

## Project Update: June 2006

Information on characterization of habitat use and suitability for black rhinos, based on local scale vegetation analysis was investigated during April – June 2006. Three study sites were selected, namely Palmwag concession, Torra conservancy and ≠khoodi //hoas conservancy. Palmwag concession (S 19.75506, E 13.83314) lies within 450 000 hectares and managed exclusively for non- consumptive tourism. Whereas Torra( S 19.97451, E 13.99973) and ≠khoodi //hoas( S 19.87721, E 14.42211) conservancy lies within 352 000 and 350 000 hectares respectively, all managed for non-consumptive tourism, consumptive tourism and livestock husbandry.

Sampling procedures involved the training and participation of 4 students and 8 local assistants from nearby, rural villages (4 are guides). Approximately 254 vegetation plots (100 secondary drainage/rivers, 44 major rivers and 100 non-river habitat) were randomly selected and sampled in all three study sites. Each plot was 20 m diameter -circular plot, with an area of 314 m<sup>2</sup> . Habitat characteristics measured in each plot were:

- a) Species composition,
- b) Number of plants per species,
- c) Average canopy diameter (measured as volume),
- d) Average canopy depth,
- e) Slope,
- f) Elevation.

Canopy diameter and depth is then calculated to give Browse Availability (BA) at three levels; per study site, per plot and per plant species.

The collected data is now being processed (ID of plants and organized) and statistics analysis will take place at a later stage. The first report with detailed field sampling methods and preliminary data analyses will be available by mid-July.

