

Tx#10742

Annual Report

DEPARTMENT

OF

AGRICULTURE

AND

NATURE

CONSERVATION

1987

DIRECTORATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION AND RECREATIONAL RESORTS

Introduction

The report year was distinguished by limited finances and a sub-normal rain cycle. Therefore it had taken good planning, perseverance and control to have been able to function effectively.

Nevertheless, the personnel completed their tasks with dedication.

Nature Management

Development

Development projects took place in almost every area under the jurisdiction of the Directorate, or where the Directorate fulfills a function.

Problems

Mining activities caused unsightly pollution on the banks of the Orange River.

Pipeline and road construction in Caprivi aroused concern that the movement of elephant could be restricted and that the free flow of water to Lake Liambezi could be interrupted.

A drastic drop in the water table in Etosha meant that urgent plans had to be made for the provision of sufficient water for animals.

The uncontrolled influx of tourists to Kaokoland and Damaraland and accompanying illegal entry into the Skeleton Coast Park put pressure on the sensitive environment and river systems as well as the animal populations.

The opening up of Harold's Bay and Student's Bay for fishermen in the Skeleton Coast Park brought a negative impact on the environment despite the efforts of the Directorate.

The culling of 7 000 seals at Cape Cross was stopped due to pressure from the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation as well as the public.

Rainfall and grazing

Unevenly spread and subnormal rainfall caused difficulties in grazing management and the supply of water. Veld fires and over grazing, particularly in the communal areas, placed a further burden on management. As an example, a third of the grazing in western Caprivi and 70% of eastern Caprivi were destroyed by veld fires.

Game overview

Numbers

There were both heartening and disappointing aspects concerning the game population of the country. The continued drought, poaching and farming practices in the communal areas contributed to negative tendencies. In eastern Caprivi the drought has for instance contributed to mortalities of elephant and buffalo.

The more positive aspects included an increase in game in the reserves of Kavango due to strict law enforcement and natural movement from surrounding areas.

Etosha experienced no real problems and in Kaokoland an increase in the number of springbok and mountain zebra was experienced, partly due to the co-operation of the local people.

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Rare and endangered species

The population of black rhino in Damaraland increased and was closely monitored.

Unfortunately the number of hippo in Kavango decreased largely due to slaughtering by members of UNITA.

Problem animals and transgressing stock

In the communal, as well as other areas, problems were experienced with elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, caracal, hyena and baboons. Where necessary the Directorate took appropriate steps.

Trespassing cattle were a problem in several game reserves.

Problem plants

Among the most important invasive alien plants which caused problems were *Salvinia molesta* in the river systems, *Opuntia ficus indica*, *Datura ferox*, *Prosopis glandulosa* and *Nicotiana glauca*. The Directorate continued its efforts to eradicate these plants.

Courses and meetings

Several courses were attended by 76 officers to extend their knowledge and expertise, and 14 officers presented courses.

Various meetings were held with tribal authorities and 648 farmers were reached at farmers' days and meetings.

Extension

Extension still plays an important role in the work of the Division and 36 859 people were reached by extension programmes.

Inspections

A total of 233 farm inspections for game and game utilisation were carried out. Inspections were also made for game farming, fire wood, testing and registration of hunting guides and professional hunters. Several inspections were made at hide and skin dealers, and taxidermists. Visits were made to inspect fencing, grazing, habitats, birds and animals.

Law enforcement

A total of 164 persons were warned for violations, and 467 were found guilty in court.

The State received R141 587 in admission of guilt fines and prison terms totalling 986 months were imposed.

The value of items forfeited to the State was R93 899.

Permits

The permit system has been devised to exercise control over a variety of activities which included the capture, trade and keeping of animals and birds, animal products, the shooting of specially protected game and huntable game, the trophy industry and the collection, import and export of plants. During 1987 altogether 4 826 permits were issued.

Game utilisation

The state received R104 487,21 from game utilisation this year and the private sector R15 206 231.

Recreational Resorts

Introduction

The tourism industry and the accompanying inflow of foreign exchange were still in a growth phase. This can mainly be ascribed to the low value of the Rand, but other factors such as international exposure in the media and effective information and advertising material also played a role.

The Division continued, with the aid of the Department of Civic Affairs and Manpower, to upgrade and extend amenities.

An important milestone for tourism in the north east was reached with the opening of the Popa Falls Rest Camp in June.

The provision of services to the public by trained personnel reached a difficult phase due to unattractive salaries. Trained personnel such as waiters, remained a problem as there are no training facilities in this field available in this country.

Statistics

A total of 42 9317 tourists visited the country's game reserves and recreational resorts this year. The total income from tourism amounted to R11 190 133. This was an increase of 23% from the previous year.

Research

Introduction

A satisfactory amount of research projects were initiated during the year to help solve practical and other related management problems in nature conservation. A fair amount of research was done to propagate knowledge of various aspects of the environment.

Because of a shortage in funds, these projects had to be carefully planned.

Research projects

Amongst others, the following projects were carried out: Botanical research in Etosha National Park; plant ecology in eastern Bushmanland; monitoring of sensitive plant communities in the Namib Naukluft Park; fish population dynamics at Hardap Dam; fish ecology of Lake Liambezi and ecological studies on various animals. Research on problem animals and various research programmes on birds are ongoing projects.

Management Plans

Management plans for Waterberg Plateau Park, Etosha, Skeleton Coast Park, and the National West Coast Tourist Recreational Area were submitted or started. A management plan for Hardap was concluded.

Auxiliary Services

Horticulture

The eradication of *Prosopis* trees continued and several plans for landscaping were submitted. Research on the propagation of indigenous plants continued.

Game capture

A total of 461 animals from 12 species were captured with a mortality rate of 2,2%. Several animals were sold or exchanged and an amount of R52 580 was realised. Buffalo were the only animals accepted from outside the country's borders.

Symposia and publications

The Division maintained contacts on a world wide basis, thereby allowing access to the scientific pool of knowledge available. Several articles were placed in the popular media while several technical articles were published in the scientific magazine *Madoqua*.

Information

The Division ceased to be a sub-section of Research and became a fully fledged division of its own. Its activities were limited due to a lack of trained personnel.

However, a total of 52 press statements were issued, 13 interviews on radio or television were given, several extension talks presented and articles placed in the press. Participation in the Windhoek Show was very successful and an Information Centre was begun at Okaukuejo.

The Division was also responsible for arrangements concerning visiting film teams and professional photographers. These visits contributed to the publicising of the Directorate's activities and of the country as a whole.

The updating and creation of tourist brochures commenced with good results. ▲