

Bowhunting Of White Rhino - Suffering Is Unacceptable

During the latter half of 1995, AROA took up the question of bowhunting of white rhino with both the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of the Northern Province. The response from the Chairman of PHASA was most encouraging. Based on the information regarding the unsuccessful hunting of a number of white rhino, the Association took the decision at their AGM to recommend that bowhunting of pachyderms cease until further investigations are carried out.

The Chairman of AROA was subsequently informed, in private conversation with a member of the Department of Environmental Affairs, that a moratorium would be placed on the bowhunting of pachyderms. However, to date, no official response has been received from the Department and a request for further information has been directed to the appropriate authority.

According to our information, seven rhinos were hunted during the course of 1995 - six unsuccessfully. One cannot place enough stress on the importance of recognising that this situation can impact negatively on the current status surrounding the legal trophy hunting of white rhino in South Africa.

At the next CITES conference due in mid 1997, this will be an important issue for rhino owners and we need to recognise that if bowhunting is to continue and that as a consequence, rhinos are to suffer, the situation will be totally unacceptable to both the local and international community.

It is hoped that a positive response will be forthcoming shortly.

New appointment at REF

The Rhino & Elephant Foundation is happy to announce the appointment of Monique Verduyn as Public Relations and Marketing Officer. Monique will be assisting Heather in the administrative work that is provided by REF for AROA and we look forward to providing members with newsletters and information on a more regular basis.

Wild Populations of Asian Rhino

The Honourable Richard Emslie, Scientific Officer of the African Rhino Specialist Group of the IUCN, reports that the Indian rhinoceros in India and Nepal is doing particularly well and that there are an estimated 1 974 Indian rhinos.

The Sumatran rhino population is believed to be 97, and Richard regards its future as rather bleak. This number is not surprising, considering that the Indonesian government needs an awful lot of convincing about the severity of the problem. The extent of government involvement and support for rhinoceros conservation is minimal. There are no fenced and protected rhino sanctuaries along the lines of the African model per se, and there are huge areas where no patrolling takes place at all. The Javan rhino too, is dangerously low at 31, with official estimates indicating that one rhino was being poached every year - according to the remains that were found. In reality, it is more likely that a quarter to a third of the carcasses of poached rhinos were never recovered.

One of the tasks of the Rhino & Elephant Foundation is to recognise the plight of all five of the world's rhinos. Through the publication of the REF newsletter and journal, we hope to inform readers of conservation efforts for these three species.

