

BOOK REVIEW

From the Jungle to Kathmandu: Horn and Tusk Trade

by *Esmond Bradley Martin*

Published by Wildlife Watch Group (WWG), 20-Pulchowk, Machhaagal, Latipur, Nepal (wwg@citesnepal.org) in 2010. ISBN: 978-999-46-820-9-6. Price USD 30

Review by Kees Rookmaaker

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Rhino horn has never been used as an aphrodisiac in any Asian culture. This was quite a revelation when Martin, during his investigations across the Asian and African rhino and elephant range states, first realized the total fallacy of this idea spread in the media—both popular and academic. Martin has made numerous other important findings while tracking the trade in rhino horn and elephant ivory across the globe. He has recorded population levels, statistics of poaching, trade routes, commodity prices, conservation failures and successes, not just once in one region, but regularly and accurately over a wide range of countries and over a period of some 40 years. Equally significantly, he has always painstakingly taken the time to write down his findings and to publish them widely, in peer reviewed journals as well as the popular press. He is a true ambassador for rhino and elephant conservation.

The Wildlife Watch Group of Nepal has seen fit to bundle Martin's contributions on the trade of ivory, rhino horn and rhino parts. This handsome little book of 186 pages provides the text of 18 papers on the subject, published over the past 20 years in *Pachyderm* (9), *Oryx* (5), *International Zoo News*, *Wildlife Conservation*, *Swara* and in his book on *South and South East Asian Ivory Markets*. Martin collaborated on these works with Lucy Vigne, Daniel Stiles and his wife Chryssee. While the contents of the book are listed on page xi, and the references to the original sources

are given in the titles of each titles, it is a pity perhaps that these data were not combined in the contents, or that it remains unnoticed that text and photographs were reset and do not follow original pagination. But that is a pedantic quibble for bibliophiles only.

Nepal conservation veteran Hemanta Mishra contributed an incisive foreword, and Mangal Man Shakya a useful introduction. Otherwise all the text is by Martin and co-authors. Much has changed in Nepal over the 20 years in which these papers were written. Rhino numbers are higher and the number of populations has increased through translocations. Rhino and elephant conservation is important to the people of Nepal, and poaching is much reduced, even though authorities must remain alert on a daily basis. What has been gained over these years could easily and quickly be lost, so we must hope that Nepal will continue to be vigilant and proactive in conservation policy and research.

This book was published as a tribute to Esmond Bradley Martin's contribution to conservation. He can be justly proud of the results. The importance of this kind of long-term commitment is demonstrated admirably in this handsome volume. We know that this book is not the end of Martin's involvement in the ivory and rhino horn trade, and I can only join others in hoping for a continued stream of important information.