

MORE OF ASSAM

Thanks to Esmond Bradley Martin for the following, excerpted from *Oryx*, 25(4):215-221, Oct, 1991.

"Assam, in northeast India, is the main stronghold for the great Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, with most of the 1500 or so individuals that live there concentrated in parks and sanctuaries. Despite valiant efforts to protect them, the forest guards are poorly equipped and no match for poachers armed with automatic weapons or those who make use of high-voltage power lines to electrocute the animals. Poachers can now get 2.5 times the price for a horn compared with the \$6250 per kg obtained in 1986, because demand in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan for Indian rhino horn has pushed up the price there to over \$18,000 per kg wholesale. Based on discussions with wildlife officials in Assam, the following recommendations have been made:

- More equipment, staff & domesticated elephants
- External sources of money and equipment
- **IMPROVE MORALE OF FIELD STAFF**
- Increase efficiency of staff, including better training
- Intelligence-gathering network is urgently needed and more money to pay for informers
- Reform the legal system to get poachers and traders jailed.
- Patrol camps should be

increased, strategically placed, and their locations reassessed as necessary.

- The local attitude towards wildlife must be improved. Until help is given to improve their standard of living, rural people, who should be the target group for wildlife publicity, will continue to consider rhinos as a threat.

Assam's wildlife officials continue to do a remarkable job in protecting rhinos, and numbers of rhinos in Assam are increasing. However, as demand for rhino horn by Assamese traders rises and poaching becomes a more efficient commercially organized operation, the job of protecting the rhinos will be that much harder. Assam wildlife employees now need all the help they can get from the Central Government, the State Government and non-governmental organizations."

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR 1992!

Michael Henderson has come up with yet another delightful rhino Christmas card. A dozen cards cost \$14 (including postage and handling). You can order assorted or single design. Make your check payable to Michael Henderson, 8763 W. Star Drive, Littleton, CO, 80123. P.S. Michael donated a portion of his receipts to Michael Werikhe when he visited Colorado.

WANT TO REDUCE YOUR TAXES? MAKE A DONATION!

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement through which more than 100 nations are committed to work together to preserve wild animals, plants and our shared natural heritage - so that they will not be forced into extinction by uncontrolled exploitation. CITES uses a system of permits to regulate trade in wildlife. The treaty members issue permits allowing trade only after they are satisfied that it will not pose a threat to survival of the species. Commercial trade in the most endangered species including all apes and many monkeys, the great whales, elephants, tiger and many spotted cats, many birds of prey and parrots, all sea turtles and many other reptiles, the rhino, giant panda, certain plants, and other species, is prohibited. You can help stamp out poaching and illegal traffic by becoming aware of the potential for illegal trade. Be sure that wild plants and animals, or products made from them, that you buy are not endangered and are traded under proper permits. Keep an eye out for illegally imported wildlife and notify enforcement officials if you see any. Avoid