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OCT 14 1980

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## ENDANGERED SPECIES TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Department of the Interior • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • Endangered Species Program, Washington, D.C. 20240

# Black Rhino Found Endangered

Hunted extensively for its valued horn, the African black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) has been determined by the Service to be an Endangered species (F.R. 7/14/80). Based on available data, the Service believes there may be fewer than 15,000 black rhinos remaining in the world.

One of five species of rhinoceroses occurring in Africa and Southeast Asia, the black rhino is the most numerous of the world's rhinos and yet appears dangerously threatened with extinction. In Kenya, probable losses over the last five to eight years have been figured at 95 percent of the black rhino population in Tsavo National Park, 85 percent in Amboseli, and over 90 percent of those that once survived in Meru National Park.

These dramatic losses are due primarily to trade in the species' parts and products. East African statistics on the legal export of rhino horn, which are carved into dagger handles or used in powdered form for medicinal purposes or as an aphrodisiac, show that 1.56 tons were exported annually from 1950-1971. From 1972-1976, legal exports jumped to 4.2 tons annually. In one instance, a single rhino horn reportedly sold for approximately \$15,000.

The biology of the black rhino may also be contributing to its demise. For a species that exists largely as solitary individuals at a naturally low density, the severe declines cause further problems by reducing the probabilities of reproduction. Also, the rhino is easy to stalk and those animals that are left show evidence of extreme disturbance in response to harassment.

The proposal to list the black rhinoceros (F.R. 10/1/79)—see the November 1979 BULLETIN) drew mainly



Photo by C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr.

*Kenya's Meru National Park, only two years ago considered a stronghold for the black rhino, is now home to less than 20 specimens.*

supportive comments. The only non-supporting comment came from Safari Club International, which recommended Threatened status for the species throughout most of its range except Kenya, where they agree the black rhino is Endangered. According to the Service, the black rhino is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range (the definition of Endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973). Listing this rhino as Endangered in parts of its range and Threatened in others would be inconsistent with the Act's intent.

Although the black rhinoceros is pro-

tected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (it is on Appendix I), listing under the Endangered Species Act will provide additional prohibitions against importing the species or its parts and products into the U.S., as well as restricting transportation or sale in interstate or foreign commerce. Listing under the Act will also allow the U.S. to provide, if requested, technical expertise for establishing management and recovery programs and funds to assist in the implementation of such programs by appropriate foreign governments.