

IN SITU RHINO CONSERVATION PROPOSALS

In the last issue of *AROUND THE HORN*, we asked you to submit funding requests for *in situ* rhino research, management or conservation projects. Our purpose is to serve as a communication vehicle between zoos and persons involved in rhino field projects, in an effort to foster more zoo participation in support of these projects. Anyone interested in funding a project should contact the ATH editors for further information. Those deciding to fund projects are free to request additional information or set their own reporting and documentation requirements.

PROJECT: Conservation of White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) in Zimbabwe: Effects of Horn Removal

ABSTRACT: In response to an increased poaching threat, an experimental dehorning exercise was approved by the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism, in April, 1991, for Kazuma Pan and Hwange National Parks in northwestern Zimbabwe. In the first phase, 72 white rhinoceros were immobilized and dehorned in 1991. The second phase, to be implemented in 1992, will involve the re-immobilization of a selected number of the dehorned animals to monitor horn regrowth and dehorning of those animals that were missed in 1991. A major research project has been implemented in conjunction with the horn removal. Objectives include: 1) to evaluate the effectiveness of dehorning in reducing the poaching risk; 2) to characterize phenotypic variation in horn size and growth, and to document rates and form of regrowth; 3) to examine interactions of both horned and dehorned rhinos with predators; and 4) to investigate the influence of horn and body size variation in dominance and reproductive performance. Additionally, research into chemical capture methodology and stress will be conducted along with collection of baseline biological data.

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$47,000 (U.S.)

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Dr. Michael D. Kock

PROJECT: Veterinary Assistance for Black Rhino Conservation in Zimbabwe and Namibia

ABSTRACT: Veterinarians working for the governments of Zimbabwe and Namibia (Mike Kock and Pete Morkel, respectively) have a continuing need for darts, immobilization drugs, medical equipment and supplies, and treatment drugs to help them better care for black rhino during capture and relocation efforts, follow-up and/or routine exams, and dehorning operations.

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$12,000/year (U.S.)

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Dr. David A. Jessup

PROJECT: Field Sampling and Importation of Blood Samples from Free-Ranging Black and White Rhino from Namibia and Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT: The 1986 African Rhinoceros Workshop in Cincinnati, Ohio identified a number of promising fields for biomedical research that could enhance the health and long term survival of both black and white rhinoceros. Many of these areas of research require the ability to obtain and compare tissues, blood, or components of blood from free-living animals to captive animals, or to compare samples from several populations. Capture of rhino for relocation, marking, or dehorning presents the opportunity to obtain these samples at little additional expense and risk. Samples can be field frozen in dry nitrogen shippers and returned to the United States or to other appropriate locations.

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$10,000/year (U.S.)

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Dr. David A. Jessup

PROJECT: Radio Collaring of Five Northern White Rhino in Zaire

ABSTRACT: A de-horning operation is planned for five northern white rhino in Garamba National Park in Zaire. The project is planned for the spring of 1992. The immobilization required for horn removal provides the opportunity for equipping the animals with radio collars to facilitate tracking. Funds are being sought to cover the cost of the radio collars and receivers.

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$5,074 (U.S.)

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Dr. Peter Morkel

PROJECT: Conservation of Greater One-Horned Asian Rhino in Nepal

ABSTRACT: Field scientists in Nepal have a critical need for a vehicle to facilitate travel between and within Chitwan and Bardia National Parks for tracking and translocation projects involving the greater one-horned Asian rhino. Funds are also needed for immobilization drugs and medical equipment which are in short supply.

FUNDS REQUESTED: Amount not specified.

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Dr. Sunder Shrestha

PROJECT: Tanzania Rhino Project

ABSTRACT: It is estimated that 95% of Tanzania's black rhinos were killed by poachers between 1975 and 1989. The Tanzania Rhino Project was originally conceived as an emergency rescue operation for Tanzanian rhinos when poaching was at its height. The plan was to capture rhinos from all over Tanzania and airlift them to Rubondo Island, Ngorongoro Crater, or to sanctuary areas established in the northern sector of the Selous Game Reserve. As poaching became less of an immediate threat, the translocation plan was abandoned to allow time for gathering information on the distribution and numbers of remaining rhinos and assessing their prospects for survival and reproduction if left *in situ* versus being translocated to the proposed release sites. A detailed nationwide survey of the remaining scattered individuals and populations of black rhino has been initiated to determine their population structure, reproductive status, and threats to survival. Potential release areas for translocated rhino are also being surveyed in terms of their ecology, security, and carrying capacity. The survey is scheduled to cover the time period from July, 1991 to December, 1992. This will be followed by the preparation and implementation of a rhino conservation plan for the whole country, that may or may not include proposals for translocating animals. During the survey period, interim conservation measures may be implemented if considered necessary for the immediate interest of the rhinos.

FUNDS REQUESTED: Amount not specified.

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Andrew Laurie

Please continue to submit funding requests for *in situ* rhino research, management, or conservation projects. Requests should include a 50-word abstract which summarizes the project (for publication in AROUND THE HORN), a project narrative (not to exceed three pages) which explains in more detail what you want to do, why you want to do it, and how much money you are requesting, and a *curriculum vitae* for the project coordinator. Send proposals to AROUND THE HORN, c/o Ms. Karen Wachs, Cincinnati Zoo CREW, 3400 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45220, USA.

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VETERINARY from Page 7

In summary, there should be veterinary participation in the management of captive and wild rhino populations. This participation should be an integral part of a multidisciplinary approach to their care, and is particularly relevant to their capture and translocation. Such efforts will contribute to the long term survival of both *in situ* and *ex situ* rhino populations.