

programme in Kampala. The papers have now been reviewed and 64 were accepted for publication in a volume put out by the International Council of Scientific Unions.

## North Yemen

### Project 6298

#### Reducing the Cultural Demand for Rhino Horn

WWF Expenditure 1986/87 — US\$ 6924

(Project initiated 1987)

**Project Executant:** Dr D. M. Varisco, consultant anthropologist.

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) To describe the cultural significance of rhino horn daggers in North Yemen;
- 2) To design a strategy to shift interest to other materials for dagger manufacture;
- 3) To recommend options and projects to promote measures in North Yemen which will conserve rhinos and other wildlife.

An important part of rhino conservation is to stop the illegal trade in its horn and discourage its use. It is estimated that half the rhino horn on the market during the past two decades has ended up in North Yemen, where it is carved into hilts for traditional daggers. North Yemen has banned the import and use of rhino horn, but these actions have not eliminated smuggling and continued manufacture of rhino horn daggers.

This project set out to explain why rhino horn is so highly prized in Yemeni culture and what can be done to discourage and eliminate its use. The study involved a briefing on the rhino issue in Washington DC and Nairobi, followed by a three-week field study in North Yemen. The findings were presented in a final report, which included a strategy and specific recommendations for future actions by concerned conservation organizations.

Rhino horn has been used for dagger hilts in Yemen for at least a thousand years. Although other materials, including silver and ivory, have been tried, rhino horn is preferred by far because of the way it ages. In time it becomes translucent and develops a yellowish, amber-like colour. In recent years the rising economic value of rhino horn has added to its prestige value. The wholesale price of rhino horn in Yemen per kilogram in 1970 was US\$ 35, rising to US\$ 675 in late 1978 and US\$ 1500 in late 1987. Perhaps 50,000-60,000 kg of rhino horn has entered North Yemen since 1970, which means that at least 20,000 animals have died to supply the trade.

#### **Future Activities**

The study concluded that the most effective way to discourage and eliminate use of rhino horn in North Yemen is to develop the abilities of Yemeni institutions and

individuals to deal with the problems. For the short term it was recommended that dagger makers be offered a range of sample materials to find a high-quality substitute for rhino horn.

## Zaïre

### Project 1941

#### Conservation of Gorillas

WWF Expenditure 1986/87 — US\$ 94,826

(Total since 1984 — US\$ 129,977)

**Project Executants:** Dr C. and Mrs R.J. Aveling.

**Participating Organizations:** Institut Zaïrois pour la Conservation de la Nature (Zaïre Institute for the Conservation of Nature — IZCN); Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), West Germany.

**Objective:** To improve the long-term conservation prospects for gorillas, their forest habitat and associated primates in eastern Zaïre.

Eastern Zaïre boasts an impressive array of forest primates, including two-thirds of the range of the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*), and the entire range of the eastern lowland form (*G.g. graueri*). The mountain gorillas of the extinct Virunga volcanoes share their habitat with the endangered golden monkey (*Cercocebus mitis kandti*), while the forested lava flows of active volcanoes are included in the range of chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*). All these species and many others come within the boundaries of the Parc National des Virunga (Virunga National Park), which has been the main focus for the Zaïre Gorilla Conservation Project.

### Gorilla Conservation Programme

The Virunga volcano habitat of mountain gorillas straddles the international boundaries between Rwanda, Zaïre and Uganda. Since 1979 the Rwandan sector of the population has benefited from increased protection through the Mountain Gorilla Project, and the Zaïre Project has now extended this to a large sector of the population on the Zaïre side of the volcanoes. The conservation advantages to gorillas of controlled tourism, in terms of improved surveillance of gorilla groups and financial benefit to the parks concerned, were proved in Rwanda, and a comparable system has been set up in Zaïre's Parc National des Virunga. The project has accustomed four gorilla groups to the presence of tourists and established a controlled system of viewing which limit disturbances to the gorillas. Emphasis on training and close collaboration with IZCN personnel at all levels has meant that