

Fig. 1

age of the modifications. Elephant densities in these habitats were observed to reach 2.6 animals per km<sup>2</sup> on average in comparison with primary forests, where densities are under 0.5 animals per km<sup>2</sup>.

There is a distinct attraction to areas which are influenced by logging activities. The preference of the secondary rain forests can be confirmed by the  $\chi^2$  test. As a result of the clearing of the original forest a new heliophile vegetation has produced a richer range of fodder plants containing a greater amount of crude protein than sciaphile species. A nutritive analysis of heliophile fodder plants selected by elephants shows a crude protein content of 18% compared with 10% in plants of the primary rain forest, which are much less used by the elephant. Furthermore, the alternating occurrence of open, grass-covered areas and dense vegetation is highly appreciated by the forest elephant.

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### RHINO WORKSHOP AT PILANESBERG

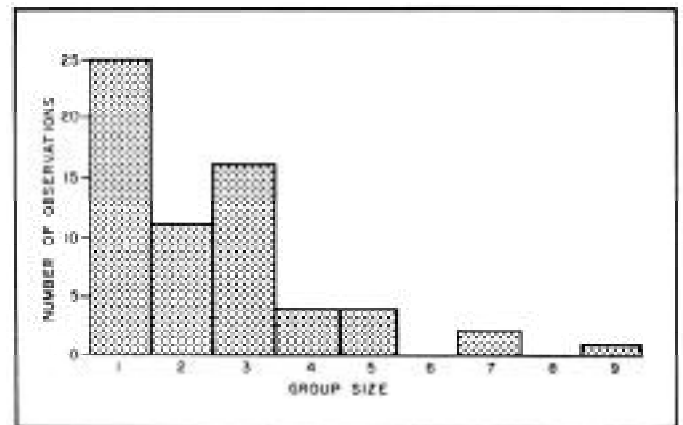


Fig. 2

## News in Brief

Following an initial suggestion by Peter Hitchins, that the status of rhinos in southern Africa should be investigated, a workshop on the topic was sponsored by the Endangered Wildlife Trust and hosted by the Pilanesberg Game Reserve in Bophuthatswana. Fifteen delegates, including a colonel of the South African Police, several officers of nature conservation authorities, zoological gardens and non-government organisations, gathered in February 1984 for two full days of discussion on the rhinos of South Africa and Namibia. The main focus of attention of course was the black rhinoceros whose statistics in South Africa have been largely covered by Martin Brooks in the previous newsletter.

Three subspecies of the black rhino occur in the two countries. About 610 animals of the *minor* subspecies were estimated for South Africa (including 21 in Pilanesberg), and the

Natal population has 19 animals per year for translocation. The population in the Kruger National Park, currently estimated at 110 animals, has a great potential for expansion. South Africa also holds 14 *michaeli* rhinos in the Addo Elephant National Park; these are genetically pure as hybrids have been removed ( and one *minor* bull castrated).

About 400 animals of the nominate subspecies are estimated for Namibia, of which 350 occur in the Etosha National Park. This latter population is expanding and animals could be translocated to three other game reserves in the north of the country. Meanwhile, the desert rhinos of Damaraland and Kaokoland have declined to an estimated 50 and .5 animals respectively. These animals live on communally-owned land, and they are very vulnerable to poaching; they are the only black rhinos not in a game reserve. There is considerable concern over their future, and as befits

a unique population of animals, it was agreed that they should receive special attention and be conserved *in situ* rather than be translocated.

The southern subspecies of the white rhino is considered safe, and little concern was voiced for its future. Its numbers were estimated at nearly 3,000 in South Africa, 70 in Namibia and 217 in Pilanesberg. In contrast to the distribution of the black rhino, the white rhino occurs widely throughout South Africa, as a good proportion of its numbers (estimated 530) now lives on private game ranches, albeit usually in small numbers per ranch. The white rhino population in Natal allows about 130 animals per year for translocation.

It was agreed that zoos have a definite role to play in the conservation of both species of rhino, particularly with regard to public education and to maintaining a viable captive population. There are at least 200 black rhinos in the world's zoos (only three in South Africa), and they are now breeding. But the workshop called on zoo directors to maintain genetic purity of subspecies if breeding is to be attempted. However it was admitted that whilst distinguishing '*michaeli*' and '*minor*' is fairly easy, it is not with '*bicornis*' and '*minor*'.

Several resolutions were suggested with regard to the trade in rhino products. The workshop called on the IUCN to continue monitoring the international trade, and requested that CITES take more interest in it and investigate the possibility of using disciplinary action against members not conforming. At a regional level, the workshop will recommend that rhino products be stockpiled until further notice, that nature con-



Desert rhino, Namibia [Koos Bothma]

servation ordinances and fines with regard to the rhino be rationalised throughout, and that a wildlife trade investigating officer be set up somewhere in southern Africa. Very importantly, SWA/Namibia announced that it has now stopped auctions of rhino products, and although not a member of CITES it will comply with regulations.

We expect to issue a fuller account of the proceedings for distribution to the appropriate authorities and other interested bodies.

P.J. Mundy  
Endangered Wildlife Trust

## ELEPHANT POACHING IN THE CHOBE NATIONAL PARK, BOTSWANA

Botswana's Chobe National Park has for the last two years experienced an upsurge in the killing of elephant by poachers from the eastern Caprivi in Namibia.

It was two years ago that Botswana's Department of Wildlife, National Parks and Tourism placed a ban on all elephant hunting in order to arrest poaching from within Botswana and to take a careful look at its elephant populations.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust and the University of the Witwatersrand were asked to assist in surveys to determine numbers and to date some 22,000 elephants have been estimated in the north excluding the Okavango Delta and Moremi Wildlife Reserve.

Clive Walker  
Director, Endangered Wildlife Trust

## SUDAN ELEPHANT CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVE

The alarming slaughter of elephants in South Sudan last year impelled the AERSG to launch a series of diplomatic and publicity campaigns aimed at urging Sudan to control the poaching. In response to these initiatives, Sudan banned the export of raw ivory by ministerial order from 1 January 1984. AERSG has warmly congratulated the Sudan Government on their action.

L. Vigne

## DESERT ELEPHANT AND RHINO: EWT HELPS

Plans to have four million hectares of the Damaraland region of Namibia proclaimed as a Park collapsed earlier in the year, causing concern for the continued protection of the elephant and rhino.

Since 1978, the Endangered Wildlife Trust had assisted the Namibia Wildlife Trust's good work with aerial surveys, research and anti-poaching measures. Now, EWT is to take responsibility for the security of Damaraland's wildlife, with Garth Owen-Smith as Senior Field Officer along with his assistant and six game scouts from the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation.

The Trust held talks with senior officials in XhoniXas, the Damaraland administrative centre, on 5 April 1984, and again in Windhoek with the Department of Agriculture and Conservation, which will be ready to take over control from EWT at the end of 1984.

Continued co-operation of all involved is essential for maintaining the protection of the uniquely adapted desert rhinos and elephants of Damaraland.

L. Vigne

## RHINO BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography of publications on rhinos, gathered by Kes Hillman, is stored on the computer at the Species Conservation Monitoring Unit and print outs are available on request to: Jane Thornback, SCMU, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, England.