

trying to set up an International Tropical Rainforest Research Institute which will include the rare dolphins in its research, education campaign and direct action. In Brazil Robin Best and others are researching some of the problems and unknowns, but their research budgets are very small and decreasing. 'The Brazil Government apparently gives the problem very low priority. The Government of Peru has no programme of research on dolphin populations.'

### African Elephant and Rhino

At its meeting at Victoria Falls in September 1985 the Group decided that black rhino was its top concern. Even since 1981 numbers in all Africa are reckoned to be down by 50 per cent — from an estimated 8800 to under 4550; both the Luangwa and Selous populations have been hard hit by poaching. In 1981, at the Harare meeting, it had not been appreciated that the value of the horn would greatly increase and with it of course the incentives to poaching, writes the Chairman, Dr David Cumming, in *Pachyderm*.

The Group's newly appointed Scientific/Executive Officer, Raoul du Toit, is giving top priority to a re-examination of the black rhino subspecies, and a paper by him appears in the February issue. There is also a paper on rhino and elephant poaching trends in the Selous Game Reserve by Marcus Borner and E. Severre. Among the urgent requirements they list, in addition to tools, landrovers, etc., is the need for a management plan and the closure of the Tanzanian ivory market by withdrawing all carvers' licences. The Tanzanian Government has asked Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton to make a survey to assess the number of elephants, which are the poachers' main targets. One observer reports seeing on average 10 elephant carcasses every day.

Also in *Pachyderm* Clive Spinage writes on the rhinos of the Central African Republic — probably, he says, the least known country in Africa today, with large areas of savanna woodland still unexplored. But the situation for the black rhino is desperate. It is feared that the species will become extinct in the CAR in 1986', he writes, 'as the intensity of poaching by Sudanese horsemen, primarily in search of ivory, is at a level that can only be termed anarchic'.

R.D. Taylor examines the reasons for the failure of a white rhino introduction in the Matusadona National Park on the shore of Lake

Kariba in Zimbabwe. All five introduced animals died, in circumstances that suggested 'the strong possibility' of a trypanosomiasis infection.

### Asian Elephant

The new Chairman, Lyn de Alwis, produced the Group's first Newsletter in May, with a report on the Group meeting in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve, in India, in November 1985 and material on elephants in captivity. The Bandipur meeting passed 22 recommendations concerned among other things with preventing fragmentation of populations, preservation of habitat, elephant corridors, trade in ivory, the education of people in living with elephants, and also urging an Action Plan. One resolution urged the need to standardise census techniques.

### Equids

Last year, at the request of the SSC chairman, the African Equid Group Chairman, Dr Hans Klingel, agreed to take on the Asiatic species *Equus hemionus* as well, and it became the Equid Group. New group members and correspondents are now being sought, and nominations and suggestions are welcome. A questionnaire survey is being prepared.

In April, 1986, the Chairman spent a week in Ethiopia and visited the African wild ass areas in the Danakil desert. Excessive rainfall restricted his movements, but a number of wild ass were seen in the Tendaho-Sardo area. The (ungazetted) Yangudi Rasa National Park established for the sake of the wild ass, is still completely undeveloped but obviously utilized by graziers. Lack of funds prevented the group from undertaking any major projects.

### Otters

The Bulletin of the Group's European section has been expanded to cover the OSG as a whole and Number 1 appeared in May, edited by Chris Mason of the University of Essex, England.

Reports on seven European otter surveys are included. *Albania*: otters apparently widespread but gross pollution in some rivers and threats from agriculture and industry. *Denmark*: otters mainly in the north-west where the first otter haven has been established; a report has been sent to the appropriate Government departments on the need for excluders on fish traps. *Federal Republic of Germany*: otter signs have been confirmed in West Berlin. In Lower Saxony and