



Peace Parks Foundation Newsflash 4/2015

SANPARKS RECEIVES AERIAL SUPPORT FOR ANTI-POACHING OPERATIONS



South African National Parks (SANParks) today announced that, as an integral part of the current strategy to combat rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park, it is in the process of applying and evaluating various aerial support technologies, which include the testing of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

SANParks Chief Executive Officer, Mr Fundisile Mketeni explained: "The UAV project aims at investigating the effectiveness of various UAV technologies as instruments in rhino protection efforts under a range of operational conditions".

Mketeni said the UAV project will run for a full year... "and by the end of the project we will have a lot of information about the use of available technology in anti-poaching operations and be able to make informed decision on what is best for our environment."

The testing of UAV technology in Kruger National Park is implemented as one component of a suite of anti-poaching initiatives supported by the Rhino Protection Programme.

The Rhino Protection Programme is a collaborative effort between the South African Department of Environmental Affairs, SANParks, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and Peace Parks Foundation. The roll-out of this multi-faceted programme is made possible thanks to generous funding from the [Dutch](#) and [Swedish](#) postcode lotteries.

SANParks is also the proud recipient of a brand new Airbus AS-350B3e helicopter with night flying capability made available with funding from the US-based Howard G Buffet Foundation. In 2014 the Howard G Buffet Foundation made R254.8 million available to SANParks in support of anti-poaching operations in the Kruger National Park, particularly in the Intensive Protection Zone.

According to Mketeni, this is the second helicopter purchased with funds received from Howard G Buffet Foundation. "The

first helicopter of the same model is already in operation, and two of SANParks' pilots have undergone an extensive training course in the USA to enable them to optimally operate the new helicopters at night and during the day when required."

"In accordance with the much needed aerial support to the anti-poaching teams around the clock, these helicopters will further assist in quick tactical response, particularly at night where we have been lacking due to limited resources, therefore it is only proper to thank Howard G Buffet Foundation for providing this much needed resource in our fight to curb poaching."

Media statement courtesy of [SANParks](#)

For further information on, or should you wish to support the [Rhino Protection Programme](#), kindly contact Lise-Marie Greeff-Villet at lgreeff-villet@ppf.org.za or Tel: +27 (0)21 880 5125



View from a UAV (drone)



Maj Gen (ret) Johan Jooste, who oversees Kruger National Park's anti-poaching operations, with Peace Parks Foundation CEO, Mr Werner Myburgh, at the UAV launch