of hunting dogs was noted in Kavango. The numbers of rare species in Bushmanland like buffalo, reedbuck and roan antelope decreased because of the settlement of people and stock around the water holes intended for game.

The Waterberg Plateau Park serves as breeding ground for various rare and endangered animals. During the year fifteen buffalo from Willem Pretorius and Addo National Park and four from Czechoslovakia were relocated in the park.

A number of cetaceans which included rare species such as hump back whale, southern right whale, killer whale and bottlenosed dolphin were observed off the coast. Response from farmers that have relocated rare species such as black faced impala, blesbuck and roan antelope has shown that these animals adapted well to their new environment.

Problem animals

During the year there were eight reports of problem animals in East Caprivi. Local residents killed three of these animals. Altogether 20 problem animals were killed in West Caprivi. The local inhabitants of Bushmanland had

problems with lion killing their stock. A total of 25 problem animal complaints were reported and investigated in Kavango. Small predator problems have drastically increased in Damaraland.

Border farmers along the Etosha National Park shot eleven lions. The Division succeeded in returning 31 lions to the park which broke out to border farms on seven occasions. During the year approximately 130 problem animal complaints were reported at the Otjiwarongo regional office.

Domestic animals are sometimes found to be in Nature Conservation areas. It is the function of this Division to apply the regulations of the relevant ordinance with reference to transgressing stock.

Problem plants

It is the Division's policy to control poisonous and alien invasive plants such as *Prosopis glandulosa*, *Nicotiana glauca*, *Datura innoxia* and *Pseadoga ciavale* or "slangkop" where and whenever possible. Means of control are physical, chemical and sometimes biological.

Pests and diseases

Nature conservators from the south were involved in a locust control campaign.

Seventy five jackal infested by mange (*Sarcoptes scabiei*), were shot in the Skeleton Coast Park. Rabies still occurred amongst kudu and eland in the Grootfontein region. A vaccination campaign against rabies was undertaken on farms. No abnormal diseases among game were observed.

Courses

Altogether 148 officials attended 16 courses during the year.

Extension work

Extension work is seen to be an important aspect of nature conservation. Lectures, informal talks and film shows were presented at schools, military bases, in communal areas and at farmer's days throughout the country on a regular basis. These actions extended to 36 831 people in 1986.

Hunting concessions

The hunting season in Kavango was only open from 9th until 20th July. Altogether 389 permits were issued for hunting.

The Damara Representative Authority applied for concession to shoot 21 oryx, 8 mountain zebra and one giraffe for communal festivals. The game was shot by Nature Conservators.

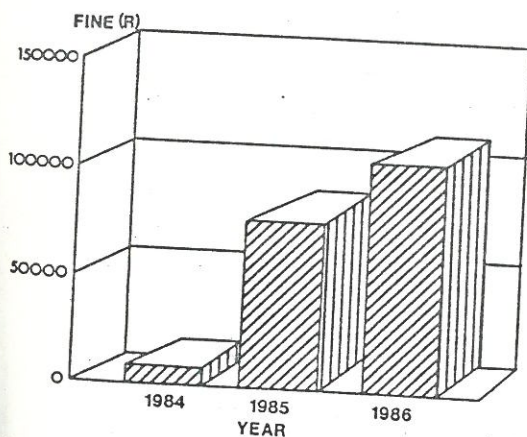
Statistics

Angling statistics for the Skeleton Coast Park are annually recorded at the following places: Terrace Bay, Torra Bay, Möwe Bay and north and Ugab Mouth and Toscanini. The total amount of line fish (galjoen, kolstert, steenbras, kabeljou, barber) angled off the beaches remained between 63 500 and 66 000 over the past three years.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement is one of the primary functions of this Division. Altogether 689 persons were involved in violations of the law and fines to the amount of R106 558 were issued during 1986.

Inspections are a part of the law enforcement function of this Division. Altogether 592 inspections were carried out by officials.



Total amounts of fines

Permits

The duties of the permit office are based on a system which is divided into 35 codes. During 1986 a total of 7 836 permits were issued according to these codes.

During the 1986 trophy hunting season a total of 1 285 hunters from 20 different countries were involved in trophy hunting in SWA/Namibia.

The yearly income from game utilisation for the State and private sector were R323 311 and R6 227 408 respectively.

Research

Introduction

Research is seen as an important Division of nature conservation.

A large variety of projects received attention. All research projects are problem-orientated, i.e. research is aimed at providing answers to management problems. The projects were all aimed at the handling of problem animals, conservation of endangered species, hunting seasons, relocation of species, collecting information for databases, fresh water fish, studies on the ecology and behavioural patterns of various species and game management.

Research in SWA/Namibia by the Directorate is well-established. It continues to draw the attention of scientists world-wide, evidenced by their regular visits to this country.

Game capture

The rapid capture of game has continued with much success. A total of 846 animals were caught in game reserves and on private land. The Directorate prides itself on the low number of mortalities suffered during the captures. Only 48 animals were lost during the year's operations, which can be ascribed to improved methods and experience gained over many years.

Night-harvesting

Harvesting at night was aimed exclusively at collecting research data, rather than at culling operations.

Symposia and publications

Research personnel attended eight symposia. Thirteen articles and three reports were published. Radio and television interviews were held with research personnel concerning their respective projects.

Research findings are published either in the Directorate's scientific journal *Madoqua* or in other international publications.

Information section

The activities of the section are divided as follows:

Public Relations - This function involves the promotion of a positive image of the Directorate to the public by means of liaison on different levels and in various areas. In 1986 a communication campaign regarding coastal conservation was launched.

Publicity - The section is responsible for issuing the Directorate's brochures and other information material concerning the country's national parks and resorts.

Journalism - The journalistic function performs the task of creating an internal newsletter, writing and issuing news releases, compiling the Annual Report and the maintenance and control of a photograph and film library.

Production - Production involves the creating of information material.

Information and Extension - The section handles telephonic and written enquiries for information material. Film shows and talks on aspects of conservation were held at schools and other organisations throughout the year.

Recreational Resorts

Introduction

A record number of 352 922 tourists visited the country's various game parks and resorts. This represents an increase of 13,8%.

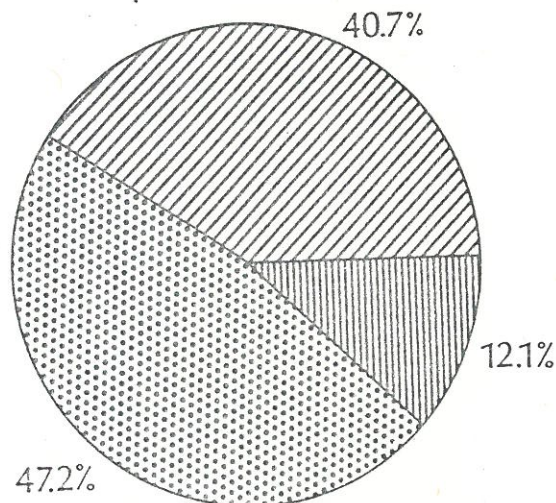
Visitors from South Africa increased by 15,4%, overseas visitors by 9,2% and local visitors by 13,5%. The turnover from game parks and resorts increased from R7 019 357 in 1985 to R9 103 950 in 1986, which represents an increase of 29,7%.

Upgrading and construction

The large scale project to upgrade and improve all tourist facilities under the Directorate's jurisdiction continued.

The completion of the Popa Falls Rest Camp, situated on the banks of the Kavango River and the Bernabè de la Bat Rest Camp in the Waterberg Plateau Park will contribute greatly towards meeting the demands of the expanding tourist industry in the country.

▨ RSA ▩ SWA ▨ FOREIGNERS



Visitor statistics for 1986