

TXA/0742

Annual Report

DEPARTMENT

OF

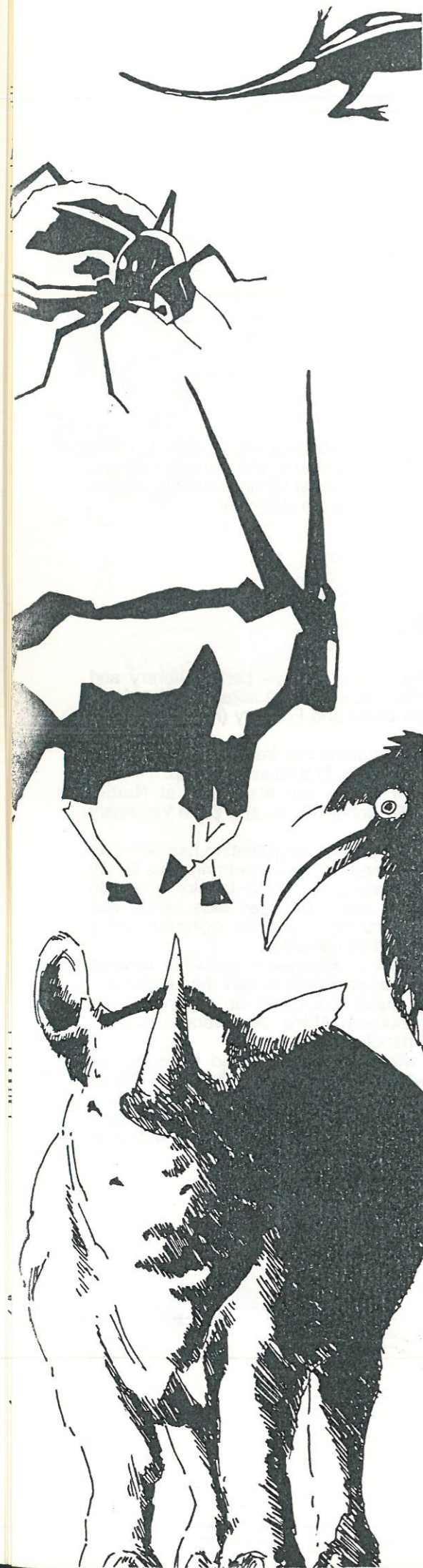
AGRICULTURE

AND

NATURE

CONSERVATION

1988



NATURE CONSERVATION AND RECREATIONAL RESORTS

This Directorate's aim is to conserve the natural environment and the founding, development and control of the country's conservation areas. It also manages resorts within these areas. The activities of this Directorate are divided into the Divisions Nature Management, Recreational Resorts, Research and Information.

Personnel

More than a thousand people are employed in this Directorate and the personnel structure is as follows:

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 76 | Resort Officials |
| 22 | Restaurant personnel |
| 74 | Administrative personnel |
| 40 | Nature Conservators |
| 149 | Game guards |
| 35 | Craftsmen |
| 62 | Shop Assistants |
| 17 | Student Nature Conservators |
| 2 | Veterinarians |
| 19 | Researchers |
| 1 | Veterinary Technician |
| 4 | Liaison Officers |
| 1 | Journalist |
| 2 | Graphic Artists |
| 506 | Labourers |
| 102 | Supporting Personnel |



Researchers gathering data from a dosed elephant.

Budget

An amount of almost R28 million was allocated to this Directorate for the financial year. The money was sub divided for the following functions:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Salaries | 9 516 900 |
| Conditions of Service | 1 051 479 |
| Supplies | 7 575 600 |
| Equipment | 1 630 100 |
| Services | 8 015 200. |
| Total | 27 789 279 |
| * Amounts rounded to nearest Rand * | |

Nature Management

Introduction

The main functions of this Division are to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the conservation of nature; the establishment of game parks and nature reserves in Namibia and the control of problem animals.

Altogether 15 game parks and nature reserves fall under the jurisdiction of this Division.

Namibia's conservation areas extend over a total of 99 616 square km or 12,3% of the country's total surface area. This exceeds the ideal of 10% prescribed by the International Union for the Conservation and Utilisation of Nature as the minimum percentage of a country's surface area that should be set aside for conservation purposes.

Serious droughts, limited funds and a considerable shortage of personnel during 1988 placed great pressure on the personnel from this Division regarding the successful carrying out of their functions and duties.

Some of the highlights during the year were the translocation of buffalo to the Waterberg Plateau Park, the commencement of the diploma course in Nature Conservation at the Academy, the subsequent registering of eight students for this course and the enlargement of the Fish River Canyon Park in order to include the Hunsberg.

The talks that the Directorate held with the headmen of Kaokoland on the conservation of this semi-desert region were successful and the region should be declared a conservation area in the near future.

Development

The Maintenance Section which is responsible for maintenance and development projects such as building of roads, gabions, buildings, the erecting of electrified and gameproof fences, the installation of boreholes and solar powered pumps and various other activities carried out their duties as far as finances allowed.

Problems

One of the most time-consuming and difficult tasks of this Division is the fight against poaching. Equipment has therefore been bought this year for the anti-poaching unit in Caprivi and eight game rangers were trained to conduct anti-poaching patrols.

Because tourism in Damaraland has increased rapidly over the past year concern arose over the uncontrolled access tourists have to the sensitive river systems in this area.

Problems with Defence Force vehicles travelling off road in the Skeleton Coast Park still occurred.

Numbers of tourists entering the park illegally from Kaokoland caused problems, especially because they seem prepared to pay the small fines imposed. This led to discussions between the Directorate and the Department of Justice to impose heavier fines.

The Directorate's store which contains ivory was broken into on two occasions. Provision has been made for better security.

Rainfall and grazing

Although certain parts of the country received good rains, there were large areas which received little or no rain. It was particularly the northern regions which experienced low rainfall and Etosha suffered from the worst drought in its history.

Grazing was generally poor in the north east, but was good in the Mahango and Kaudom game reserves in Kavango. Grazing was also poor in most parts of Hereroland, the Outjo/Kamanjab districts, parts of Etosha, Owambo, parts of Kaokoland, Damaraland, the whole of the Namib region and at the Hardap game reserve.

Game overview

As a result of the increased anti-poaching activities in Caprivi, particularly on Nkasa and Lupala islands, game numbers stabilised. Lion and buffalo increased as a result of immigration from Botswana.

A breeding herd of elephant entered the Mahango from Botswana for the first time. Sable antelope in this reserve have doubled since 1984 and 148 were counted.

Despite the drought in Etosha, game appeared to maintain a good condition. Anthrax caused the deaths of 31 elephant in Etosha.

Game numbers in Kaokoland remained low. Game in Damaraland bred well this year.

The condition of game in the south remained fair in general.

Rare and endangered species

At least four Cape vultures were bred successfully at the Waterberg, bringing the population to at least 20. The number of buffalo and roan antelope in Bushmanland decreased drastically.

Roan bred well in Etosha, bringing their numbers to 65.

Problem animals

Approximately 100 reported cases of problem animals were investigated in the communal areas. Crocodile and elephant remained the biggest problem in Kavango. Elephant and lion breaking through the gameproof fences of Etosha were again reason for concern and this year almost 30 such lion were destroyed on bordering farms. Black-backed jackal and caracal continued to cause problems on farmland in the south.

Problem plants

Efforts to remove alien invasive plants from various conservation areas continued, but the problem worsened in the Skeleton Coast Park as seeds of *Nicotiana glauca*, *Datura ferox* and *Datura glandulosa* germinated in the river systems of this park.

Courses and meetings

A total of 92 officials attended various courses and three courses were presented by the Directorate. Officials attended 96 tribal and farmers' meetings.

Extension

During the year, 407 talks were presented to 33 078 people throughout the country and 210 films were shown. Radio interviews, held with officials on conservation issues, had potential audiences of approximately 500 000 people.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is one of the main functions of this Division. It therefore carries out inspections at farms on the utilisation of game, is responsible for the registration of hunting farms, tests and registers hunting guides and professional hunters, inspects sites of dealers in hides and game and attends game capture operations and night culling operations for control reasons.

During the report year 429 persons were found guilty of violations of the law, 117 persons were warned and fines to the amount of R132 401 were issued.

Hunting concessions

Concessions for the trophy hunting of 10 elephant were granted for the first time in eastern Caprivi to two safari companies.

A concession for trophy hunting of certain animals was also granted in Bushmanland for the first time.

Permits

The work of the permit office is based on a permit system which is divided into 35 codes which cover a variety of activities such as the capture, trade and keeping of game and birds, game products, the shooting of specially protected game and huntable game, the trophy industry and the collection, import and export of plants.

Game utilisation

Income for the State and private sector relating to game utilisation were:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| State: | R348 294 |
| Private sector: | R19 740 882 |

Recreational Resorts

Introduction

The main functions of this Division are:

- Handling of reservations for all the rest camps through the Central Reservations' Office in Windhoek;
- Management of all rest camps;
- Control over tourists in the rest camps;
- Trading activities in rest camps such as shops, garages and restaurants;
- Law enforcement ;
- Development of tourist facilities.

It is expected that the considerable increase of entrance fees as from April 1 1989 will lead to a sharp decline in the number of day visitors at camps such as Daan Viljoen, Hardap and Gross Barmen. It will however, release the pressure on facilities at these camps, which are at present being over-utilised.

Statistics

A total of 429 317 tourists visited the various resorts and game reserves during the past year. This represented an increase of 27 884 visitors or 7% more than during 1987. The average occupancy rate of accommodation was 72,6% compared to 69,8% in the previous year. The number of visitors from South Africa increased by 6,6%, while foreign visitors increased by 13,3%. There were 5,2% more local visitors. The turnover for game reserves and resorts increased by 19,5% to R13 375 901.

Research

Introduction

This Division was active in many problem orientated research projects ranging from pasture management aspects such as controlled burning, the determination of carrying capacities and the reduction of game animals to studies of population dynamics of various big and small mammal species, some rare bird species as well as an intensified study on the influence the open canal of the Eastern National Water Carrier has on various animal species. The drafting of Master Plans in various conservation areas also received special attention while long-term biotic and abiotic monitoring was continued. The personnel component was near complete throughout the year.

Pasture Management

A thorough investigation into the condition of the pasture at Hardap and Daan Viljoen, and a long-term monitoring programme covering vegetation dynamics was initiated in the Etosha National Park. A four year study of the ecology of the vegetation in Eastern Bushmanland was completed.

Agricultural researchers busy with a field grass study.



Zoological Investigations

A number of investigations relating to population dynamics that were undertaken in the last few years were completed:

Elephant and giraffe in the Etosha National Park; The influence of farming activities on the hartebees, gemsbok and kudu and the study on Roan antelope in the Waterberg Plateau Park.

Research projects that have not yet been completed are: Gemsbok in the southern Namib; Black faced Impala in the Etosha National Park; Jackal and caracal ecology on farmland; Lappetfaced- and Cape vultures and Black- and Martial eagles.

The long-term integrated small mammal research programme progressed well. Species lists for conservation areas have been made available and the studies on the reproductive potential of the four *Tilapia* fish species at the Hardap Research Institute have been completed. A project investigating the growth and production potential of these species has also been completed. The final reports of these studies have been compiled and are ready for distribution.

Scientific Liaison

Close contact with sister organisations and academic institutions throughout the world is maintained through the attendance of local and international symposia.

Seventy nine lectures were given at farmers' days, other meetings with organised agriculture and to school groups. Two articles were published in popular magazines and six in scientific magazines. Two issues of the Directorate's scientific magazine, *Madoqua*, were published and distributed.

Thirty six radio interviews and thirty seven television interviews were held.

Information

This Division is primarily involved with liaison, i.e external liaison with the media and the public and

internal liaison within the Directorate to improve communication channels. The Division experienced an ongoing shortage of qualified personnel.

Brochures

Among the functions which were successfully concluded was the rejuvenation of information material which was begun in 1987. The following material was delivered:

- New brochures for Hardap, Gross Barmen and Daan Viljoen;
- A pamphlet for the self-guided Welwitschia Nature Drive;
- A pamphlet for the National West Coast Tourist Recreational Area.

A start was made on brochures for the Namib-Naukluft Park as well as the Skeleton Coast Park and they will be available early in 1989.

Liaison

Effective liaison resulted in news coverage of the country's tourist attractions, especially in the RSA media. Various film teams and professional photographers visited areas under the jurisdiction of the Directorate and world-wide coverage was achieved. Of the most outstanding was a Japanese film team which visited Etosha and whose work reached about 30 million people in Japan.

Communication

The first steps were taken to create an official communications policy with specific strategies. At the same time the first Information Rangers for the communal areas were appointed and their training commenced. It is expected that they will be placed in their respective areas early in 1989.