

## Project Update: August 2017

The fieldwork for this pilot study was successfully completed, with 391 km travelled over a period of approximately 10 days. 69 dung samples less than 24 hours old were collected, and additional data such as time, position of the dung and age of the sample were recorded. Sampling was predominantly undertaken on roads and trails, and 50% of the samples were found by tracking spoor. This highlighted the importance of having an experienced tracker and logistic support from the park management.

DNA was successfully extracted from all samples. However, five dung samples that were severely broken and scattered failed to produce useable genetic data. For all other samples, the black rhino DNA generated good quality genetic data. Eleven genetic markers were amplified and used to create a unique 'barcode' for each individual. Using this barcode, we will determine the total number of individual animals represented in our dung samples, and classify them by sex.



Figure 1: Black rhino dung, perfect for sampling

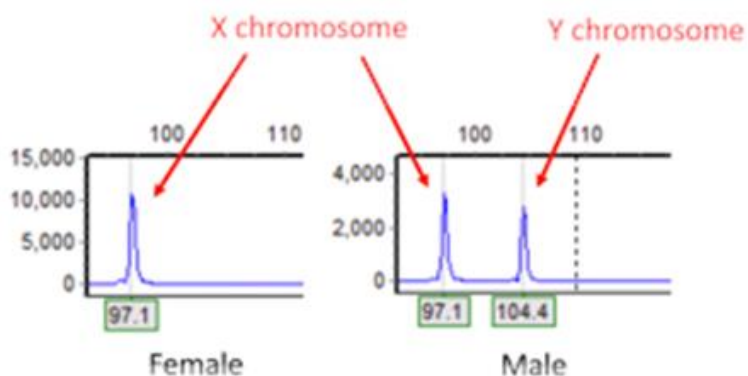


Figure 2: Sexing black rhino dung using DNA