EDITORIAL

Researching Rhinos *in the Library*

KEES ROOKMAAKER · RHINO RESOURCE CENTER · CO-EDITOR, *ASIAN RHINOS* NO. 3 (2000)

Rather than answer our questions, Kees sent an essay — which is exactly what we hoped the bulletin's historian would do. It begins fifty years ago, in the Artis Library in Amsterdam:

"On Wednesday afternoon, when there were no classes, I was allowed to spend time in the Artis Library... Here I was surrounded by all the great books of the past. It did not take long before I had to decide that a serious choice was needed, as my life would not be long enough to read everything on offer... What could really be better than the rhinoceros, with five living species, three in Asia, two in Africa. With the enthusiasm and naivete of youth, I somehow thought that I could wade my way through the accumulated wealth of knowledge in a few years. Rhinos are too ponderous to allow such quick fixes though."

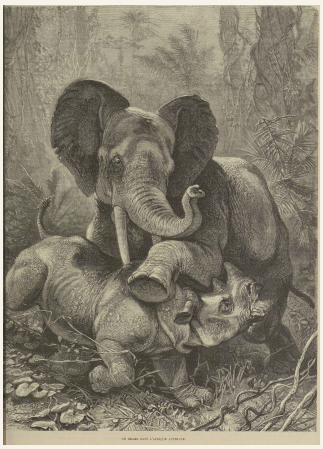
"At the start of the millennium... I was encouraged by Nico van Strien, who studied the rhinoceros in the Indonesian field and who had a great understanding of the value of older publications. Nico engaged the help of his son Willem to build a website needed for global access. In 2003 the Rhino Resource Center was born. The RRC now has over 30,000 references and over 7,500 images. We add about 3 items every day of the year."

On this bulletin: "At the turn of the century, Nico van Strien and Tom Foose wanted to put together a newsletter with all the latest news from the field. They asked me to join their team for the 3rd issue of 2000. That would be the last for some time... This then must be a call to everybody working with rhinos, especially in the range states, to write about any developments as they happen. A newsletter is a far more permanent venue than a picture or blog on social media."

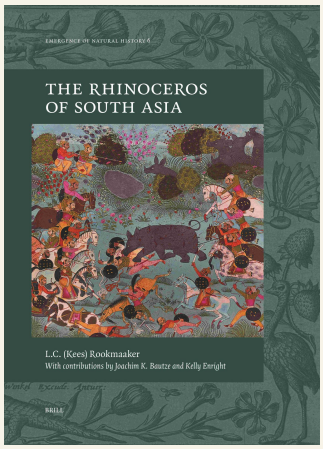
And on his magnum opus, The Rhinoceros of South Asia (Brill, 2024; 890 pages, 707 figures, 3,081 bibliography items): "Some reviewers have stressed that the book is too expensive for individuals. How did they overlook that the book is available on the publisher's website, to view, to read, to download — entirely free for everybody anywhere in the world." (doi.org/10.1163/9789004691544)



Kees Rookmaaker in the Artis Library
25 June 2026



Chasse Illustrée, 20 October 1881
"yes, 2 horns, but distinctly GOHR?"



The Rhinoceros of South Asia (Brill, 2024)
free to read and download at the publisher's site.