

Indian Supreme Court process. In November 2001 all logging was temporarily banned in the Islands as a result of a complaint lodged by several non-governmental organizations about timber extraction in a Tribal Reserve on Little Andaman. The Supreme Court appointed a one person Commission of Enquiry, consisting of Shekhar Singh of the IIPA, to investigate the state of conservation in the Islands and make management recommendations. In May 2002 the Supreme Court accepted and enacted into law 45 out of 47 of the Commission's recommendations, which drew heavily on the results of the 2001 Port Blair workshop. These included the closure of the Andaman Trunk Road that cuts through the Jarawa Tribal Reserve, the phased reduction of sand mining from beaches, the cessation of all commercial logging, and the removal of illegally settled forest encroachers. It is widely felt that the 2001 Port Blair workshop was instrumental in allowing the Supreme Court Commission to arrive so quickly at a decision, because it had already gathered all the key stakeholders together and allowed them to voice and discuss their opinions in an official public forum. This is an all-too-rare example of conservationists' recommendations becoming rapidly incorporated into legislation. It is hoped that non-governmental conservation organizations and the Forest and Wildlife Department will now be able to capitalize on the Supreme Court decision and pursue conservation initiatives in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands backed by strong legal support from the highest court in the land, in order to secure the biodiversity of these remarkable islands for future generations.

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Black rhino translocations into Malawi

In 1987 an optimistic estimate was given of 25 black rhinos *Diceros bicornis* occurring in Malawi, but in 1990 the species was officially declared extinct when Malawi's last black rhino was poached in Mwabwi Game Reserve. However, as reported in *Oryx* 32(1), 21 (1998), thanks to a project initiated by J&B Circle and supported by J&B Care for the Rare marketing campaign, a pair of black rhinos (Justerini and Brooks) were translocated from South Africa into Liwonde National Park in 1993. In June 1997 Justerini gave birth to a male calf Jet, and in September of the same year, Brooks broke out of the specially guarded and fenced Rhino Sanctuary into the main Park. He was recovered by the Kruger National Park capture team and returned to the sanctuary. This operation was again funded by J&B Circle and J&B Care

for the Rare. A further pair of black rhinos (Julia and Bentley) were brought into Liwonde in November 1998 and placed in an adjoining enclosure, and in the following year Justerini gave birth to her second male calf, Rydon.

A major set back in the project occurred when the fence between the two sanctuaries was removed in November 1999. The carcass of Brooks was discovered, probably killed by Bentley, around April 2000. Chimpanje and Chimwemwe, a breeding pair of black rhinos arrived in October 2000 and were placed in a third adjoining enclosure, and the aircraft that brought them in was utilized to send Jet to South Africa in order to forestall any further territorial fatalities.

The successful birth of Julia's first calf (as yet unsexed) in January 2001 was offset by another tragedy when the remains of Chimwemwe, containing a foetal calf, were discovered in May 2001. It is believed that her death was due to stress during translocation. However, Justerini gave birth to her third calf around October 2001, and Julia is expected to calve around April this year. Overall it is felt that thanks to the ready cooperation and assistance of several organizations and the dedicated work of a small number of volunteers, a valuable and viable breeding population of the Critically Endangered black rhino has been re-established in Malawi.

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Darwin project discovers pink-billed parrotfinches in Fiji

A new project funded by the Darwin Initiative (see <http://www.darwin.gov.uk>) has just discovered a new population of pink-billed parrotfinches *Erythrura kleinschmidti*, endemic to Fiji. So few parrotfinches have been seen in the last few years that BirdLife International and IUCN have classified it as globally Endangered (see <http://www.birdlife.net/species>). In 4 days of fieldwork in December 2002 the project recorded 1–2 birds on 11 occasions, more than were recorded in the whole of the preceding decade!

Fiji has 88 native breeding bird species, of which 57 are terrestrial species and 27 are endemic to Fiji. Of these, one is Critically Endangered, two are Endangered and eight are Vulnerable – 41% of the endemic species. The two main threats are alien invasive species and forest loss. Fiji is biogeographically intermediate between the larger, species-rich Melanesian islands and the small, depauperate Polynesian islands. Like Polynesia, Fiji lost many species to pre-historic predation by both humans