

**CONSERVATION COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

5356

SUMATRAN RHINO PROJECT

Plans progress for development of a cooperative project between AAZPA institutions and the wildlife departments of Sabah and West Malaysia for captive propagation of Asian two-horned or Sumatran rhino (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis). Because of its extremely endangered status, the Sumatran has been one of four rhino species designated for the SSP program as part of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for the entire family Rhinocerotidae. As with all SSP programs, the basic purpose of the Sumatran rhino project will be to re-inforce conservation of wild populations through captive propagation.

Explorations and preparation for this project have now extended over two years and entailed a reconnaissance by the Conservation Coordinator and William Zeigler to S.E. Asia in April, May and June of 1983. On the basis of these explorations, a formal proposal for the project was presented to the AAZPA Board at the 1983 Annual Meeting in Vancouver.

Very basically, the proposal is to collect 6 to 12 pairs of rhinos to establish the captive population and program. Fewer than 400 Sumatran rhinos are estimated to survive, mainly in Malaysia and Indonesia. However, at least 25% occur as remnants of 1 to 5 animals outside sanctuaries sufficiently large and protectable to accommodate viable populations. In their present situation, these remnants cannot contribute to the survival of the species. The project would attempt to capture rhinos only from these remnants. No capture will be attempted in the main populations and sanctuaries.

Rhinos captured will be equally distributed between captive facilities in Malaysia and North America. An important part of the project will be to provide technical assistance for development of captive propagation capabilities in S.E. Asia. Eventually, the project may be extended by the AAZPA or others to Indonesia. In any case, there will be a commitment by all parties involved that any and all animals placed in captivity from whatever source will be cooperatively managed as a population in the interest of the species under oversight of IUCN.

The AAZPA Board has endorsed the project in principle and has encouraged the interested zoos to develop the project through the "consortium" approach under AAZPA auspices that has been recommended for endeavors of this nature involving an attempt to acquire adequate foundation stock to establish a captive population of an endangered species not currently represented in zoos.

Since the Vancouver meeting, a nucleus of eight zoos has proceeded in an attempt to organize the project: Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, Brookfield, Miami, Philadelphia, and National. Representatives of these eight institutions convened a meeting in mid-February in Chicago to develop details of how the AAZPA side of the project would be organized and operated.

It has been decided the most appropriate vehicle to achieve the objectives will be a Sumatran Rhino Species Survival Trust. Organizationally, the Trust will encompass two types of members. Primary members will be institutions interested in acquiring rhinos from the wild and willing to commit sufficient resources to accomplish this objective. Estimated costs for the first three years are approximately \$1,000,000. Subsidiary members will be institutions desiring to be involved at a lesser level by contributing smaller amounts of money, receiving progeny from the founder stock, and/or participating in research aspects of the project.

The Trust will be governed by a Board of Trustees. Each primary member will appoint one Trustee. The AAZPA will also appoint a Trustee. Subsidiary members will be represented on the Board of Trustees in a manner to be determined.

Corporate lawyers Peter Freeman and William McMaster (of Hopkins & Sutter), who are closely affiliated with the Chicago Zoological Society and who have indicated a great interest in AAZPA SSP programs, have been engaged to prepare papers for formation of the Trust. The nucleus of eight zoos will convene another meeting in conjunction with the AAZPA

Northeast Regional in Philadelphia (29 April-1 May) in an attempt to finalize details and formalize establishment of the Trust.

Thereafter, the project can hopefully be initiated in Sabah and West Malaysia quite expeditiously, perhaps by midsummer 1984. Tony Parkinson, the person that all available evidence indicates is the best qualified to organize such an operation to capture large, rare, elusive mammals under tropical forest conditions, has been retained for the project. Many of the readers may be acquainted with Tony's work with bongo in the past. Recently, he has been engaged in a project on semicaptive propagation of tamaraw (Bubalus mindorensis) in the Philippines.

Any other institutions (beyond the nucleus of the eight already identified) interested in participation in, or contribution to, the project or Trust are invited to contact the AAZPA Conservation Coordinator who is serving in a coordinating capacity until the Trust is formally established and selects an Institutional Leader/Species Coordinator.

#### SSP WORKSHOP

Plans also continue for a workshop to better prepare SSP Species Coordinators and Studbook Keepers to develop masterplans for their species. The AAZPA Board, at its midyear meeting, provided a big boost for this project by approving up to \$15,000 as matching funds toward such a workshop. It is currently intended to conduct the workshop the week of 13-17 August 1984. The Conservation Coordinator will be in contact with all present and impending AAZPA Species Coordinators and Studbook Keepers in April with further details and arrangements.

(T. Foose)

#### AAZPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION POLICY

The 1984 AAZPA Annual Conference will be held in Miami, Florida 9-13 September. The registration fees will be \$75 member, \$75 member's spouse and \$150 nonmember. Persons registering after 25 August will be charged an additional \$20 late registration fee. Refunds can only be sent to those canceling prior to 7 September.

All AAZPA individual members are accorded member registration privileges. Institutional, Related Organizational and Society members have been provided with forms on which they may designate persons to receive AAZPA individual Supporting membership. No changes in persons so designated will be accepted after 1 June 1984. Registered Animal Supplier and Commercial members have been given the opportunity to register two representatives of their companies at the member rate.

Those wishing to join the AAZPA in order to take advantage of member registration rates should apply immediately. The processing of applications may take two months to complete. Only those completed applications, including all required letters of sponsorship, received at the AAZPA Executive Office prior to 1 June 1984 can be processed in time to accord membership registration rates at the Annual Conference. If you know of any person interested in AAZPA membership for this purpose, please have them contact Cheryl Ignace, Membership Secretary, AAZPA, Oglebay Park, Wheeling, WV 26003.

(C. Ignace)