

OVERVIEW OF AsRSG, NEW STRUCTURE & FUNCTION

MOHD KHAN, CHAIRMAN ASIAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP

- The IUCN Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) has adopted a more activist role in rhino conservation rather than just its advisory function that previously characterized IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups.
- This activism includes coordination of and fund-raising for rhino conservation programs. These functions are already well underway in S.E. Asia.
- Toward this goal, AsRSG is concentrating on function and cost effective activities. Hence, AsRSG is emphasizing a more regional structure and function.
- The structure of AsRSG has evolved to facilitate effective action:
 - There is an overall Chair: **Myself, Mr. Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan**
 - There are two **Deputy Chairs**:
Mr. S.C. Dey for India and Nepal, and
Drs. Effendy Sumardja for S.E. Asia.
- There are also now **Principal Range State Representatives** for the five countries where significant populations of Asian rhino species still survive:
 - India - **Mr. P. Lahan**
 - Nepal - **Dr. Thirta Maskey**
 - Malaysia - **Mr. Musa Nordin**
 - Indonesia - **Mr. Sulaiman Kesumahnegara** (replacing Mr. Heru Basuki Sukiran, feb' 2000)
 - Vietnam - **Dr. Nguyen Xuan Dang**
- Recent evidence suggests that Sumatran rhino may survive in appreciable number in southern Thailand on the border with Malaysia. Hence, AsRSG may add a **Principal Range State Representative** for Thailand.
- Finally, there are also two very active **Program Officers**:
 - **Dr. Tom Foose**, and
 - **Dr. Nico van Strien**
- The Chair, Deputy Chair, Program Officers, and Principal Range State Representatives will constitute an **Executive Committee**. The functions of this Executive Committee will evolve and hopefully, later in this meeting, there will be discussions of useful activities for India and Nepal. AsRSG has also significantly expanded in size, now including over 60 members in an endeavor to involve everyone who is significantly involved in Asian rhino conservation. Later in this meeting, there will be a discussion of possible additional members from India and Nepal.
- Also towards more concentrated and effective activity, AsRSG has decided to conduct regional rather than plenary meetings. This meeting in Kaziranga for the India and Nepal region is the first such session. Only the Chair, Deputy Chairs, Program Officers, and members of AsRSG for the region will attend the regional meetings. Next year, there is expected to be a regional meeting for S.E. Asia, possibly in Vietnam.

PAPERS PRESENTED

- Finally, AsRSG intends to resume publication of its newsletter **ASIAN RHINOS** by early 2000. One very important function for the Principal Range State Representatives is to provide the Program Officers with material for the newsletter.

