

# REALLY RHINOS!

8:1, Spring, 1994

## NOTES From NANCY

Hello and Happy '94 to my rhino brothers and sisters everywhere. Judyth has asked me to keep you informed of Planet Rhino's activities. 1993 was both encouraging and frustrating for me as far as our horned friends go. The situation in Zimbabwe is horrendous! Rhinos are dying by the dozens and the local Campfire conservation projects just aren't proving effective enough. I met with Ambassador Midzi in Washington, D.C. He was receptive, yet reserved in his speculations for the future. The funds are very limited. Is a Zimbabwe Rhino Support Group far down the road? Let's hope so for the rhinos' sake. I encourage you to write to the Ambassador at: The Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, 1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009. Let him know we care!

Speaking of Zimbabwe, my good friend and mentor, Marlys Houck, a geneticist with C.R.E.S. in San Diego, recently returned from her sample-collecting journey there. She went out on de-horning runs with Michael Kock. While the rhinos were down, she'd collect skin samples and try to keep them sterile until freezing - not easy in the dusty African environs. She managed to collect a few,

however, and we're awaiting any new scientific evidence gained. She has already determined that the Zimbabwe Black Rhinos have much less genetic material to work with than Kenyan Blacks. All the more reason to fear for Zimbabwe's rhino future.

I visited Calvin Bentsen's Texas ranch in October. Calvin is not well-received by the AAZPA due to his love of hunting - but he and several other hunters have gotten together and formed Game Coin, a conservation group dedicated to helping the rhino, among other endangered species. Calvin feels that the current African environment is too dangerous for rhinos' well-being, and that breeding should be encouraged in zoos, parks and private ranches in safe territories. He has six Black Rhinos on his ranch now, from Zimbabwe and Kenya. They are breeding well within themselves and other captive populations and are extremely healthy on a varied diet, including the local Texas mesquite.

I visited San Diego Wild Animal Park during the recent fires. David Merner gave me an incredible "insider's tour" in the midst of all the chaos; firemen camped out on the grassy areas, helicopters flying overhead with gigantic buckets of water, ashes falling from the sky. The animals were remarkably calm however, and the baby Greater One-Horned was beautiful. Sadly, there were still no amorous events between the Northern

White Rhinos. (I am currently investigating the status of the Northern Whites in Czechoslovakia, since the recent dramatic political changes.)

I can't finish this report without mentioning the continual dedication and tireless work of Anna Merz and Andy Lodge, with Ngare Sergoi. These are two folks turning things around for the rhinos of Kenya. If you're not a member of the support group yet, well by all means sent \$15 and get in on the action. Contact Andy Lodge at the Ngare Sergoi Support Group, PO Box 29503, Columbus, OH 43229. He'll send you all sorts of neat information, including order form for great rhino stuff!

Finally, I want to recommend two excellent books. At the Hand of Man (Bonner) and Last Animals at the Zoo (Tudge).

Until we meet again, keep your rhino spirits high! If you have any remarks, drop me a line at Planet Rhino, Box 263 Jerome AZ 86331. I'd love to hear from you, or drop by the Old High School in Jerome and look for the rhinos! Ngufu kama ya kifarui!

*Nancy*