

NORTH YEMEN NOW TAKES ONE HALF OF ALL RHINO HORN

The North Yemen Government outlawed all imports of rhino horn on 22 August 1982. Esmond Bradley Martin, on behalf of the African Wildlife Foundation, recently visited North Yemen and found that more than 50% of the rhino horn available each year on the world market was being exported to North Yemen, as opposed to 40% six years ago, and despite the official ban.

The horn comes mainly from Khartoum, even though Sudan is a signatory to the CITES Agreement. North Yemeni and Sudanese traders bring the 'black gold' through Sana'a Customs, often in their hand baggage. Some customs officials say they do not know about the ban. Smuggling of many goods is rife and uncontrollable in North Yemen. Esmond Bradley Martin states that all customs officers should at least be told about the ban, and asked to enforce it.

Craftsmen carve the horn into elaborate traditional dagger handles for North Yemeni men. Dealers collect the horn shavings and export them to the Orient for medicine. Banning this secondary trade, Esmond Bradley Martin suggests, would help lower the demand and threat to the rhino.

The population of North Yemen is increasing and given that 7.75% of males from the age of 12 require and can afford new rhino-horn dagger handles, two tonnes of horn a year are needed to meet the demand, excluding that from the 24,000 tourists to North Yemen who may be offered daggers as souvenirs. The media should impress upon the newly rich Yemenis and on the tourist trade the endangered state of the rhino.

The most effective measure which should be taken against the trade, however, would be stricter control on exports from source countries, especially via the Khartoum connection, Esmond Bradley Martin states.

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AERIAL SURVEY ANALYSIS COMPUTER PROGRAMME

There has been a need for some years for a simple programme for the analysis of systematic aerial reconnaissance surveys available to wildlife biologists and workers.

Iain Douglas-Hamilton has now developed such a programme, written by Anne Burrill, which is suitable for most aerial sample surveys that follow the methods described by Norton-Griffiths in

Counting Animals, produced by African Wildlife Foundation, 1978.

The programme can extract and analyse portions of census zones and also merge different areas of the census zone. A more complete description is available on request, and copies can be obtained for the price of postage and disc or photocopying by contacting Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton, P.O. Box 54667, Nairobi.

Iain Douglas-Hamilton



North Yemeni carver at work [Esmond Bradley Martin]

WWF/IUCN RENEWS SUPPORT FOR SELOUS

The Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania is undoubtedly the most important woodland savanna reserve in Africa. Its vast 55,000km² support the largest coherent populations of elephants, black rhinos, crocodiles, buffaloes and hippos in the world. There are approximately 1 00,000 elephants and 3,000 black rhinos within the Reserve. In addition, some 350 species of birds and over 2,000 species of plants have been recorded. As a result of these tremendous biological values, the Selous was recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Selous has also been accorded the highest priority for field action by the African Elephant & Rhino Specialist Group.

To date, the vastness and inaccessibility of the Reserve have protected it from the human encroachment and poaching that have become so characteristic of other East African conservation areas. However, it is inevitable that human pressures upon the Reserve will grow, and have an increasingly severe impact. It is essential that the Tanzania Wildlife Division which is charged with the protection and management of the area, be adequately equipped to deal with these growing pressures.

Under a recently initiated project (No. 3173), WWF/IUCN is continuing its support to the Selous, and is helping to meet the most immediate needs of the Reserve. Spare parts for vehicles and aircraft are being purchased. Ranger equipment, medical supplies, radios, vehicles and motorcycles are also being provided. Although the original budget is for an initial period of two years, it is hoped that Project 3173 will evolve into a long-term support programme for this strategic wildlife stronghold.

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