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Conference Reports

Energy and Equity

The Australian/New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) held its meeting at Brisbane, Australia, during the period 11-15 May 1981. The general theme of the Conference was Energy and Equity.

Readers of *The Environmentalist*, will have special interest in the topics discussed by Section 40 (Environmental Studies) of the Conference, which was under the presidency of Professor G. H. Taylor, Centre for Resources and Environmental Studies, Australian National University. The topic areas discussed at the meeting were

- (1) Policies and realities in environmental management
- (2) Social aspects of mining development
- (3) Environmental pollution and health
- (4) Management of tropical ecosystems

The joint secretaries of Section 40 were: Dr R W Simpson, School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD 4111, and Mr D S Kells, Department of Biology and Environmental Sciences, Queensland Institute of Technology, GPO Box 2434, Brisbane, QLD 4001.

The next annual ANZAAS will be at Macquarie University, Sydney, 10-14 May 1982.

Zimbabwe Meeting Urges Rhino, Elephant Conservation Measures

African and international wildlife specialists meeting in Zimbabwe have called for urgent efforts to build up a breeding nucleus of northern white rhinos to safeguard the animal from extinction in the wild through hunting for its horn.

The meeting was convened from 30 July to 7 August by the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), under the sponsorship of WWF. It estimated that fewer than 700 northern white rhinos survive in the wild with almost all in Sudan and northern Zaire.

It suggested that a small breeding herd at the Dvur Kralove Zoo in Czechoslovakia and a group at San Diego in the United States be built up to guard against extinction of this form of rhino. Meanwhile, protection of the wild survivors must be stepped up, the meeting declared.

The meeting heard that there are now nearly 3,000 of the other subspecies, the southern white rhino, which was considered extinct until a few were found and protected in Natal. There are over 2,500 in South Africa and more than 300 in other

countries in the region, apart from a considerable number sent to zoos in other parts of the world.

Dr. David Cumming, chief ecologist of Zimbabwe's parks and wildlife department, who chaired the meeting, said that the success in saving the southern white rhino showed that dedicated efforts now could certainly save the northern form from extinction.

World Wildlife Fund and IUCN have long been active in rhino conservation. WWF has raised funds through international campaigns for vehicles, aircraft, radios and other equipment for anti-poaching units and wildlife management; funds for the establishment of guard posts and reserve demarcation, and for translocation of animals to reserves; carrying out of wildlife status surveys and monitoring; and provision of equipment for public education in conservation, especially of young people.

The meeting also reviewed the status of the African elephant. It was agreed that the population in areas in which accurate surveys have been conducted is approximately 600,000. The number of elephants occupying the remaining, unsurveyed elephant range is not known, but could be anything from a further 500,000 to over a million. Although these may

*Courtesy of WWF/IUCN Information Service.

appear to be large numbers, it is agreed that elephant populations are declining fast.

Elephant specialists pointed out the difficulty of assessing numbers in tropical forests and recommended that a survey of the central African basin should have top priority because the area is thought to contain a high proportion of Africa's elephants. In recommending enhanced protection of elephants throughout their range in 34 countries south of the Sahara, the meeting emphasised the need for urgent measures to save elephants in West Africa, where they survive in fragmented and beleaguered populations, with the largest numbers in Ivory Coast and Liberia.

Dr. Cumming said: "There will inevitably be a continuing reduction in the number of Africa's elephants as a result of increasing human population and the demand for land. The key issue is to focus on conservation of elephants in a wide range of habitats throughout the continent. This is why we stressed the importance of the West African governments to what land and habitat should be conserved before their options are closed".

The meeting also reviewed the trade in ivory and rhino horn. It declared that the trade in horn should be halted if rhinos are to survive. Countries with stocks of horn were urged to examine whether these stocks should be destroyed. In the case of ivory it was stressed that the trade must be controlled by universal adherence to, and implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES). Over 70 countries are now party to the Convention, but several countries involved in ivory trade, including major exporters like Congo, Sudan and Ivory Coast, have yet to join.

The meeting, which included scientists, wildlife managers and other specialists, drew up recommendations for elephant and rhino conservation measures based on the biological importance of the various populations and the areas they live in, their current conservation status, and existing and future economic and human population pressures.

"Although so much has to be done all over Africa, our meeting has

identified a small set of priorities which require strong and immediate action", Dr. Cumming stated.

"There is no doubt that the northern white rhino in Sudan and Zaire is in an extremely precarious position. But the black rhino is declining at an alarming rate, and the major focus for action is to arrest the trade in rhino horn, as well as to secure key black rhino populations in Tanzania and in the Luangwa valley in Zambia".

The meeting was addressed by

Zimbabwe's Minister for Natural Resources and Water Development, Mr. Joseph Msika, who stressed the importance of conservation for economic development. He said that Zimbabwe regarded wildlife as a natural resource to be protected, preserved and used wisely. Expressing "considerable alarm" over the threat to the rhino in Africa, Mr. Msika said that there was a healthy population in Zimbabwe, but the threat from poachers was growing.

Summary of National Environmental Training Association: 3rd National Workshop and Conference

The National Environmental Training Association (NETA), an association of professional environmental trainers, held its Third National Workshop & Conference at Seattle, Washington, on 9-12 August, 1981. The conference theme, "Training the Environmental Trainer for this Decade", set the tone for the programme, which included workshop sessions to improve the technical and instructional skills of the environmental trainer.

The keynote address, entitled "Where do we go from here?", was delivered by Walter G. Gilbert, Director of the US Environmental Protection Agency's National Training and Operational Technology Center located in Cincinnati, Ohio. The address discussed the challenges posed to environmental trainers by the US government's reduction or elimination of funds for environmental training. Responses to Mr Gilbert's address were presented by George A. Kinias, Executive-Director of the National Environmental Training Association (NETA), Daniel J. Campbell, President of Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) and William R. Hill, Chairman of Joint Training Coordinating Committee (JTCC). Each response discussed how each organization is planning to meet these challenges.

The conference portion of the program included updates from several national and international associations concerned with the environment, including: Federation of As-

sociations on the Canadian Environment (FACE), American Water Works Association (AWWA), Water Pollution Control Federation (WPCF), Governmental Refuse Collection & Disposal Association (GRCDA) and American Public Works Association (APWA).

Topics of the workshop sessions included: "Systematic training models", "Development of the testing tool", "Self-evaluating your training facility & delivery system", "Selection and development of training materials", "The Evaluation tool", and "Training and test development", among others. Copies of the proceedings for the 1981 conference may be purchased from:

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SCOPE

Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment

A workshop on "Effects of pollution on ecosystems" was held in London, September 1981. This was organized by the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE). The result of this workshop will be a book on ecotoxicology. SCOPE is doing some pioneering work in this field.