SOUTH-EAST ASIAN RHINO CONSERVATION WORKSHOP BOGOR, INDONESIA -- OCTOBER 1 - 4

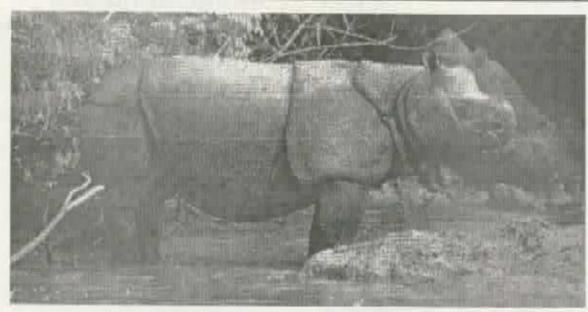


Photo by Charles Santipillal Tigetpaper, Vol. XVII-2, 1990

(Reported by Mond bin Mornin Khan, Chairman of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group at the SEA Zoos Conference as recorded by S. Walker)

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group held a specialised workshop for S.E. Asian rhinos (Javen and Sumatran) in Bogor, Indonesia immediately following the Captive Breeding Specialist Group meeting in Singapore.

The mandate for this meeting was information gathering as well as trying to secure agreement between the different governmental and non-governmental support groups interested in the two species of South East Asian Rhino. The Specialist Group functions in an advisory capacity only; final decisions on the conservation in the two S.E.Asian Rhinos is left to P.H.P.A., the Indonesian wildlife establishment.

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group is a part of the Species Burvival Commission of I.U.C.N., the World Conservation Union and deals with the three species of Asian Rhinos, that is the Great One-homed Rhino, the Sumatran Rhino and the Javan Rhino.

The Javan Rhino is the most endangered of the three and was thought to be found now in only in one area. Instead of 25 as according to the previous consus, there are 55 to 60 and the species is found to be still in existence in Vietnam and Laos.

An issue between thino enthusiasts has been that of capture for captive breeding with those for and against divided dramatically and often bitter criticism of the concept.

At this meeting, compromises could be reached without much disagreement and the atmosphere was generally positive. However, no agreement to capture Javan rhinos for captive propagation could come out of this meeting but a great deal of work was done. The Population Viability Analysis was completed. There was a paper presented on a photo survey of Uhulu Phulan National Park with photographs of 13 individuals and highlighting a new research method consisting of setting up trip-cameras at strategic points.

There was consensus on translocation however as all the rhinds are in one National Park. If was decided that there should be a second wild population and this should be established in three years.

The Sumatran rhino is not ac critically endangered as the Javan. There are about 1000 left in the wild — 420 in Indonesia, 50-100 in Sebha and 50-100 in Sarawak. For the Sumatran rhino there had been criticism of the plan to capture it but it was done anyway and now there are 25 Sumatran rhinos in captivity throughout the world. The animals at the Frangunan Zoo have bred and it is thought by the Director in Jakarta that conception has taken place. The P.V.A. has recommended that 150 should be in captivity to maximise the potential for success sof the breeding strategy. In general the P.V.A. (Population Viability Analysis) has become more reliable and people are beginning to accept it more.

At the meeting the gathering broke up into eleven Working Groups which looked at different areas of rhine management, such as translocation and reintroduction protocots, biology, ex-situ conservation (including housing, yards, diet, vaterinary care, etc.), Community relations, Conservation strategy, Monitoring, etc.

Editor's Note: Although Mr. S. Debroy, Addl. I.G., Wildlife from India had been invited as an advisor and participant, he was unable to attend due to ill health. There was, unfortunately, no representative from India at this meeting.