
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: AFRICAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP

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The African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) has entered its second triennium since splitting from the combined elephant/rhino group, and invitations for 1994-96 membership have been sent to individual specialists and Range States for nomination of their representatives. Members are thanked for their wholehearted support of the Group's activities over the past three years and should draw significant encouragement from what has been achieved.

Since its Mombasa meeting in May 1994, the AfRSG has been actively assisting in the development of conservation management and funding strategies, and has secured the services of its first Scientific/Programme Officer; the post being jointly funded by the Commission of the European Union, the United Kingdom Department of the Environment and WWF Africa and Madagascar. The Honourable Richard Emslie was appointed in mid-October 1994, and is based in Pietermaritzburg with the Chairman.

Northern white rhino strategy

At the request of WWF, the Chairman held a meeting in Nairobi in October 1994 to assess the progress with the report which aims to assess the various management options for the long-term conservation of the northern white rhino. The information collected by Kes Smith will be developed further by Holly Dublin and Tom Foose, and a final report should be completed by the end of April 1995. A workshop is planned for August or September 1995 in Kwa-Zulu/Natal, South Africa, at which key players will discuss the management and funding options, and decide on appropriate action.

Interaction with UNEP

The Chairman attended a UNEP meeting at Gigiri, Kenya in October 1994 at which collaboration between UNEP's newly-created Elephant and Rhino Conservation Facility and IUCN's specialist groups

for elephants and rhinos in Africa and Asia was discussed. A common mission was developed, the roles and responsibilities of the Facility and the Specialist Groups discussed, and a mechanism for sustained collaboration agreed upon. The most critical role of the Facility is seen by the Specialist Groups to be the acquisition of funds for both global and national rhino conservation projects.

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The Scientific Officer and Tom Foose, who represented the AfRSG at COP9 as part of IUCN's delegation, contributed to a number of debates on rhinoceros issues.

In presenting their proposal to downlist the Southern White Rhino from Appendix I to II, the South African delegation stressed that they had no intention of initiating trade in rhino horn under their proposal. The AfRSG's representatives pointed out that the South African population of white rhino qualified for downlisting to Appendix II under the Berne criteria, and that CITES should encourage self-reliance in Parties, noting that the proposal could provide financial and conservation benefits for South African rhinos.

The annotated South African proposal for "Transfer of the South African populations of southern white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* from Appendix I to Appendix II for sale of live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations, and hunting trophies only", was approved by 66 votes to 2 with strong range state support. This downlisting is valid until the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties when it will be reviewed.

The AfRSG was requested to introduce the draft resolution on "Conservation of rhinoceros in Asia and Africa" which it had prepared at the request of the CITES Standing Committee. The basic premise of the resolution was that current conservation measures,

including some of the CITES provisions, have not succeeded in arresting or reversing the decline in rhino numbers. The resolution proposed that all conservation measures be evaluated; and that adaptive management be instituted based on such evaluations. The resolution advocated that a full range of options be considered and that opportunities to use those options had to be kept open. The need to expand funding sources to respond to substantial needs was articulated with a particular emphasis on sustainability and self-reliance within range states. WWF reported that provisional findings of a cost: benefit study on rhinoceros conservation indicated that the total budget allocated to in-situ conservation was the best predictor of rhino conservation success. The AfRSG pointed out that it had been estimated that to successfully manage and protect rhino sanctuary populations could cost as much as US\$1,000 to \$1,200/km²/year.

The resolution was passed with minor modifications. Most importantly Resolution Conf 3.11 and 6.10 were repealed. The latter had called on parties to destroy

horn stocks. The Group argued that this was no longer considered appropriate, and that burning horn stockpiles would in all probability lead to accelerated depletion of wild populations by increasing horn values on the illegal market and hence poaching pressure.

AfRSG activities for the coming period

- Design and initiate a regular newsletter.
- Design and set up databases to manage data on rhino numbers, distributions, poaching statistics and other key attributes.
- Compile an Action Plan for African rhinos.
- Establish basic survey and planning requirements of range states without “key” populations.
- Contribute to the revision of the regional black rhino conservation plan for Namibia and South Africa.

RAPPORT DU PRESIDENT: GROUPE DE SPECIALISTES DE RHINOCEROS AFRICAIN

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Le Groupe de Spécialistes de Rhinoceros Africain (GSRAf) a entamé son deuxième triennat depuis la séparation du groupe conjoint éléphants/rhinos, et on a envoyé à des spécialistes individuels ainsi qu’aux états de distribution, des invitations à soumettre leurs représentants à la nomination pour être membres de 1994 à 1996. Nous remercions les membres pour le support enthousiaste qu’ils ont apporté aux activités du Groupe au cours des trois dernières années; ce qui a été réalisé devrait les encourager significativement.

Depuis sa réunion de mai 1994 à Mombasa, le GSRAf s’est impliqué activement dans l’aide à la mise au point d’une gestion de conservation et de stratégies de financement et s’est assuré les services de son premier responsable de programme Scientifique: ce poste est financé conjointement par la Commission de l’Union Européenne, par le Département de

l’Environnement du Royaume Uni et par le bureau Afrique et Madagascar du WWF. L’Honorable Richard Emslie a été nommé à la mi-octobre 1994 et est basé à Pietermaritzburg, avec le Président.

Stratégie pour le rhinocéros blanc du Nord

A la demande du WWF, le Président a tenu une réunion à Nairobi, en octobre 1994, pour estimer le progrès du rapport qui doit évaluer les différentes possibilités de gestion en vue de la conservation à long terme du rhino blanc du Nord. Les informations recueillies par Kes Smith seront analysées plus profondément par Holly Dublin et par Tom Foose, et un rapport final devrait être terminé pour la fin avril 1995. On a prévu un atelier en août ou septembre au Kwa-Zulu/Natal, en Afrique du Sud, lors duquel les partenaires principaux discuteront des options de