

supporting this amendment are critical. How the US government stands on this issue will undoubtedly influence many other CITES member-countries as they cast their votes.

Some final words about CITES. The point of CITES is to protect species whose survival is being, or might be threatened by international trade. The failure of CITES to end the illegal rhino-horn trade is now being used as an excuse to restructure the whole convention, making its goals as much to do with continuation of trade as the protection of the species. CITES has not failed the rhino. It is the poor implementation of CITES - the failure of the people who matter to carry out the democratically voted decisions and resolutions of the people who mind. CITES can be likened to a dam across a river of rhino trade, with conservationists and customs officers in the role of the beavers. The dam is well built and most of the flow has been stopped but every time one leak is plugged, another one - another smuggling route - appears. Leakage is now down to a trickle, but the rhino populations are so low that there is a drought of rhinos to feed the trade - because for years there were more leaks than there were new rhinos. But the leaks are being plugged faster now

that rhinos have become the issue of the moment. If we succeed, we will then need a long period during which the rhino trade is totally dammed, and the level of rhinos allowed to rise. And the last thing the rhino puddle needs now is a sluice-gate of legal trade. Otherwise the rhinos will run dry, and Sir Peter Scott's dire prediction will come true - and only a few years behind schedule.

MORE ON FORENSICS

A fascinating article on new scientific methods to catch poachers can be found in the Spring, 1993 issue of *ZooLife*.

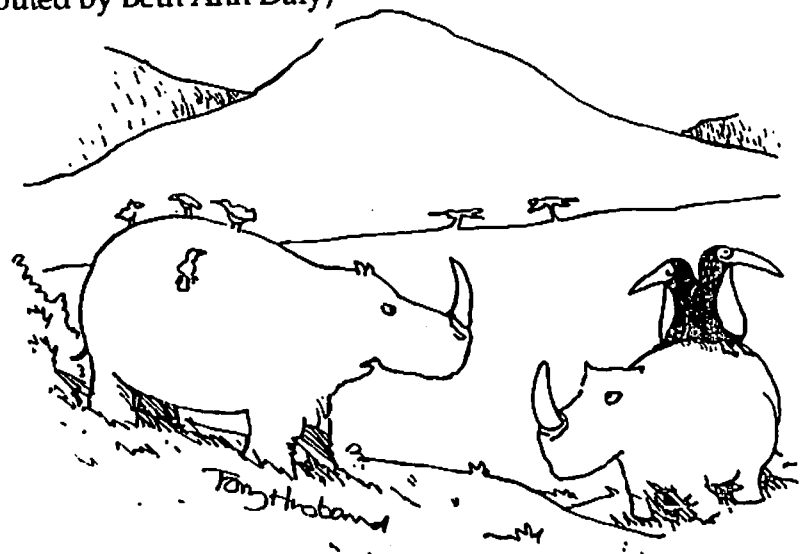
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon is highlighted. (see also the preceding article).

RHINO HUMOR

Q: Why did the rhino cross the road?

A: The chicken was on vacation!

(contributed by Beth Ann Daly)



"And where the hell have you been?"

A traveller going through customs in Africa was asked by the customs officer if he had anything to declare.

"No, nothing to declare," said the man.

"Are you sure about that?" asked the customs agent.

"Quite sure," replied the man.

Narrowing his eyes, the customs officer said, "What about that rhinoceros standing behind you with bread in his ears?"

"Sir," said the man indignantly: "What I put in my sandwiches is my own business." (contributed by Arthur Chandler)