



## NEWSLETTER '91 SEPTEMBER VOL. 5 No 1.

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## VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As Nicholas is away this month having a well earned holiday in England with his family, it is my pleasure to write a report in his absence.

I thought I would take this opportunity of thanking Nicholas on behalf of all the Executive and Members of SAVE for his tireless work. Many hours are spent, not to mention his own money, helping this worthy cause. I did officially thank him at our A.G.M., however, I felt this exposure was also deserved.

At the A.G.M. our new Executive Committee was elected, Nicholas Duncan President, Marion Bowers Vice-President, Steve Deacon Treasurer, Cheryl Davenport Secretary and Kerry Parsons General Duties. Congratulations to ALL.

Since our last Newsletter many things have been discussed by the Committee in relation to functions and fund-raising and, in fact, one of our major fund-raisers for the year comes up at the end of September, THE ROYAL SHOW. Hopefully, even in these difficult times we will find the public sympathetic to the cause. Our new coloured T-shirts and sweatshirts have certainly taken off well and will, I hope, be the usual best seller at the Show. Tim Scarrott, our best T-shirt seller assures me our new range

will break all past records. Tim keeps a supply in his car and manages to sell them all year round. Thank you, Tim.

The Victorian SAVE Branch held it's inaugural meeting in July. Miss Susan Penicuk is hoping to create another keen group of helpers and many new members. Good luck, Sue.

After the Royal Show, we are hoping to organise a function for early November. We will keep you posted on the where and when and look forward to your support.

Marion Bowers.

VICE PRESIDENT

## UPDATE ON HORN TRADE IN ASIA

Since 1987 when CITES passed a resolution urging Asian countries to introduce laws prohibiting trade in rhino products, both Hong Kong and Macau have taken action to stop domestic trade, and even Taiwan has taken some steps in that direction. Unfortunately South Korea, one of the main commercial centres for rhino horn and hide products, has shown considerably less enthusiasm to restrict its flourishing trade.



*Nicholas cautiously approaching his favourite group of "friends".*

# SOARING HORN PRICES IN TAIWAN

Although not recognised by the UN and therefore not eligible to accede to CITES, the Taiwan Government has nevertheless taken some action to control trade in rhino parts. Trading without express permission from the authorities has been banned, and registration of rhino horn and ivory is required by law.

Though official figures are not yet available, the number of companies registering possession of horn and powder (386 companies owning a total of 1415 kg of horn and powder) provided ample evidence that the product is still very popular.

It is unlikely that all rhino stocks in Taiwan have been registered, and

equally unlikely that the majority of horn found in Taiwan has been lawfully acquired, as traders have openly admitted that rhino horn was, and still is, being smuggled in by air and sea.

Taiwan is also moving towards legislation regulating the use of horn in manufactured medical products, with new laws in 1986 calling for manufacturers to register their stocks. According to the Bureau of Drug Control, no companies have done so, but most rhino parts are marketed in unprocessed form through clinics. Although domestic trade in rhino horn is illegal under the Wildlife Conservation Law, no action is currently taken to enforce the law.

Despite these developments, smuggling continued throughout last year,

with Taiwanese Customs confiscating 9 rhino horns in a shipment that arrived via Hong Kong in July. In September 3 Taiwanese nationals were arrested in South Africa with 110 horns in their possession, and another 40 horns have reportedly been sent to Taiwan. In December another 28 kg of horn was found in a crate shipped from Zambia. A number of public burnings took place during the year to publicise the bans.

It is not clear whether Taiwanese traders are buying horn for domestic markets or for export, but Taiwanese consumers are paying some of the highest prices in the world. African horn was selling in Taipei last year for US\$4221 a kg and Asian horn for US\$54,040 a kg retail.

## DRASTIC DROP IN HONG KONG TRADE

From 1976, when Hong Kong became a member of CITES, the use of licences for possession of rhino parts was introduced, and all horns and hides had to be registered. Imports were prohibited but registered stock could still be exported until 1986, while internal trade remained legal until prohibited in 1988. Possession licences were extended to cover rhino carvings, antiques and trophies, and in 1989 all avenues of trade in rhino products were closed with the introduction of a new law banning the import, export and domestic sale of traditional medicine containing, or claiming to contain, rhino ingredients.

In March last year, Esmond Bradley Martin co-ordinated a survey to test the effectiveness of these bans and, using a Chinese interpreter, found that of 65 medicine shops and several wholesale establishments only 5% offered rhino horn, a significant decrease from 1987 when 32% offered the horn. Dealers, well aware of the new laws, said they would now only sell clandestinely to well-known customers.

Martin found that prices had also dropped by 20%, suggesting a decline in demand for rhino horn, which has in part been replaced by Saiga Antelope horn.

Although there is evidence that some dealers are still exporting stock illegally,

mainly in China, Taiwan, and possibly South Korea, the survey seems to confirm that the Hong Kong ban is working, and that some manufacturers of medicine are altering their products to exclude rhino horn and use Saiga Antelope, Water Buffalo and cattle horns instead.

### MACAU LAWS EFFECTIVE

As a Portuguese territory, Macau has been a member of CITES since 1981, when Portugal joined the organisation, and the island has banned all internal sales of rhino parts since 1988. The effect of the law has been quite remarkable: In 1987 65% of medicine shops featured rhino horn, while three years later the figure had dropped to 7%, the sale figures applying to hide products. Martin learned during the 1990 survey, however, that large quantities of rhino horn were sold to a number of East Asian countries in 1988.

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# NEW SOUTH AFRICAN MOVE IN BLACK RHINO CONSERVATION

The following is an extract reproduced courtesy of the *Rhino and Elephant Journal*, Vol. 5, June 1991.

On 18 June 1990, a founder population of black rhinos — two bulls and three cows — were auctioned by the Natal Parks Board, which realised a sum of R2.2 million, the highest price ever paid for the species by Mr. Dale Parker, the owner of Lapalala Wilderness, and it means that the black rhino today is worth more alive than dead. In addition, the sale has provided the Natal Parks Board with important funding for various conservation programmes.

Lapalala Wilderness, a 24,400 ha sanctuary in the Waterberg mountains of the north-west Transvaal, was one of eight private game reserves that had applied to the Natal Parks Board for classification as suitable for the introduction of black rhino. An area of approximately 10,000 ha was selected for the black rhino introduction. The entire reserve area, covering approximately 100 square kilometres, is encircled with an 18-strand game fence over a dis-

tance of approximately 45 kilometres. Five game scouts have been appointed to control the area, which amounts to one scout for every 20 square kilometres.

The topography of Lapalala Wilderness consists of densely bushed slopes, hills, plateaus and valleys, with the Blackland River running from south to north; this is a tributary of the Lephalala River, providing an excellent source of water. The entire area is surrounded by some 75,000 ha of wild country, devoted entirely to conservation.

The rhinos left Natal on 8 August, 1990, arriving at Lapalala the next day after a journey of some 15 hours in the Natal Parks Board's 18 wheeler rhino transporter, drawn by a powerful MAN Diesel Horse lent to the Board for the occasion. The operation was under the control of Aple Strauss and veterinarian Pete Rogers. Offloading into a newly-built bomas proceeded smoothly and heralded the return of the black rhino after an absence of more than 100 years.

The final release of the rhinos into the 10,000 ha sanctuary commenced on 3

December, 1990, after eighteen weeks in the bomas. Previously about four weeks was considered suitable, but extremely late rains had resulted in poor veld conditions and the decision was taken to hold the rhinos for a protracted period. A number of rhino specialists consulted unanimously, confirmed the wisdom of holding the rhino back, regardless of cost, as the risk was high.

The protracted confinement resulted in all five rhinos calming down extremely well, which resulted in releases proceeding easily over a period of 10 days, one animal being released every 48 hours. No problems were experienced whatsoever and all five rhinos have settled in well; the two bulls selecting well separated locations. Two of the cows have been seen together on a number of occasions and the youngest, at seven years old, is very settled in the presence of people in vehicles, which has provided wonderful viewing for visitors to the reserve's exclusive lodge. The other four rhinos have reverted to type and are extremely shy.

## SOUTH KOREA LAGS BEHIND

South Korea is not a member of CITES, although authorities have said for the last five years that the country intends to join the organisation. It is a major destination for rhino horn, and recent surveys reveal record quantities of horn products on sale in Seoul. The price of horn, US\$4410 a kg, has risen to three times its normal level.

Although rhino horn was prohibited as an ingredient in manufactured medicine in 1983, and there has been a total ban on imports since 1986, Korean authorities have never conducted a registration of existing stocks and have not forbidden domestic trade in rhino horn.

After a press conference was held in Seoul to present the results of last year's survey, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs immediately wrote to Oriental medicine associations urging doctors to refrain from using the product in

medicines, but has no intention of introducing registration to monitor the situation.

As long as South Korea lags behind other Asian countries in its control of horn, it is likely to remain a major market, and may even become the most

lucrative market as restrictions are tightened in Taiwan and other countries.

(Summarised from a report by Tom Milliken, Esmond Bradley Martin and Kristin Nowell in *TRAFFIC Bulletin* Vol. 12, Nos 1/2, 1991).

## DEHORNED RHINOS THRIVING IN NAMIBIA

According to the Namibian Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism, a second rhino dehorning operation has been successfully carried out on a number of Black Rhino as part of a strategy to protect the species from poaching.

The first dehorning programme was undertaken in 1989, while other measures include anti-poaching pa-

trols and the translocation of threatened animals to safer areas.

The animals dehorned in the 1989 operation do not seem to have been adversely affected. Two calves have since been born, and dehorned rhinos have been seen mating. A dehorned calf is also progressing well.

(Summaries from reports in *TRAFFIC Bulletin* Vol. 12 Nos. 1/2 1991)

# SHOULD TRADE IN HORN BE LEGALISED?

Many experienced conservationists believe that banning trade in rhino horn has failed, and will continue to fail, to save the rhino from extinction. They are convinced that the only way to save the rhino (and elephant) is by looking at ways to legalise trade in animal products and so gain the support of tribespeople living on the borders of national parks.

In the thought-provoking article "Legalise the horn of Africa?" in the June issue of the South African publication 'The Rhino and Elephant Journal', Clive Walker puts forward the view that the combined efforts of the World Life Fund for Nature and other organisations do not appear to have been successful.

Is it realistic to think that we can persuade the consumers of Asia to change traditions that have existed for hundreds of years.

Clearly, says Clive Walker, killing poachers is not the solution, as the rewards of rhino poaching are obvi-

ously worth risking death for. When one is dealing with people whose priority is survival, not conservation, then surely the way to go is to bring the poachers on side by improving their own situation.

He quotes an article in the Endangered Wildlife Trust Journal of June 1990, in which economist Mike 't Sas-Rolfes says:

"With a legal market for rhino goods, most other problems could be resolved. The park boards could auction off supplies of horn collected in the past. Small amounts could be sold at a time, to keep the market partially satisfied while gaining maximum prices (it would be foolish to attempt to 'flood' a market of that size about which relatively little is known). This would facilitate the gradual commencement of rhino horn production."

"... An unrestricted market in rhino goods and services would provide society with an optimum number of live rhinos in game reserves, rhino horns and rhino trophies. All that is required is a legalised market and the recognition

and protection of private property rights to rhino's by government."

Clive Walker's argument is that 70 per cent of all rhino on the African continent are under protection in South Africa, including 20% of all black rhino. In other words the population is in good enough shape for sustainable use to be made of it. Many white rhino are legally shot as hunting trophies, and others die from natural mortality. If the horns from these animals were legally traded, the profits could be ploughed back into rhino protection and management.

He suggests that discussions should be held with sellers in the Far East, with a view to establishing direct legal and controlled marketing links which could eventually do away with middlemen and poachers. All proceeds of trade would go to conservation.

Clive Walker's argument is more or less the same as that being presented by Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa in support of their right to continue selling ivory to raise funds to protect wildlife and assist local tribespeople.

What do you think?

## ROYAL SHOW HELPERS

Help is needed to set up the stand on Friday 27 September between the hours of 12 noon and 5pm, and on Sunday 6 October for dismantling at 10.00am.

Anybody handy with a hammer and able to lift and carry please phone 444 6550.

Also if anyone is interested and can spare a few hours during the Show — a roster will be set up. Phone 444 6550 — we will take names and let you know if we need you. It is important to stick to the time of the roster, otherwise we end up with too many helpers at one time and none at another.

## CONSERVATIONISTS ALL AT SEA?

The Elephant Protection Group in the United Kingdom, using public subscription, last October launched its first sea-going patrol boat, Tusk, which was sent to Tanzania. Well, we are all aware that loss of habitat is one of the reasons for the declining elephant population. I didn't realise, however, that the elephants of Tanzania had been driven

into the sea! Officially, the reason for the launch of this boat was to patrol the Tanzanian coastline to intercept ivory smugglers. Rather like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted, don't you think?

(Reproduced courtesy of the Rhino and Elephant Journal, Vol. 5 June 1991)

## — STOP PRESS —

### T-SHIRTS

Don't forget our new range  
**\$22.00**  
Assorted colours.

### DINNER

Perhaps early November.  
A dinner with an African theme.