

Report on Activities

The third meeting of the AERSG, held in Nairobi on 3-4 December 1983, was attended by David Western, Esmond Bradley Martin, David Cumming, Iain Douglas-Hamilton, Ian Grimwood, Hanne Lindemann, Rob Malpas, Cynthia Moss and Lucy Vigne.

Robert Scott, Executive Officer, SSC, came to the meeting from Geneva. Others present were Keith Lindsay and Phyllis Lee who are engaged in elephant research in Amboseli National Park, Kenya.

Matters requiring attention in the next six months were discussed and most of these are now under way. They are either described in the body of this *Newsletter* or outlined below.

1. Charles Mackie, Senior Management Adviser, and Fraser Smith, Technical Specialist, arrived in Garamba National Park, Zaire, to start the Rehabilitation Project of the Park. Kes Hillman went to Garamba simultaneously in order to monitor the few remaining northern white rhinos. A decision should be forthcoming in the next few months as to what should be done with the rhinos. Work has started, however, and is described on page 19.
2. Elephant and rhino survey data were discussed, and updated questionnaires are still being returned, Iain Douglas-Hamilton has an assistant, Ken Kaliski, to help analyse the heavy backlog of the elephant data. The IUCN Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit, Cambridge has agreed to publish the African Rhino Action Plan once it is fully updated.
3. Five black rhinos were successfully translocated from Natal to Texas in March 1984. The project is a co-operative effort of Game Conservation International, the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, African Fund for Endangered Wildlife and the Natal Parks Board. The rhinos will be encouraged to breed in the wide open spaces of two Texas ranches. It is hoped that eventually the offspring will be reintroduced into the wild in Africa once the poaching problem has been contained. Judging from reports, all animals are doing well. The outcome of the project will be reported in the December *Newsletter*.
4. Save the Rhino Trust, Zambia, has been given substantial funds by the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD). This will cover anti-poaching activities for the next two years at least. During this period every effort will be made to establish a more permanent means of generating funds to ensure the future financial independence of the Trust.
5. A study of the forest elephant is to be carried out by Richard Barnes in Gabon. He will try to develop a methodology for counting elephants in the tropical rain forest which will be adapted to other countries in Central Africa.
6. The present CITES requirement that every piece of worked ivory must have documentation was discussed. The Group felt that the resulting huge amount of paper work was counterproductive to the conservation of elephants. The Group therefore agreed that pieces of worked ivory weighing under 1kg each should be exempt of all CITES documentation. However, all worked ivory consignments in

excess of 10kg would require CITES documentation.

7. At the CITES Technical Committee meeting on ivory to be held in Brussels at the end of June 1984, all aspects of the trade will be discussed. David Western will be attending.
8. David Western, supported by Kenton Miller, Director General of IUCN, has approached several international ivory trading associations about the possibility of setting up an Ivory Council whereby conservationists, traders and other interested parties will co-operate to exchange information, set priorities and monitor the trade, with the object of conserving the African elephant. Prospective members of the Ivory Council will be meeting in Brussels at the time of the CITES Technical Committee meeting on ivory.
9. The Tokyo Ivory Arts and Crafts Association has donated \$10,000 to AERSG for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of raw ivory consumed domestically in southern Africa, and to study the ivory carving industries of this region. Esmond Bradley Martin has completed the field work in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi. The first of his reports is on pages 5-6. Further reports will be published shortly.
10. Over the past three months the group has widely disseminated information concerning the illegal importation of rhino horn into North Yemen through various newspapers and magazines, such as the *Sunday Times*, *Observer*, *The Times* of London and *BBC Wildlife*, for the purpose of encouraging the countries involved to stop the trade. The North Yemen problem is described on page 18.

The fourth AERSG meeting will be held in Gaborone,

Botswana on 22-23 September 1984. Lucy Vigne



Black rhino [Anthony Hall-Martin]

The objective of the AERSG *Newsletter* is to offer to members of the group and those who share its concerns brief factual articles containing points of information and topical interest relevant to elephant and rhino conservation.

Contributors are described at the foot of their articles only if non-members of AERSG.

Readers are reminded that material published in the *Newsletter* does not necessarily reflect the views of AERSG.

We will welcome articles, no longer than 1500 words, for *Newsletter* No. 4. We will publish suitable black-and-white photographs and graphics and may edit some articles. The deadline is 19 November 1984.

Lucy Vigne
Editor