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became decimated. Today, about 650 kilos of rhino horn are used for medicinal purposes in China each year. In 1989, when China finally succumbed to the international pressure to register its existing stock of rhino horn, more than 10 tons of rhino horn was counted. So desperate are China's medicine factories for the precious horn, that they have begun buying up valuable antique rhino horn carvings to grind down into powder form to be used in medicines. On the positive side, some medicine companies are starting to use rhino horn substitutes on a limited basis. Also, the Chinese government has taken a step towards controlling the rhino horn medicine trade by requiring a permit in order to export it.

In Taiwan, where government rhino horn trade bans exist but are unenforced, Asian rhino horn is more sought-after than ever before. Wealthy Taiwanese are buying Asian horn for investment purposes and paying retail prices of up to \$60,000/kilo for it. A ray of hope can be found in the fact that in 1990, Taiwan finally registered its rhino horn stockpiles, and the current plan calls for limiting trade to registered stock over the next three years, and then banning all domestic trade completely after that.

The proverbial "bad boys" of rhino horn trade are South Korea and Thailand, where unregulated domestic and international trade still runs unchecked. In 1988, 80% of Asian medicine clinics in Seoul carried products containing rhino horn. South Korea refuses to register rhino horn stocks or to join CITES. Thailand, on the other hand, remains one of the leading rhino horn marketplaces despite being a party to CITES. Today, rhino products such as horn, skin, nails, penises, and dried blood are readily available in Bangkok.

It is obvious that although there have been many positive aspects in the world arena of rhino conservation recently, the state of the rhino today remains both a good and bad news story. Recent clampdowns on rhino horn exports out of Africa have put additional strain on the demand for horn from the three Asian species. This, combined with the belief that medicinal powers are more concentrated in the horns of the smaller Asian species, has led to skyrocketing prices paid for Asian horn on the black market. This, in turn, has led to a sudden increase in the incidences of poaching of previously stable populations of the greater one-horned rhino in India and Nepal. Poachers there have also developed more effective poaching methods, including electrocution with electric wires and poisoning. This tragedy points out why the key to effective

rhino conservation measure lies primarily in decreasing the demand for, rather than the supply of, rhino horn products.

[The information in this article was taken from Esmond Bradley Martin's keynote address at the San Diego Rhino Conference, and from a WWF Campaign Report entitled Stop the Rhino Horn Trade, April 1991.]

AAZPA ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF RHINO TAG

The Wildlife Conservation and Management Committee of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums recently approved the formation of a Taxon Advisory Group for rhinoceroses. TAGs are designed to provide coordination, structure and assistance to species survival plans. The Rhino TAG includes SSP programs for the greater one-horned, the eastern and southern subspecies of black, the southern white, and the Sumatran rhino.

Generally the objectives of the rhino TAG include:

- * establishing a regional management plan for rhinos which focuses on the efficient use of existing resources, the development of new resources, and the encouragement of effective relationships with other regional programs;
- * developing strategies for the support of *in situ* conservation efforts through increased communication and interaction among SSP institutions, range country managers, NGOs, and field scientists;
- * identifying research priorities and assisting in the development and implementation of an aggressive research program with specific objectives in those areas of greatest concern;
- * maintaining current information on the status of all captive and wild populations; and
- * assessing the implementation of the various rhino SSP masterplans and providing assistance wherever possible.

While not yet complete, the membership of the Rhino TAG will include the species coordinators and regional studbook keepers, and specialists from the zoo, field, and academic communities. Additional advisors will be appointed for specific projects. The Chairman of the group is Robert Reece, species coordinator for the white rhino SSP.

In the near future, the Rhino TAG intends to address (jointly with the Captive Breeding Specialist Group) the black rhino subspecies issue, and a number of husbandry and management issues for both black and white rhinos. Additionally, the group will begin to examine research requirements, specifically in the areas of reproduction and health, since both are crucial to the development and maintenance of a captive self-sustaining population. The reproductive physiology of rhinos has not been fully studied and the development of technology in this area is seen as essential to the future use of germplasm transfer as a tool for the genetic management of controlled populations.

The initial meeting of the Global Captive Action Plan Group for rhino will occur during the CBSG sessions in Singapore on 27-29 September, 1991. The purpose of the Group is to review all rhino taxa and recommend global priorities for captive propagation, *in situ* programs, and research projects.

An Indonesian Rhino Conservation Workshop will be conducted in Bogor on 3-5 October, 1991. The purpose is to continue development of conservation action plans for the Sumatran and Javan rhinos in Indonesia. It will continue the process initiated at the June, 1989 Javan Rhino PVA Workshop.

SUMATRAN RHINO GLOBAL PROPAGATION GROUP MEETS

The first meeting of the Global Propagation Group for the Sumatran rhino was convened in conjunction with the International Rhino Conference in San Diego. Attending were representatives of the four countries and eight of the eleven facilities maintaining captive specimens.

The purpose of the session was to review and advance the captive propagation program as part of the conservation strategy and action plan for this species. It was noted that since 1984, 32 Sumatran rhino have been captured and placed in participating institutions. A review of the mortality data indicated that nine animals have died from a variety of causes; however, the death rate has continuously declined over the years and no rhinos have died since 1989.

During the meeting, an institution by institution and animal by animal review of the captive population was conducted. Breeding activity in the United Kingdom and in Jakarta was described as were plans by the other regions to optimize reproductive opportunities. Generally, reproduction has been impeded by a lack of mature males.

Representatives also agreed to intensify efforts to investigate possible subspecies distinctions and to organize a working research group to improve cooperation and coordination among scientists in several countries.

SUMMARY OF SUMATRAN RHINO CAPTIVE PROGRAMS - 1984 TO 1991

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>CAPTURED</u>	<u>BORN</u>	<u>IMPORTED</u>	<u>EXPORTED</u>	<u>DIED</u>	<u>ALIVE</u>
P. MALAYSIA	2/9	0/1	1/0	0/2	2/2	1/6
SABAH	4/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/0	2/1
INDONESIA	6/10	0/0	0/1	3/5	0/1	3/5
THAILAND	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/1	0/0
U.K.	0/0	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/1	1/1
<u>U.S.A.</u>	<u>0/0</u>	<u>0/0</u>	<u>1/3</u>	<u>0/0</u>	<u>0/0</u>	<u>1/3</u>
TOTAL	12/20	0/1	3/7	3/7	4/5	8/16