

Rehabilitation of greater one horned rhinoceros calves in Assam, India

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For the first time in the history of rhino conservation in India, ten rescued orphan greater one-horned rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) calves have been rehabilitated Assam, India and contributed to the rhino conservation in India. Of the ten rhinos rehabilitated, eight were in Manas National Park and two in Kaziranga National Park, both World Heritage Sites in India. The source of all the 1-5 months old rhino calves was Kaziranga National Park (NP), rescued under various circumstances. The calves were hand-reared at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) established to deal with wildlife emergencies and displacements in the state. As per the rhino rehabilitation protocol that was prepared in 2004 and constantly updated, the calves were milk-fed till 18 months of age, and then held in large stockades till they turned 3 years of age. Eleven of them were translocated to the release site Manas NP, about 500 km away from Kaziranga, and accommodated in a pre-release power-fenced boma of 600 acres. The acclimatized rhinos were then released after about two years, during which period no supplementary feeding was resorted provided. Only the vegetation inside the boma was managed, primarily by cutting and/or burning tall grasses in order to encourage sprouting of new grass. The calves were radio-monitored for two years and established their own home ranges. The rhino rehabilitation project and the subsequent India Rhino Vision 2020 project successfully brought rhinos back to Manas after a gap of about 25 years. Three of the released rhinos have so far given birth to five calves, with the inter-calving interval being just 2 years and 2 months, perhaps the shortest ever recorded inter-calving interval for the greater one-horned rhinoceros in the wild. Besides these soft-released rhinos, two hand-raised male rhinos were hard-released in 2015 in Kaziranga National Park itself. The successful establishment of these two orphan males in a densely rhino populated park like Kaziranga, has shown that orphan rhinos can also be hard-released as well.

Rejuvenation camps for captive elephants –A novel and unique conservation strategy for the isolated captive elephants in the state of Tamil Nadu, India

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India has a very long tradition of rearing elephants in captivity for various purposes. The Tamil Nadu state in India is one among the south Indian states that has an ancient tradition of rearing elephants in Hindu temples as a part of performing temple rituals. This type of activity is considered as an important conservation strategy through which the elephants are respected and thereby protected for hundreds of years. As poaching of tuskers is a major concern for saving this wild species from extinction during recent years, protective measures in the form of captive breeding has become imperative in saving this species from extinction. Tamil Nadu forest department has a several century old practice of establishing elephant camps for various forestry purposes and has a long history of successful captive breeding programs. This practice helps to protect the potential breeding population, especially tuskers for their long term survival which otherwise faced the threat of extinction in the wild. Unlike the camp elephants of the forest