

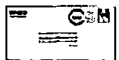
sponsoring the Northern White Rhino Workshop held in White Oak in October 1995.

IUCN Headquarters for support and administrative assistance.

The Scientific Officer would like to thank the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Compaq for the loan of a portable computer.

### Subscription Details

Those wanting to receive or advertise in African Rhinos or on the AfRSG's future Web Site are asked to please write to or fax the AfRSG Office.



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or Fax (+27) 331 473278

The success of the newsletter will depend on contributions received from the African range States and other managers and organisations involved in rhino conservation.

Therefore please provide the editor with brief news items or short articles. Deadlines for submissions for the next edition will be the 31st October 1997.

The AfRSG will be sponsoring the publication of this edition of the newsletter.

However we are looking for sponsorship to cover printing and distribution costs of future editions. Anyone, or any organisation interested in sponsoring the publication of African Rhinos or advertising (tax deductible) in African Rhinos

Anyone or any organisations who would like to support the work of the AfRSG, are requested to please contact the Chairman, Dr Martin Brooks, AfRSG, PO Box 662, Pietermaritzburg 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Fax (+27) 331 473278

# AFRICAN RHINOS

Newsletter of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group

## African rhino numbers near 10,000 in the wild - whites up and blacks stable

This first edition of the new African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) Newsletter reports on the conservation of Africa's rhinos with particular emphasis on news from the range States.

Other subjects discussed in this edition include a brief explanation of the role and activities of the AfRSG during the last IUCN triennium, CITES issues, news from rhino conservation bodies, an update on

the status of the new AfRSG African Rhino Action Plan, and Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) news.

This news letter supplements *Pachyderm* which is the joint journal of IUCN SSC's African Elephant Specialist Group and African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups.

### The AfRSG



The African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) is one of a number of groups which make up the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the IUCN (World Conservation Union).

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### Mission of AfRSG

The mission of the AfRSG is to promote the long-term conservation of Africa's rhinos and, where necessary, the recovery of their populations to viable levels.

The AfRSG is charged with (a) providing and improving technical information and advice to both Government and non-government conservation agencies, and (b) promoting and catalysing conservation activities to be carried out by these agencies.

In particular, the AfRSG plays a key role in the promotion and coordination of rhino conservation strategies.

### Objectives of AfRSG

- ❖ Review the status and trends of rhino populations in Africa at AfRSG meetings held at approximately 18 monthly intervals.
- ❖ Assess impacts of use and other human activities on these populations.
- ❖ Establish rhino conservation

priorities, and use these to direct Action Plans. Assess options for rhino conservation, thereby providing technical support for conservation strategies and promoting their implementation.

- ❖ Facilitate coordination and cooperation in the field of rhino research.
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of conservation action, and where necessary undertake technical assistance missions.
- ❖ Produce a Newsletter, and Key Issue Reports as required.
- ❖ Liaise with the Asian Rhino Specialist Group on technical matters.

### Membership

AfRSG members come from 15 countries and all but four members are based in Africa. The group comprises official representatives of the main African rhino range States and rhino specialists in the scientific, veterinary, field conservation management and trade study fields. Three members of the AfRSG are

also members of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG), and there is increasing dialogue between the two groups.

### Activities

Members regularly network with each other and also interface with rhino management groups at the regional or national level. This networking contributes to the enhancement of skills.

There is a need to channel limited donor funding into critically important projects with a reasonable chance of success. The AfRSG facilitates this by providing technical direction, prioritising and listing key and important populations, proposing projects, as well as identifying and promoting the conservation strategies and approaches most likely to succeed. To this end, the AfRSG also routinely rates proposed projects as to their continental and national conservation importance.

The AfRSG regularly reviews rhino project proposals for a number of funding agencies world-wide (including WWF and US Fish & Wildlife Service). Three AfRSG

members also sit on the International Rhino Foundation Scientific Advisory Board.

A final draft of a new AfRSG African Rhinoceros Action Plan has been completed and been reviewed by the membership. It will be published in both print and electronic form in 1997.

The AfRSG undertakes technical assistance missions and compiles Key Issue Reports when necessary.

The AfRSG maintains close links with the CITES Secretariat which has one representative on the AfRSG. AfRSG members drafted a resolution for CITES Standing Committee which COP9 ratified as Resolution 9.14 with only a few changes.

The AfRSG has also assisted CITES Standing Committee by starting and reporting on the process of developing "indicators" of success in rhino conservation as called for by Resolution Conf. 9.14. This process is scheduled to be developed further in cooperation with both the AsRSG and TRAFFIC.

AfRSG members also play a key role in the technical review of CITES

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proposals on African rhino for inclusion in the IUCN Analyses of CITES proposals.

AfRSG members will be well represented at the 10th Conference of the Parties scheduled for Harare in June 1997.

### Last triennium

During the last three years the AfRSG held two meetings - the first in Mombasa, Kenya in May 1994, and the second in Itala Game Reserve, South Africa in February 1996.

Apart from their involvement with national and regional rhino management committee's, AfRSG members have also taken part in or held workshops and undertaken technical assistance missions in the Cameroon (veterinary), USA (northern white rhino conservation workshop), Zimbabwe (assessment of carrying capacity and suitability of the Midlands for black rhino compared to lowveld conservancies, and a review of Zimbabwe's rhino conservation policy), South Africa (monitoring and population estimation in Kruger N.P. and Hluhluwe-Umfolozzi Park),

Democratic Republic of Congo (law enforcement, law enforcement monitoring, rhino monitoring and rhino research & veterinary assistance in Garamba National Park), Kenya (monitoring and population estimation in Aberdares National Park, and study tour to S.Africa).

The AfRSG also gave assistance to the African Rhino Owners Association in their 1996 resurvey of the status of white rhinos on private land in South Africa.

Three AfRSG members attended the Asian Rhino Specialist Group meeting in Sabah, Malaysia.

### 1996 AfRSG meeting

The third meeting of the AfRSG was held in Itala Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, from the 12-17 of February 1996 and was attended by 30 members and contributors from 14 different countries, mainly African range States.

The meeting comprised reports from the range States, a re-assessment of the status and trends of Africa's rhinos, the identification of key and

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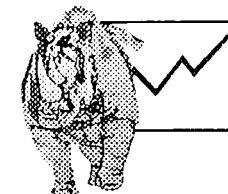
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important rhino populations and presentations and discussions on a wide variety of issues relating to trade, conservation and management techniques and strategies. In addition during workshops, the system for rating rhino conservation projects and programmes was revised to include a category for projects of national importance, the terms of reference for the technical assistance mission to Garamba were developed, and definitions of wild and captive breeding, as well as some indicators to determine the effectiveness of conservation measures as required by CITES were developed. Drafts of sections of the AfRSG Action plan were also circulated for comment.

### AfRSG study tour of Hluhluwe-Umfolozzi

Following the AfRSG's February 1996 meeting, members visited Hluhluwe-Umfolozzi Park which currently holds the world's second largest populations of both black and white rhino. Members were exposed to aspects as diverse as: - law enforcement techniques and equipment, - deployment of specialist anti-poaching units, - operation and value of intelligence networks, - rhino carrying capacity

estimation, - vegetation ecology as it affects rhinos, - rhino capture techniques, equipment and veterinary issues, - white and black rhino monitoring and population estimation, - rhino metapopulation management, - ecotourism, - and community development and awareness programmes.



### Status of African rhinos

The continental statistics for African rhino numbers compiled at the AfRSG's Feb 1996 meeting (based on 1995 population estimates) revealed that the number of African rhinos in the wild was nearly 10,000, the highest number since the mid 1980's.

Details of numbers by subspecies and country are presented in *Pachyderm* 1996 Vol 21 p 3, and the forthcoming AfRSG Action Plan gives full details of changes in numbers of African rhinos over time by country and taxon.

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Southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) numbers have continued to increase to around 7,560, up from 6,780 in 1993/4, with four countries recording increases over the last two years and none declines. Considering the southern white rhino had been reduced to only about 20 in one population in South Africa a century ago, this recovery represents one of the world's greatest conservation success stories.

Poaching however threatens the only remaining population of the northern white rhino (*C.s.cottoni*) in Garamba National Park in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. Following rapid growth from 1984 to 1991, numbers have since remained stable at around 31 animals and poaching pressure is increasing.

Conservation in the area has been disrupted and current rhino numbers are unknown. It is hoped that the new government will be pro-conservation, and that it will fully support all conservation programmes in the Park.

Since 1992, numbers of black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) have remained stable at around 2,410 (excluding speculative guesstimates). This is

largely due to a combined 23% increase in numbers in South Africa and Namibia which has cancelled out declines in a number of other range States.

Three of the four remaining black rhino subspecies number between 475 and 1,300. However the status of the few remaining West African black rhino (*D.b.longipes*) in Cameroon continues to be critical.

Four range States (South Africa, Namibia, Kenya and Zimbabwe) now conserve over 98% of Africa's known wild rhinos.

Close to a fifth of Africa's wild rhinos are also now either managed on a custodianship basis for the State or owned by the private sector.

Despite improvements in some areas, the performance of the 655 white rhinos and 234 black rhinos living in captivity worldwide in 1997 continues to fall short of that being achieved by protected wild populations.

From 1993-97, 64 black rhinos were born in captivity and 51 died, giving a net growth of 13 animals (12 of which were in North America).

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Over the same period 58 white rhinos were born, but 66 died giving a net loss of 8 animals over the period.

(Source of data on numbers of African rhino in captivity : Foose 1997 and International Studbook Keepers Dr Reinhart Göltenboth and Dr Andreas Ochs).

### AfRSG Action Plan



A revised draft of the new AfRSG "African Rhinoceros Action Plan" has been compiled by the Scientific Officer and Chairman and will be available soon.

The Action plan outlines the conservation status, goals and strategies for conserving Africa's remaining black and white rhinos. As such it incorporates many of the strategic initiatives discussed and developed by members during AfRSG meetings since 1991, and therefore is very much a Group product.

The plan comprises 12 chapters dealing with (i) past and current distribution, status and conservation of African rhinos, (ii) the conservation framework for African

rhinos, and (iii) action strategies. It includes a full list of AfRSG-rated priority projects.

The list of rated projects is constantly changing as projects get funded, are completed or revised. Therefore the AfRSG has deliberately decided not to include details of projects in its Action Plan as this information dates quickly. Instead the Action Plan concentrates on recommended action strategies for successfully conserving rhinos. However an up-to-date list of projects requiring funding will be maintained on the Web site.

The plan will provide governments, non-governmental organisations, journalists and students with an informed perspective on the status of rhinos and their conservation. It will be published both in hard copy and also electronically on the Web.

Those interested in obtaining a copy of the Plan when it is published and wishing to be sent details of cost should either write to the AfRSG office at PO Box 662, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 3200 or fax ++27 331 473278.

### AfRSG WebPlans

The AfRSG will very shortly opening a site on the Web.

At the time of publication the AfRSG still has to register its domain name. However, surfers can be advised of developments by visiting the Wildnet Africa Web Site at [www.wildnetafrica.co.za](http://www.wildnetafrica.co.za) or visiting the IRF site at [www.rhinos-irf.org/specialists/](http://www.rhinos-irf.org/specialists/) who will both provide hot links through to the future AfRSG site.

This newsletter will also be published at the AfRSG's Web site. Later the new Action Plan will also be added to the site. Future plans also include publishing a current database of AfRSG rated projects requiring funding.

Anyone interested in advertising on the AfRSG's proposed Web Site should please contact... The Editor, African Rhinos (see back page for address)

### Range State Updates



BOTSWANA

#### Rhino numbers continue to increase under protection in the Khama Rhino Sanctuary

White rhino numbers continue to increase in the Khama Rhino Sanctuary. By June 1996 the number of rhinos had increased to 12 following the birth of three calves.

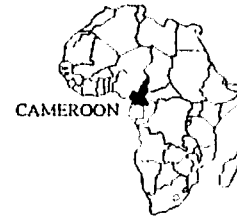
Khama is one of the world's most heavily protected rhino populations, and the Botswana Defence Force provides 24 hour protection. Look out towers along the fence line surround the reserve further enhancing the security.

The Sanctuary is located on 4,300 ha of Kalahari sandveld savanna overlying deep Kalahari sands. Serwe Pan, which provides most of the preferred white rhino habitat is a

large grass-covered depression with several natural waterholes.

It is run by the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust which is a community-based wildlife project established in 1992. The Trust aims to provide economic benefits to the community through tourism and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Thirty cattle that were fenced in the Sanctuary are in the process of being removed which should reduce any competition for grazing with the rhino.



CAMEROON

#### Cameroon black rhinos poached

In the last year at least four of the few remaining West African black rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) have been poached. One poached animal had been fitted with a radio transmitter.

Unfortunately, the court case has been postponed and the poachers were not held in custody.

The AfRSG awaits future developments with interest.

#### Update on numbers of *D.b.longipes* in Cameroon.

Recent ground surveys throughout the area of northern Cameroon by Hubert Planton (Projet Biodiversité Nord, volet Coopération Française) and Michael Walter (WWF consultant) has revealed that there are between 15 and 26 animals remaining.

These few remaining animals are scattered over a huge area in small groups, which is highly undesirable in terms of conservation biology.

Given the low density of rhinos, their scattered distribution, logistic difficulties and the lack of local conservation capacity, catching and consolidating the remaining rhinos would be difficult and expensive.

To achieve success it will be necessary for the Government to make rhino conservation a priority and increase its commitment and

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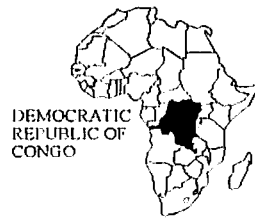
effort, and do whatever possible to ensure that anyone convicted of a rhino crime receives a very severe sentence.

### Cameroon rhino conservation strategies discussed

In March 1997, an AIRSG member from WWF Cameroon, Dr Steve Gartlan and Dr Jaap Schoorl (Coordinator WWF-NL/Cameroon Programme) visited Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, to discuss the situation regarding the last remaining West African black rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) in Cameroon.

The two held discussions on current and future conservation approaches with the AIRSG Chairman, Scientific Officer and AIRSG security expert Tony Conway, as well as senior Natal Parks Board staff.

They also visited Hlululuwe-Umfolozi Park where they were briefed on rhino conservation measures in the Park, and in particular to discuss and examine anti poaching strategies with the Park's Conservator and the head of the anti-poaching unit.



### WWF/AIRSG joint technical assistance mission to Garamba National Park

AIRSG members Tony Conway, Holly Dublin and Richard Emslie visited Garamba National Park in April 1996 as part of a joint WWF/AIRSG Technical Assistance Mission to review the law enforcement, law enforcement monitoring, rhino monitoring and rhino research in the Park.

Ten days were spent in Garamba by the team who reviewed the situation in the field, and held discussions with fellow AIRSG members Dr Kes Hillman-Smith and Dr Mbayma Atalia, as well as the out-going Park Conservator, Monsieur Muhindo Mesi and WWF Garamba Project's Chief Technical Officer, Fraser Smith.

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A detailed report was produced by the team which contained prioritised recommendations. This report was then used by WWF and Garamba project staff to assist in their refocusing and revision of the major WWF project and conservation programmes in the Park.

### Unrest and southward movement of poachers threatens rhinos

The unrest following the Civil war in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (ex Zaïre) has negatively affected conservation in Garamba National Park.

At one stage foreign mercenaries took over the Park Headquarters at Nagaero, and they made the Headquarters out of bounds to WWF's Chief Technical Officer, Fraser Smith. However the main damage to the Park was caused by fleeing troops and mercenaries of ex-President Mobutu and according to Dr Hillman-Smith "anything that could not be looted was destroyed". It will be expensive and logistically difficult to replace the fuel, vehicles and radio equipment lost. Fortunately the two spotter planes were removed to Kenya during the unrest to prevent

them being stolen.

Monitoring has proved difficult since February. There is also increasing concern about the poaching gangs which have now moved further south into the area occupied by the northern white rhino. During the unrest these gangs could have increased their activities which could have disastrous consequences for not only the rhino but also the rare Congo giraffe, and the thousands of elephants and buffalo in the area.

The AIRSG therefore hopes that the new government of President Kabila and his local officials will give their full support and backing to conservation programmes in the Park.

Following discussions between the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRA), AIRSG and WWF, GRA training expert Jack Greeff undertook a reconnaissance mission in the Park with the WWF's Chief Technical Officer Fraser Smith to examine field ranger training needs. Negotiations are currently underway to see if the required ranger training can be done in the Park by the GRA and contribute to increasing protection for the remaining rhinos.

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Garamba is a World Heritage Site and one of the planet's spectacular and truly wild areas. All who have been there are captivated by its beauty. Its loss would be a catastrophe, not only for the northern white rhino but also for global biodiversity conservation.



### Numbers of white rhino stable in Abokouamékro

The AIRSG has recently been informed by Ivorian correspondent Monsieur Secka Kanga Rene that the number of white rhinos in the reserve is still four animals. Monsieur Rene undertook a study of the behaviour of the animals in 1996.



### Kenya Wildlife Service rhino study tour of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

The Kenya Wildlife Service, represented by Tim Oloo and Daniel Njaga were hosted jointly in September 1996 by the AIRSG, Natal Parks Board and Wild Solutions.

Approaches for estimating carrying capacity in South Africa were discussed: the latter being central to making off-take decisions to manage rhino populations for maximum productivity (a core principle for successful rhino conservation action advocated by the AIRSG).

Population monitoring and the importance of producing regular status reports were also discussed.

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Kenya currently holds 420 (or 88%) of the East African subspecies, *Diceros b. michaeli*, and only Namibia (598 *D.b.bicornis*) and South Africa (1,204, mainly *D.b.minor*) hold more black rhino. The success of Kenya's rhino programme is therefore critical to the survival of the African black rhino.

### Kenya Wildlife Services restructuring

Kenya Wildlife Service has recently gone through a process of reorganisation and restructuring.

The position of Kenya's rhino coordinator, Tim Oloo, has remained unchanged in the KWS restructuring. However, Daniel Njaga, who was previously responsible for rhino research countrywide, has been posted to one of the regions. He will still be responsible for rhino research in Lake Nakuru.

Mr Njaga is busy completing his black rhino carrying capacity studies in Lake Nakuru National Park, Nairobi National Park and Ngulia Sanctuary in Tsavo West National Park.

### AIRSG Technical Assistance Mission to Kenya on the cards

Following approaches by Kenya Wildlife Services and private landowners, the AIRSG Chairman and Scientific Officer hope to visit Kenya later this year to discuss a number of issues.

Topics on the agenda will probably include the apparently low population growth rates and long inter-calving intervals in some Kenyan black rhino areas, carrying capacity estimation with a view to maximising population growth rates, vegetation dynamics and its impact on rhinos, rhino and habitat monitoring, and status reporting.

### Oi Choro white rhino update

For many months after introduction, the white rhino at Oi Choro in the Masai-Mara experienced problems with animals being infected with trypanosomiasis or "tryps" - a disease caused by tsetse flies.

However, recent reports suggest that they seem to have become more resistant to the disease.

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### Black rhinos still survive in northern Mozambique

In August 1996 Nick O'Connor and Liza McKay visited Niassa province in northern Mozambique and obtained permission to visit the Niassa Reserve, accompanied by local guards.

Based on spoor of two black rhino found during about 40km walked each way, and after talking to Administrator Mulindina, the population of rhino could be guesstimated at 10-50 animals.

However, it appears that poachers from both Mozambique and Tanzania are operating in the area. Intelligence from Tanzania also indicates that rhino are currently being poached in either southern Tanzania or northern Mozambique.



### Namibian rhino coordinator appointed

In April 1996, Namibia appointed a veterinarian, Dr H.O.Reuter as their rhino coordinator. H.O. as he is commonly known, has many years experience with the Namibian Game Capture Unit.

### Namibian rhino conservation plan updated

In 1996 Namibia revised and updated its National rhino conservation plan.

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### Confirmed sightings of black rhino in Akagera National Park

WWF has reported that in October 1996 four black rhino were seen in Akagera National Park. The Park management authority, the Office Rwandais du Tourisme et de Parcs Nationaux (ORTPN) has confirmed this.

Previously it was thought that the black rhino might have gone extinct in the Park following heavy poaching at the time of the civil war.



### Revised South African black rhino conservation plan published

The Rhino Management Group (RMG) has published a thoroughly revised South African black rhino conservation plan and distributed it widely to all the management and scientific teams charged with conserving black rhino in South Africa.

The plan was compiled by the RMG's Chairman, Dr Martin Brooks and Keryn Adcock.

The plan outlines and discusses the following topics...

- the conservation goals for the three subspecies of black rhino in South Africa,
- black rhino conservation



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management, including protection, maintaining genetic diversity, managing for maximum productivity, estimating carrying capacity and monitoring black rhino populations.

- establishing or augmenting new populations including assessing area suitability for reintroductions and guidelines for black rhino reintroduction and establishment
- captive breeding
- regional status reporting

### **AFRSG provides evidence in aggravation of sentences in recent court case**

The AFRSG Scientific Office gave evidence during a recent court case in Durban, South Africa, in aggravation of sentences relating to four people convicted of the illegal possession of one rhino horn and one elephant tusk. The AFRSG also prepared a document for the court emphasising the seriousness of the crime and the need for adequate sentencing to act as a deterrent to potential criminals.

One of those convicted was a school principal; and the court recognised

that this was a crime of greed and not need. On the count of the illegal possession of the rhino horn, the four were fined a total of R85,000 (far more than the horn was worth on the local illegal market), or face imprisonment totalling 9 years 3 months in jail.

Additional fines totalling R32,000 or imprisonment for a total of 3 years 7 months were handed down on the count of the illegal possession of the tusk.

The magistrate, was quoted in the press as saying "it must be clear to people who do the actual illegal hunting that the court will not find it difficult to imprison them".

Local conservationists were pleased with the sentences.

### **Resurvey of the status of white rhinos on private land in South Africa**

Results of the 1996 African Rhino Owners Association (AROA) survey of the status of southern white rhinos on private land by Daan Buijs and Theo Papenfus show that since 1994, numbers on private land in South Africa have continued to increase to

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an estimated 1,475 rhinos in over 144 populations.

Natural population growth was the primary reason for this increase, with the buying of additional animals from State-run reserves accounting for a smaller percentage.

A report on the recent survey appeared in the Rhino & Elephant Foundation (REF) Journal and details can also be found at [www.wildnetafrica.co.za/rhino/ref/survey.htm](http://www.wildnetafrica.co.za/rhino/ref/survey.htm) and the AROA web site (see page 22).

### **Revised Hluhluwe-Umfolozu white rhino population estimate**

The 1996 white rhino population estimate for Hluhluwe-Umfolozu Park (Africa's second largest population) is 441 lower than the 1994 estimate of 1,805 rhinos. The lower estimate appears to be due to a combination of variable biases between line transect surveys (as the 1996 estimates were lower for almost all species), differences in survey methodology in the wilderness area of the Park (where point density estimation was used for the first time), and the removal of

320 rhino by the Natal Parks Board for conservation reasons between surveys.

The reduced estimate is no cause for concern, as the observed cow-calf ratios indicate the population is continuing to breed well, and there were no reports of poaching between surveys.



### **Healthy increase in Swazi rhino population**

The head of Swaziland's Big Game Parks, Ted Reilly, reports an encouraging increase in the Kingdom's rhino population. Surveys of Swaziland's rhino reserves have revealed a big increase in white rhino numbers over the past three years.

This follows a traumatic four-year period in which Swaziland lost almost 70% of its rhino to commercial poachers at an average

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rate of about one rhino every two weeks.

In what represents one of the recent success stories of African rhino conservation, security and legislation have been tightened up to the extent that not one animal has been poached in the Kingdom since December 1992

### Swaziland's black rhino population bolstered by addition of six more animals

The Kingdom's black rhino population has been boosted by the addition of six more founder animals from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The project was sponsored as a gift from the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan to His Majesty King Mswati III.



### Tanzanian rhino coordinator appointed

Mr Max Morgan-Davies has been appointed as the new Tanzanian rhino coordinator.

His major responsibility will be to coordinate all rhino conservation activities in Tanzania in accordance with the National Plan, as well as acting as the secretariat of the National Rhino Conservation Committee. The latter body will comprise representatives of the three main management authorities in the country - the Tanzanian Division of Wildlife in the Ministry of National Resources and Tourism, Tanzanian National Parks (TANAPA) and the Ngorongoro Area Conservation Authority.

### Proposed translocation of *D.b.michaeli* from South Africa to Tanzania

AIRSG members Drs Mike Knight and Pete Morkel of the National Parks Board of South Africa have just returned from Tanzania where they held meetings with local conservationists and visited Mkomazi Game Reserve in northern Tanzania with a view to the possible

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re-establishment of a population of *D.b.michaeli* in Mkomazi.

Reserve manager Tony Fitzjohn has completed the electrified fencing around the reserve, and the security on the ground appears to be good. Concerns that had been raised about the attitudes of neighbouring communities surrounding the Reserve were also discussed.

It looks likely that later this year a founder group of five *D.b.michaeli* will be caught in Addo Elephant National Park in South Africa and reintroduced into Mkomazi.

### Proposed Selous Survey

Mr Morgan-Davies is planning to survey two areas in the Selous Game Reserve known to have small breeding populations of black rhino.

Raoul du Toit, Richard Emslie, Keryn Adcock and Dr Holly Dublin were able to assist during the planning phase by advising on survey techniques, sample design and data analysis.

The primary aim of the proposed Selous surveys is to determine the distribution and numbers of rhino in

the two areas, and to decide where Intensive Protection Zones (IPZ's) should be set up to protect the remaining rhino.

### Security stepped up in Ngorongoro crater

As a result of poaching, the *D.b.michaeli* black rhino population in the crater has declined from an estimated 20 in 1992 to only 12 in 1996.

The AIRSG is therefore pleased to learn that in a cooperative venture between the Ngorongoro Area Conservation Authority which manages the crater, and the Frankfurt Zoological Society, security in the crater has been increased. No one except anti-poaching staff is now allowed in the crater after dark.



### Black rhinos increase in Zimbabwe's lowveld conservancies

As in Namibia and Kenya, black rhinos on private land in Zimbabwe are looked after on a custodianship basis by private landowners. Initially, private custodianship was seen purely as an "insurance policy" for the species, and in 1989 only 9% of the country's rhino were held in this way. Numbers of black rhinos on private land changed little between 1989 and 1994 (160-161), in part because of sub-optimal performance of animals in one conservancy as a result of initial overstocking.

However, more recently the translocation of animals to set up new conservancies in better rhino habitat in the Zimbabwe lowveld have proved very successful. By 1995, 60% (190) of Zimbabwe's population was in custodianship on private land, and two of these populations have since become rated as Key-2 populations by the AIRSG.

In the case of Save Valley Conservancy, the introduction of black rhinos helped act as a catalyst to change land use to game, resulting in internal farm fences and all cattle

being removed from the area. Experience from case studies of Madikwe and Phinda Game Reserves in South Africa, and a local investigation of the economics of game conservation in the semi-arid Zimbabwe lowveld by internationally renowned accountants Price-Waterhouse indicated that the change to game in lowveld rhino conservancies will create more, better paid jobs, generate more foreign income, and will be economically and ecologically more sustainable than cattle ranching, as well as being less susceptible to the effects of periodic droughts.

### Rapid increase in black rhino numbers in Sinamatella IPZ

With the private sector custodians paying for the management of rhinos on conservancies, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWLM) has been able to concentrate its efforts and budget on protecting the remaining rhinos in Intensive Protection Zones within its Parks.

The Warden of Sinamatella IPZ in Hwange National Park, Mr Norman English, recently reported that this

IPZ had been tremendously successful, and the black rhino had been breeding very well.

There has been a lull in poaching over the last two years, with no rhinos known to have been poached in 1995. For the first time in ten years, numbers of both black and white rhinos in Zimbabwe are starting to inch upwards again.

### Zimbabwe rhino policy review

At the request of IUCN and the Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, the AIRSG Chairman, Dr Martin Brooks, and two other AIRSG members, Dr Holly Dublin and Professor Nigel Leader-Williams, participated in a review of Zimbabwe's black rhino policy held in December 1996.

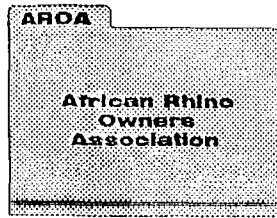
Written evaluations were submitted, and a presentation given which described the critical factors for conservation success including the value of partnerships between the State and other role players. Several of the suggestions were adopted for inclusion in the new policy.



### RMG expands

The Rhino Management Group of southern Africa (RMG) was formed in 1989 by South Africa and Namibia. In 1996, participation was extended to Swaziland and Zimbabwe, thereby widening its regional influence.

While the participating countries operate under their own country plans, all benefit through the development and sharing of rhino conservation philosophies, strategies and information.



### AROA activities

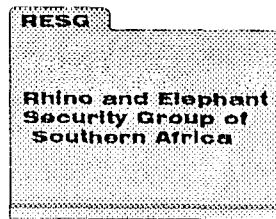
The African Rhino Owners Association (AROA) has been active over the last year, and its membership continues to grow. AROA Chairman, Mr Clive Walker, is also an AIRSG and RMG member.

During 1996, AROA organised a resurvey of the status of white rhinos on private land.

Improving security on private land has been a topic of discussion at AROA meetings, and following from this the Game Rangers Training Co-ordination Group, in cooperation with the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRA), is compiling a document on rhino security for the private landowner.

Those interested in finding out more about AROA, its goals and activities can visit their Web Site at

[www.wildnetafrika.co.za/bushcraft/organisations/rhinowatch/](http://www.wildnetafrika.co.za/bushcraft/organisations/rhinowatch/) or fax (+27) 11 453 7649



### RESG formed

The security sub-committee of the Rhino Management Group of southern Africa (RMG) has been reconstituted as the Rhino and Elephant Security Group of southern Africa.

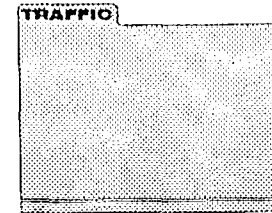
Its mission is ..

*"To promote the security of rhino and elephant populations in southern Africa."*

The RMG and RESG will continue to cooperate closely, as a representative of the RESG will continue to sit as a member of the RMG.

The RESG recently has appointed Mr Ian Thomson as its full-time

coordinator; and in July 1996, the RESG also published a short "Master Plan for the Security of Rhino and Elephant in Southern Africa".



### TRAFFIC report on Rhino Progress? - The response to CITES Resolution Conf.9.14

In an effort to determine the response by Parties to Resolution Conf. 9.14, TRAFFIC undertook a review of trade control legislation. CITES related activities and conservation activities in 14 rhinoceros range States and 18 consumer States. The report by Sue Mainka is being released to coincide with the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES being held in Harare, Zimbabwe in June 1997.

TRAFFIC and WWF offices, as well as the AIRSG and AsRSG, provided

insight and data on their work in consumer and range States.

The report highlights the need for effective field protection, and that although some support for rhino conservation has been forthcoming from the international community, overall levels of support have been disappointing, and that efforts need to be redoubled to increase levels of support for field rhinoceros conservation.

For further information or to obtain a copy of the report contact... The Executive Director, TRAFFIC International, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL or Fax (44) 1223 277237 or E-mail [traffic@wcmc.org.uk](mailto:traffic@wcmc.org.uk)

### TRAFFIC East-Asia holds symposium to discuss Traditional East Asian Medicine

Rhino horn has been a key ingredient in Chinese medicines for over 2,000 years with rhino horn being listed in an ancient Chinese Pharmacology Text, "The Divine Ploughman's Herbal", written around 200 BC to 200 AD. Today, Traditional East Asian Medicine (TEAM or TCM)

practitioners still use rhino horn to treat life-threatening fevers and other conditions. Indeed rhino horn is one of TCM's most revered ingredients.

The TRAFFIC programme in consumer countries has undergone a shift towards gaining a deeper understanding of the sociological and cultural underpinnings of rhino horn usage in Traditional East Asian Medicine (TEAM or TCM). The TCM community has been identified as comprising critical decision-makers in the rhino horn equation.

Initial progress was made in 1992 when TRAFFIC organised a workshop in Taiwan, which for the first time brought together TCM practitioners, government regulators and conservationists.

In October 1995, a WWF and TRAFFIC-sponsored symposium was convened and attended by TCM delegates from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Japan, as well as academics, government officials and conservationists.

The composition of the delegates and observers maximised Asian participation, allowing TCM specialists for the first time ever to be at the centre of an international

forum on how wildlife conservation affects TCM, and how TCM affects wildlife conservation.

Judy Mills, Director of TRAFFIC East Asia, writes in TRAFFIC Dispatches (January 1996) that the symposium indicated that:

- There is a strong cultural attachment to the merits of TCM. Practitioners feel that TCM is often viciously maligned in the Western press, and that the West should not seek to legislate moral / health care choices in the East. Delegates at the conference cited the "insulting propensity of Westerners to erroneously claim that the primary use of rhino horn is as an aphrodisiac".
- There is a lack of understanding of the link between TCM and wildlife conservation. Consumers wrongly believe that the impact of TCM is inconsequential or minor.
- The TCM community is willing to explore ideas for limiting the use of medicinal products from endangered species; for example - by limiting their use to emergency situations. Delegates expressed some doubt about the efficacy of substitutes.

- The TCM community felt that bans were not working as they stimulate profiteering and give rise to black market trading. Several delegates at the conference emphasised that they were respectable health care providers, and not criminals; but that bans on life-saving medicinals "forced" them into breaking the law.

There is a strong belief among the TCM community that captive breeding and farming of endangered species might be a solution.

The TCM community felt it was being railroaded into giving up rhino horn, which they viewed as a life-saving ingredient. They felt that the burning of horn was "offensive". It appears that the resentment created has alienated some TCM practitioners in cooperating in the responsible use of wildlife derivatives.

Clearly the TCM community must be brought into the CITES process. The challenge for the future lies in addressing these concerns, and in enlisting the TCM community as a positive force in halting the decline of rhino populations in affected range States.



### African rhino - State vs private sector

By 1995, private landowners were conserving close to 20% and 16% respectively of the remaining white and black rhinos in the wild.

Of the white rhinos on land not managed by State conservation departments, 91% were privately owned. By way of contrast, the pattern with black rhinos differs, as almost 87% of the black rhinos on private land were not owned, but managed on a custodianship basis for the State. A further 7.4% of black rhinos occur in communal land or in municipal/county council-run Parks.

In South Africa in particular, live sales of white and black rhinos to the private sector have generated much needed revenue for conservation departments.

### Ageing black rhino - New synthesis document produced to aid those in the field

Correctly ageing animals can contribute to the success of re-establishment programmes. Age data is also needed to accurately predict or interpret the breeding and social performance of a population, which in turn can contribute to improved biological decision-making with a view to maintaining high metapopulation growth rates.

Given that accurately estimating the ages of black rhino assists in their conservation management, and the fact that there was room for improvement in the field, the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF-South Africa), Endangered Wildlife Trust and Wild Solutions sponsored some new research, and the collation of existing work on ageing by a number of rhino experts with the specific aim of producing an illustrated guide to ageing black rhino by various different methods.

A document detailing five different methods of ageing black rhino has been compiled by Keryn Adcock, and has been distributed to

conservation bodies who manage rhino in the Rhino Management Group of Southern Africa Region (South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland).

The methods were derived particularly for *D.b.minor*, but if data are available, adaptations could be made to draw up ageing criteria specific to other ecotypes.

For more information contact Keryn Adcock, PO Box 1212, Hilton, South Africa, 3245, ☎ (+27) 331 434065 or E-mail [keryn\\_ric@mail.tes.co.za](mailto:keryn_ric@mail.tes.co.za)

### Rhinos in captivity

Organised collective programmes at a regional level (like SSP in North America and the EEP in Europe) are underway and aim to improve management and propagation of rhinos in captivity.

As rhino husbandry and diets have improved in recent years, so has performance. However, with a few notable exceptions where larger groups of rhinos are kept in large paddocks, the performance of African rhinos in captivity still remains poor, and well below the

growth rates obtained in protected wild populations.

According to Dr Tom Foose, by 1995 there were 664 white, 223 black, 134 Indian, 21 Sumatran and no Javan rhinos in captivity worldwide. By 1997 white rhino numbers had marginally declined to 655, but black rhinos had slightly increased to 234.

Sadly, attempts to captive-breed Sumatran rhinos have so far been disastrous, with half of those captured dying, and no calves having yet been captive-bred. On a positive note, the increasing trend towards giving captive Sumatran rhinos access to paddocks of natural habitat has resulted in observed matings in the Sepilok Managed Breeding Centre in Sabah, Malaysia. Hopefully calves will soon result.

Attempts at an AFRSG workshop to engage the two zoos currently in possession of the world's nine remaining captive northern white rhino (Dvur Kralova & San Diego) in a joint conservation initiative to establish a second free-ranging population unfortunately failed.

### Captive breeding institutions increasingly support wild rhino conservation efforts

In recent years captive, breeding institutions worldwide have increasingly donated funds to assist rhino conservation efforts in the wild.

Key organisations involved in supporting wild rhino conservation include The International Rhino Foundation (IRF), The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the Wildlife Conservation Society, Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the American Association of Zookeepers and other UK zoos through the Rhinos in Crisis Appeal.

### Big rhino horn bust in the UK



In Operation Morello, a large haul of rhino horns were seized in London in September 1996.

This important bust followed undercover work by RSPCA staff who had been offered the horns for sale. Following confirmation of the legislation involved by the UK Department of the Environment, the

police were brought in and the suspects (all British citizens) were arrested by the South East Regional Crime Squad. A total of 124 rhino horns in four tea chests were seized. Most of the horn appears to have been old.

Operation Morello was an excellent example of good cooperation between agencies, and represented a major breakthrough in the fight against illegal trade in rhino horn.



### Live export sales of southern white rhino under the amended downlisting passed at COP 9

At the 9th Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP 9), an annotated proposal to downlist the South African southern white rhino for live international sales to approved buyers, and for the (continued) export of legal hunting trophies only, was passed with a massive majority of 66 votes to 2 and had the support of significant African and Asian

rhino range States.

This proposal was in keeping with CITES Resolution Conf. 9.14 which emphasises the need to expand funding sources, including reinvesting revenues derived from the use of rhinoceroses, to offset the high costs of their conservation.

However the annotation was only until COP 10 where it will be reviewed.

Research by the AFRSG and TRAFFIC (South Africa) found that 46 live white rhinos have been exported from South Africa since COP 9. Of these 16 were conservation donations to a National Park and a Rhino Sanctuary (10 to Namibia, and 6 to Botswana). The remaining 30 were sold to approved buyers and exported (see Table on next page).



### Export sales of South African southern white rhino since COP9

Year	Seller	CITES Export Permit issued by...	Number of white rhinos exported	Importing Country	Destination
1995	Natal P.B.	Natal P.B.	2	Israel	Zoo
1995	Natal P.B.	Natal P.B.	10	Thailand	Safari Park
1995	Natal P.B.	Natal P.B.	6	UK	Safari Park
1995	Private	Gauteng D.N.C.	2	Argentina	Zoo
1996	Natal P.B.	Natal P.B.	3	Malaysia	Zoo
1996	Natal P.B.	Natal P.B.	2	Malaysia	Zoo
1996	North West P.B.	Gauteng D.N.C.	3	Zimbabwe	Private Game Ranch
1996	Private	Gauteng D.N.C.	2	Zimbabwe	Private Game Ranch

\* P.B. = Parks Board D.N.C. = Department of Nature Conservation

## 30 AFRICAN RHINOS

June 1997

Of the 30 white rhinos sold and exported from South Africa since COP 9, 5 have been sold to Private Game Ranches in Africa, 16 to Safari Parks, and 9 to Zoos. Of the rhinos sold, 10 went to Thailand, 6 to the UK, 5 to Malaysia, 5 to Zimbabwe, 2 to Israel and 2 to Argentina.

Before either the Natal Parks Board or Gauteng Nature Conservation have issued Export permits, they have contacted the proposed importing country's CITES authority asking them to confirm the bona fides of the purchaser, specify for what purposes the proposed import is taking place, and if appropriate, to comment on the suitability of the habitat for the introduction of rhino.

The annotation specifying that international trade in live animals should only be "to appropriate and acceptable destinations" has therefore been adhered to by South African conservation authorities.

The total turnover from the 30 animals sold abroad since COP9 is in the region of \$277,000. However, the bulk of live rhino sales continue to be on the

domestic market inside South Africa. The average auction price of white rhinos has increased since the downlisting, further increasing incentives for the private sector to conserve rhino. Numbers of white rhinos in South Africa have also increased since COP 9.

Thus one can conclude that the COP 9 downlisting has benefitted rhino conservation in South Africa.

### **Progress in developing "indicators" of success**

CITES Resolution Conf. 9.14 directed the Standing Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of rhinoceros conservation actions and to develop appropriate indicators of success. Policies guiding interventions should also be responsive to such evaluations.

Since the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the AIRSG has been able to assist the Standing Committee in the task of developing the standardized indicators called for in the above Resolution.

## 31 AFRICAN RHINOS

June 1997

At the request of the CITES Secretariat, a working group of the AIRSG discussed the issue at its meeting in February 1996. The minutes of the AIRSG working group were then used as the starting point to develop the process further following wider consultation. A preliminary briefing document on the use of 'indicators' entitled "Towards evaluating the effectiveness of rhinoceros conservation actions", was then prepared for the CITES Standing Committee. This briefing document comprised a 'straw dog' contextual model (framework within which indicators operate); and also outlined how indicators of rhinoceros numbers, indicators of consumer demand, indicators of field conservation effort and other key indicators could be used to help evaluate the merits of current and potential future conservation strategies.

The work done to date has highlighted the complexity of the task. There is also a need to consult further and to include major input from the Asian Rhino Specialist Group and from TRAFFIC.

To make progress in the

development of indicators, it will be necessary to hold at least two meetings. Subject to budgetary approval, the CITES Secretariat will provide the finance needed to hold the meetings and develop the process further.

The first will be a workshop of about 18 experts bringing together key people with specialist knowledge of the different areas of relevance (trade in consumer markets, implementation of trade bans, levels of field conservation effort, intelligence on levels of poaching and trade in range States, changes in rhinoceros numbers, economics and decision-analysis), and should include representatives of the major rhinoceros range States in Africa and Asia.

To ensure the meeting is as productive as possible, comments on the work to date, and other suggestions will be sent to a decision-analysis expert/facilitator for the production of a revised 'straw-dog' contextual model and of a suggested process for developing indicators.

The aims of the first workshop of experts will be to:



- develop the process of deciding how indicators can be used to assess alternative conservation strategies;
- identify the set of key indicator variables that need to be assessed/measured;
- define each variable; and
- identify key people and request them to collect the necessary data needed to develop indicators (including determining what trade research is required in east Asian consumer countries).

Once the data on indicators have been obtained they will be analysed and interpreted to shed light on the desirability of current and alternative rhinoceros conservation strategies. At this stage it will probably be necessary to hold the second, much smaller meeting, to complete the process, before producing a final report on the results for the CITES Standing Committee.

### South Africa submits southern white rhino downlisting proposal to COP 10

South Africa has submitted a proposal to downlist their southern white rhino to Appendix I for trade, but initially with a zero quota. This proposal will be considered at the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP 10) to be held in Harare from the 9th to the 20th June 1997.

The proposed zero quota means that irrespective of any decisions at COP 10, the status quo - a moratorium on international trade in rhino products will remain for the foreseeable future (until a future CITES COP approves a non-zero quota).

The SA proposal in effect seeks the backing of CITES to investigate the possible setting up of a legal trade in rhino products as a rhino conservation measure, and to determine whether appropriate controls could be set up to prevent illegal laundering of horn which could threaten other rhino taxa.

The supporting statement to the South African proposal argues that a controlled legal trade would benefit rhino conservation by reducing the financial incentives for illegal traders, and generating much needed revenue to offset the high costs of field rhino conservation.

While the supporting statement to the South African proposal recognises that the necessary controls for a legalised trade are not in place, an attachment suggests a possible framework and sophisticated techniques for controlling such a legal trade.

The current proposal is in keeping with CITES Resolution Conf. 9.14 that emphasised the need to expand funding sources, including "reinvesting revenues derived from the use of rhinoceroses that is consistent with the Convention, to offset the high costs of their conservation".

Arguments against the South African proposal are concerned primarily with whether it is practically possible to set up sufficient and effective anti-laundering controls at all stages of the proposed trade, and in so

doing not put other rhino taxa at increased risk from poaching in other range States. Increased poaching may occur if poachers perceive that they will be able to easily launder illegal horn through a future legal trade.

Support for continued investigation and dialogue concerning possible future trading comes from economists who have argued that rhino horn trade bans are likely to have been counter-productive by i) driving the trade underground, ii) increasing prices, iii) creating and maintaining opportunities for criminal middlemen and officials (who stand to make the biggest profits from illegal trading), iv) ensuring that the demand for horn as a traditional East Asian medicine has to be primarily supplied on a non-sustainable (ie by killing rhino) rather than sustainably from dehorned rhinos supplemented by horn from legal stockpiles (ie without killing rhinos), v) reducing incentives for those that own and conserve rhino in the field, and 6) limiting the capacity of resource managers to maintain adequate conservation expenditures.

Economists further argue that long-term solutions should aim to transfer the capacity to earn revenue from rhinos from illegal traders to rightful owners and managers.

However there is concern in some quarters about how the legalising of trade will affect demand and prices for horn, and therefore eventual poaching pressure in the field.

If demand is stimulated and horn prices rise as a result or re-opening trade, this may put increased pressure on wild rhino populations.

Alternatively if a legal trade were to depress prices and sophisticated trade controls could be enforced (making it very difficult to launder horn), this may reduce the incentives of criminal traders to deal in horn, to the benefit of rhino.

This proposal is sure to be hotly debated at COP 10, and developments will be reported on in the next edition of African Rhinos.

### **AfRSG assists with review of South African downlisting proposal**

Thirteen AfRSG members were among those asked to review and technically comment on the proposed amendment to the Appendix II downlisting of the southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) by IUCN's trade office. This forms part of the process by which IUCN and TRAFFIC aid governments by preparing objective and technical analyses of all proposals submitted for consideration at the CITES Conference of the Parties to held in Harare, Zimbabwe in June '97.

### **AsRSG News**

#### **AsRSG Action Plan published**

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group's Action plan that was finalised at the last AsRSG meeting has just been published.

The plan provides the latest estimates of numbers and

assessment of status for the 3 species of Asian rhinos: the Indian, the Javan and the Sumatran. The plan also presents a general strategy and specific actions for Asian rhino conservation including 36 specific project proposals with estimated costs.

For further details contact Dr Tom Foose at Fax +1 614 638 22 87 or write to 20 Pen Mar Street, Waynesboro, PA, 17268, USA

### **Increased liaison between AsRSG and AfRSG**

Contact between the two rhino specialist groups is being increased.

Dr Tom Foose (AsRSG programme officer), Dr Esmond Bradley Martin and Richard Emslie (AfRSG Scientific Officer) are members of both groups facilitating interchange of ideas and knowledge at AfRSG and AsRSG meetings.

Dr Tom Foose and Richard Emslie are also currently trying to set up a field study tour to South Africa for three key Sumatran rhino

conservationists from Malaysia and Indonesia.

The tour would examine veterinary, monitoring, anti-poaching and intelligence gathering techniques in some key South African rhino parks.

The AfRSG and AsRSG Programme Officers also took part in the Malaysian rhino PVA held in Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia in November 1995; and held a joint press conference on the status of the world's five rhino species in Kota Kinabalu on Sabah, with the aim of raising awareness of the need for increased field rhino conservation in Malaysia.

AsRSG and AfRSG meetings indicate the importance of effective concentrated law enforcement efforts backed up by intelligence gathering. There are similarities in successful rhino conservation approaches in India and Nepal and well protected African sanctuaries and IPZ's. Similarly the failure to successfully protect and conserve Sumatran rhino in Malaysia and Indonesia has parallels to failures in Africa where field law enforcement effort has been

inadequate.

Currently the Asian rhino specialist group Web site at the IRF has a page giving details of both rhino specialist groups ([www.rhinos-irf.org/specialists/](http://www.rhinos-irf.org/specialists/)).

In the near future, when the AIRSG has its own web site, the two rhino specialist groups plan to hot link their Web sites.

### Status of Asian rhino

#### Indian rhino

The conservation of the Indian rhino in India and Nepal is the success story of Asian rhino conservation. The total population has been steadily growing in recent years.

Since 1993, numbers of the greater one-horned or Indian rhino have increased from about 1,880 to 2,135 (Source - AsRSG).

About three quarters of Indian rhinos are conserved in India, with all but two of the remainder (which wandered into Pakistan) being conserved in Nepal. The north-east state of Assam is home

to 95% of India's rhinos.

India's Kaziranga and Nepal's Royal Chitwan have the largest populations.

AIRSG and AsRSG member Esmond Bradley Martin believes the main reason for the success is that government budgets for Indian rhino areas have been over ten times higher, on average, than those in Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Both India and Nepal have generally protected their rhinos well, and in some cases manpower densities are as high as one man per square kilometre. Just as in some of the well protected African reserves, expenditure can be as high as \$1,500/km<sup>2</sup>/year.

Political instability, inadequate expenditure on intelligence in the past, cut backs in funds for management, poor leadership and low morale of forest guards, and limited or outdated equipment have been a problem in some areas.

However, Esmond Bradley Martin notes that a big increase in expenditure on intelligence

gathering and the catching of two big rhino horn traders has coincided with an approximate halving of poaching in Assam in recent years.

For more details on Indian rhino conservation, readers should consult the AsRSG Action Plan and 1996 paper by Esmond Bradley Martin "*The Importance of Park Budgets, Intelligence Networks and Competent Management for Successful Conservation of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros*" in *Pachyderm* volume number 22. The same edition also contains a paper by Anwauddin Choudhury on "*The Greater One-Horned Rhino Outside Protected Areas in Assam, India*".

*Pachyderm* is the journal of the IUCN SSC's African Elephant Specialist Group, AIRSG and AsRSG. For further information please write to The Editor, *Pachyderm* c/o WWF Regional Office, PO Box 62440, Nairobi, Kenya; fax +254 2 332878 or e-mail [afesg@arcc.or.ke](mailto:afesg@arcc.or.ke).

#### Sumatran rhino

The recent history of the smallest "woolly" two horned Sumatran rhino is bleak.

Although population estimation is difficult (as Sumatran rhino live in dense tropical forest and are very secretive); it appears that numbers have declined between 25% and 50% over the last five years.

The latest figures compiled by the AsRSG estimate there to be only about 120 left in Malaysia and about 150 in Indonesia.

In November 1996 the AsRSG organised and held a Malaysian rhino Population Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) which recognised that without increased action and commitment the rhino could become extinct in Malaysia by 2020 or earlier.

Although the PVA was concerned with Malaysian rhino conservation, many of the conclusions also appear to apply to Indonesia.

It appears that insufficient manpower is being deployed to patrol *inside* Sumatran rhino areas to increase the chance of detecting and arresting potential or actual

poachers.

From an African perspective, there is a desperate need to set up one or two well protected Intensive Protection Zones (IPZ's) in each country if this species is to be saved from extinction in the wild.

Sumatran rhino conservation efforts in Indonesia and Malaysia are currently being assisted by a \$2 million Global Environment Facility grant over three years that the AfRSG helped to secure through the United Nations Development Programme.

These much needed funds are being used to support additional anti-poaching teams and community outreach programmes for the critically endangered Sumatran rhino in both countries.

A mobile unit and nine teams have been recruited, trained and deployed in Indonesia. A similar number of teams are in the field in Malaysia.

Although in donor terms \$2 million is a substantial sponsorship, this amount only represents an average of \$1/3 million per country per year,

which is a small amount compared to actual needs.

Putting this figure into context (per country per year) it only represents 0.3% of the South African government's grant to State conservation departments in 1996/97. The figure is also small compared to the current annual turnover in South Africa from live sales of black and white rhino, and trophy fees and daily rates for the limited number of white rhinos hunted. This generated a turn-over of approximately \$2.75 million in 1996 which is over 8 times the level of the GEF grant per country per year.

Furthermore, it appears that GEF will not be renewing this grant. Given that more support for Sumatran rhino conservation efforts in the field is urgently needed, it is hoped that the GEF will reconsider its decision.

#### **Javan rhino**

The majority of remaining Lesser One-Horned or Javan rhino (60) occur in the Ujung Kulon park in Indonesia, with a further 15 remaining in Vietnam (Source - IUCN AfRSG).

In Ujung Kulon, efforts are ongoing to limit illegal access to the park from both land and sea.

Population estimates indicate the population appears to be stable, yet the age structure (based on spoor) suggests that the population should be increasing. Carrying capacity limitations are therefore unlikely to be the cause of the apparently stable population in Ujung Kulon.

It is therefore likely that either actual poaching levels may be higher than recorded levels (cancelling out the annual natural increase), or the stability is more apparent than real, and a function of difficulties in population estimation.

Despite much success in Ujung Kulon, there is therefore no room for complacency, as any increase in poaching will probably cause this key population to decline.

## **The AfRSG thanks..**

The AfRSG would like to acknowledge the valuable support of...

The World Wide Fund for Nature (Africa & Madagascar), the United Kingdom Department of the Environment and Commission of the European Union for supporting the initial three year contract for the AfRSG's Scientific Officer.

The World Wide Fund For Nature (South Africa) for contributing towards the AfRSG Chairman's running costs.

US Fish & Wildlife Service and the United Nations Environment Programme for their sponsorship of the 1996 AfRSG meeting.

The Natal Parks Board - for being the host organisation to the AfRSG and providing an office, an e-mail link, as well as accounting and financial management support from their Financial Services Division. Lyn Harrison is also thanked for valuable administrative support.

The United Nations Development Programme and the Howard Gillman Foundation for generously

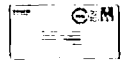
sponsoring the Northern White Rhino Workshop held in White Oak in October 1995.

IUCN Headquarters for support and administrative assistance.

The Scientific Officer would like to thank the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Compaq for the loan of a portable computer.

### Subscription Details

Those wanting to receive or advertise in African Rhinos or on the AIRSG's future Web Site are asked to please write to or fax the AIRSG Office.



Please write to ...

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South Africa



or  
Fax (+27) 331 473278

The success of the newsletter will depend on contributions received from the African range States and other managers and organisations involved in rhino conservation.

Therefore please provide the editor with brief news items or short articles. Deadlines for submissions for the next edition will be the 31st October 1997.

The AIRSG will be sponsoring the publication of this edition of the newsletter.

However we are looking for sponsorship to cover printing and distribution costs of future editions. Anyone, or any organisation interested in sponsoring the publication of African Rhinos or advertising (tax deductible) in African Rhinos

Anyone or any organisations who would like to support the work of the AIRSG, are requested to please contact the Chairman, Dr Martin Brooks, AIRSG, PO Box 662, Pietermaritzburg 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
Fax (+27) 331 473278

# AFRICAN RHINOS

Newsletter of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group

## African rhino numbers near 10,000 in the wild - whites up and blacks stable

This first edition of the new African Rhino Specialist Group (AIRSG) Newsletter reports on the conservation of Africa's rhinos with particular emphasis on news from the range States.

Other subjects discussed in this edition include a brief explanation of the role and activities of the AIRSG during the last IUCN triennium, CITES issues, news from rhino conservation bodies, an update on

the status of the new AIRSG African Rhino Action Plan, and Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) news.

This news letter supplements *Pachyderm* which is the joint journal of IUCN SSC's African Elephant Specialist Group and African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups.

### The AIRSG



The African Rhino Specialist Group (AIRSG) is one of a number of groups which make up the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the IUCN (World Conservation Union).

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