

# VELD & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT Fact Sheet

## Introduction

Palabora is dedicated to the protection of the environment in which its activities are conducted. We are particularly conscious of our proximity to the Kruger National Park and the abundance of flora and fauna in the area and attempt to promote harmonious co-existence of people, industry and wildlife through education and responsible management

## Situation Analysis

The nature of the operations at Palabora involves the use and reuse of large amounts of water on a daily basis. This has resulted in many water bodies on the property that naturally attracts wildlife, in particular during the drier months of the year between May and December. This is particularly the case with elephants, hippos and buffalo, classified as bulk grazers. This results in an increased demand for grazing material in the form of grass and bush foliage. Due to the open fence system on the southern end of the property, it is difficult to control the numbers of the bulk grazers during the drier months. This in turn often results in overgrazing and puts undue pressure on the vegetation.

## Wildlife & Veld Management System

Palabora believes in gathering data so that informed decisions can be made on how to manage the wildlife, and indirectly the vegetation component. Wildlife Information on is gathered on a daily real-time basis using a computer palmtop with a global positioning system. Types of information gathered are sightings of animals, birds, reptiles, frogs, trees, alien plants, spoor, diseased animals and carcasses, presence of water, erosion, poaching, tourism and environmental incidents. Each of these aspects can be described in more detail, depending on the specific nature of the sighting. This information assists management in making either decisions in the capture and relocation of problem animals or where there are too many of a specie on site, i.e. elephant, buffalo and hippo

An annual game census is conducted, giving a total picture of animals present on the ground at the particular time. An ecological survey is done annually, allowing the evaluation of the interaction of the wildlife with the vegetation. Trend analysis is done, considering climatic conditions. The grass for trend analysis considers climatic conditions. Grass parameters with neighbouring reserves are compared; estimates of food availability made and a projection of herbivore biomass made.

This information is used to calculate a stocking rate for herbivores and is compared to the actual numbers recorded. From this a management decision can be made, and whether any game relocation should take place or not

## Poaching, Problem animals & Diseases

Palabora has trained game rangers who can identify and address issues of poaching and problem animals. Problem animals are reported to the local Nature Conservation authorities, evaluated and appropriate action taken where necessary. Diseases are identified with the assistance of the local veterinary services and the necessary precautions taken in order to ensure that the disease does not spread any further.

## Management

The average annual rainfall in the Phalaborwa region is approximately 505mm. In most seasons it is not necessary to interfere with the vegetation status. It is only when a few consecutive seasons have had above average rainfall that a burning programme will be planned and actioned. Burning under normal conditions at Palabora, is most often regarded as a last resort, as is not often needed. The most critical factor is the control of bulk grazers, and this determines the extent of grazing at Palabora.

**For more Information contact:**

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