

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, Management and Protection of Elephants  
(Project 3019)

A four-year project began in 1981 to study the ecology of the elephant in the Manovo-Gounda-St Floris National Park in the Central African Republic (CAR), so as to determine its movements, habitat use and status in relation to poaching pressure. The project includes ground surveys of both elephant and rhino. Two vehicles have been supplied to the project.

The Manovo-Gounda-St Floris National Park lies in a wooded savannah area of northeastern CAR, two days by road from the capital, Bangui, and covers 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of 2,000-3,000 elephants and about 30 black rhinoceros. During the first half of 1980 about 300 elephants were killed by poachers. Adequate protection cannot be given to the elephants without better knowledge of their movements and behaviour. The black rhinos are also threatened by poaching, and continuous monitoring of their numbers is needed.

In December 1981, an international conference of Ministers of "Eaux et Forêts" was held in Bangui to study ways of controlling illegal grazing and poaching activities in the northern CAR. Of the six neighbouring countries invited only two, Gabon and Congo, sent representatives. The CAR Minister called for a commission to be established of representatives from Chad, Sudan and the CAR, to deal with the grave problem of poaching on the northern and eastern borders of the CAR.

Later in December, the biologists assigned to the project left Bangui for Manovo-Gounda-St Floris National Park to start the survey. The African Wildlife Leadership Foundation is also contributing to this project.

U S Peace Corps  
Bangui, CAR

KENYA, WWF-Kenya National Project - Laikipia Project

A ranch of 90,000 acres in the Laikipia area of Kenya is the home of between 70 and 80 rhinos; in addition there are between 200 and 300 elephants, and numbers of greater kudu, leopard, cheetah and lion with herds of savannah game. Until recently the owners of the farm have undertaken protection of the wildlife as part of their farm security but two seasons of very low rainfall has caused economic stress and they found that they could not continue to support the added burden of ranger patrols to track and guard against wildlife poachers. The conservation organizations were therefore appealed to for support.

Losses of rhino to poachers had been small but significant and the poacher pressure was increasing. The government's anti-poaching unit was called in to assist but this proved unsuccessful and they were withdrawn. A plan was developed to increase the ranger strength from 8 to 16, to provide firearms, uniforms, tents and a radio system. Authority to arm the rangers was obtained and rifles were provided to replace the bows and arrows previously carried by the ranger force. WWF provided 16 sets of uniforms and donated funds from which radios, tents and salaries were paid.

A report in July from the ranch manager stated that expenses were very high during 1981 due to abnormally high pressure from poachers, but the situation was being contained and it was hoped to get on top of the situation within two months. Six rhinos were born during 1980-81; rhinos poached during the same period numbered five (four in 1980 and only one in 1981).

It is recognised that this is a "survival" measure and gives no long-term security to the wildlife on the ranch, but as the same situation pertains elsewhere throughout the country it must be regarded as acceptable. The security provided within the ranch is greater than that provided within the national parks and considerably greater than in the reserves.

Long-term protection of the rhinos and endangered game can only come from outside Africa by the elimination or strict control of the trade in wildlife products.

E T Monks  
WWF-Kenya

#### KENYA, Rhino Action Group (Project 1724)

Investigations by WWF-Kenya in 1977 revealed that the export of rhino horns in recent years from Kenya must have resulted in a very severe depletion in rhino numbers. As a result of the concern expressed by conservationists, the Kenya Rhino Action Group (KRAG) was formed under the sponsorship of WWF-Kenya. It consisted of biologists, zoologists, government wildlife staff and all persons having an interest in the future of the rhinoceros. IUCN revitalised the SSC Rhino Group and WWF/IUCN established its Rhino Project with Dr Kes Hillman as chairman. KRAG and the WWF Rhino Project co-ordinate their work under the chairmanship of Mr Ian Grimwood.

A series of discussions located the priority areas and, in consultation with the Wildlife Department a Rhino Action Plan was evolved setting out the immediate and long-term priorities. Since it was not possible to give protection with anti-poaching units over the whole of the rhinos' range, it was decided that wherever possible rhinos should be captured and translocated to