

REALLY, RHINOS!

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Zambian Protection Unit Nabs Suspected Poacher

[Focus, 12(6):1.5, N/D, 1990]

"As part of Zambia's renewed efforts to control illegal killing of wildlife, investigators from the Species Protection Department recently intercepted a man armed with a .375 caliber rifle who was known to ferry rhino poachers across Lake Kariba into nearby Zimbabwe. Black rhinos almost eradicated in Zambia by poaching, are at risk now by poachers crossing Lake Kariba into Zimbabwe to strike rhino populations there. Earlier this year, WWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service jointly pledge \$150,000 to support the new Special Protection Dept., part of Kenneth Kunda's effort to stop illegal wildlife killing and official corruption in Zambia as well as prevent the entry of poachers into neighboring countries. The Zambian investigators deployed in this unit are using four-wheel drive

vehicles, two-way radios, fuel, and field equipment supplied by WWF and FSW, increasing their mobility and ability to communicate over long distances and between countries." Anyone wishing to contribute to this effort can contact the World Wildlife Fund, 1250 Twenty-Fourth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

RHINO SHOCK!

[BBC Wildlife, July, 1990, Lucy Vigne & Esmond Bradley Martin]

"Poachers of greater one-horned rhinos in India's northeastern state of Assam have struck upon an altogether new way, both ingenious and crude, of killing their quarry, and one of the best hopes of ending this practice may lie with a group of illegal extremists. The United Liberation Front of ASSAM (ULFA) has warned poachers, some of whom have been killing rhinos by electrocuting them, that if they do not stop their assault on "the pride of Assam," they will be caught and murdered. Greater one-horned rhinos were given official

protection in India in 1910 and have since then grown steadily to about 1,500, with 1,250 in the Kaziranga National Park, the rest scattered among Manas and Pobitora wildlife sanctuaries and Orang Game Reserve. But the increase in rhinos has been nothing compared to the rise in the price of rhino horn - which now sells wholesale in Taiwan and Singapore at \$15,000 a kilogram and brings the poacher nearly half that. In a place as poor as Assam, that much money can make people desperate so poachers turned to electrocution. The sanctuaries have high voltage power lines running through them. To one of these lines, where it runs near a track used regularly by rhinos, poachers will hook the two ends of a long wire, which is then suspended about a metre above the ground. When a rhino which is usually using the track to reach nocturnal grazing in nearby paddy fields, touches the live wire, it receives an 11,000 volt shock. The animal struggles for about five minutes before it dies.

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