

Good news from Esmond Bradley Martin!

The 1994 census of the rhinos in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park revealed an increase of about 100 animals from the approximately 365 counted in a 1988 survey. Since the late 1960s the population has increased by an estimated 5.6 percent per year on average. The reason for Nepal's rhino conservation success are simple: The federal government has fully supported rhino protection since Chitwan was established in 1973. Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, Nepal spends nearly \$2,250 per square mile on management and protection of Chitwan. Park earnings, which are mostly from tourism, roughly match these expenditures. Eight hundred soldiers of the Royal Nepali Army are posted in the park, and Forest Department personnel help guard rhinos that stray outside park boundaries. Assistant warden Tika Ram Adhikari says that "Giving rewards for information is the most cost-effective anti-poaching system." In 1993, \$3,500 was paid to informants, and 37 rhino poachers were caught and are awaiting trial. The International Trust for Nature Conservancy, based in the United Kingdom, is largely responsible for coordinating the funding for intelligence work.

Since the late 1970s, the local villagers have been receiving direct benefits from Chitwan. Each year for two weeks in January, tens of thousands of villagers are allowed to enter the park to collect grass and reeds with which to build and repair their houses - a benefit valued at about \$500,000 a year. In addition, if a rhino dies outside the park, staff remove the horn, hooves, and skins; then the villagers can help themselves to the blood, meat, and urine - all much in demand for traditional medicines. Officials hope that helping the people who live around the park will result in a more positive attitude toward the rhinos and that, instead of harboring poachers, the people will help safeguard their natural heritage. [*Wildlife Conservation*, 98:4, July / August, 1995, p.64]



Love the animals. God has given them the basis of thought and joy untroubled. Don't harass them. Don't deprive them of their happiness. Don't work against God's intent.

Dostoevsky

Does anyone know of any sports team which uses a rhino as a mascot, besides the San Jose Rhinos?

A one year subscription to *Really, Rhinos!* is \$15 (\$20 foreign) for four issues. 100% of each subscription is donated to rhino conservation projects. Send feedback or rhino citations to: Judyth Lessee, Editor, *Really, Rhinos!*, PO Box 40503, Tucson, AZ 85717-0503. Phone: (520) 327-9048. e-MAIL: rinophyl@rtd.com.

If you find errors, please know they are printed for those who always look for them. We try to print something for everybody.

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