

AsRSG MEETINGS

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group has convened and facilitated a number of important meetings and workshops to assist conservation efforts for the Indian (Great One-Horned) Rhinoceros, the Javan (Lesser One-Horned) Rhinoceros and the Sumatran Rhinoceros.

Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) Meetings

1979		Bangkok, Thailand	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Prof.Dr. Rüdi Schenkel
1982		Frazer's Hills, Malaysia	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Prof.Dr. Rüdi Schenkel
1986	July	Jakarta, Indonesia	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan
1987	October	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan

1989 First AsRSG Asian Rhino Action Plan

1989	June 5-7	Bogor, Indonesia	Javan Rhino Workshop
1991	September	Bogor, Indonesia	Rhino Conservation Strategy and Action Plan
1993	November	Bandarlampung, Indonesia	Sumatran Rhino Population and Habitat Viability (PHVA) Analysis Workshop
1993	May	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysian Rhino Conservation Action Plan
1993	September	Bogor, Indonesia	Indonesian Rhino Conservation Action Plan
1993	Dec. 6-11	Jaldapara, India	Indian Rhino Population & Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) Workshop
1993	Dec. 6-11	Jaldapara, India	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan
1995	Nov 27-28	Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia	Malaysian Rhino Population & Habitat Viability (PHVA) Analysis Workshop
1995	Nov 29-Dec 1	Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia	AsRSG Meeting Chair: Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan

1995 Second AsRSG Asian Rhino Action Plan

1997	Jul. 1-3	Bogor, Indonesia	Javan Rhino Colloquium
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REPORTS ON RECENT MEETINGS

In *Asian Rhinos* Number 2, the meetings to be conducted in Sabah in November 1995 were announced. The results of these meetings are extensively integrated in the text of the new edition of *Asian Rhinos: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* (1997). The Javan Rhino Colloquium conducted in Bogor in January 1997 was preceded by an *Agenda & Briefing Book*, and followed by a 50 page document with its *Report & Recommendations*. A summary is provided below. The first official regional meeting of AsRSG under its reorganized structure and operational policy was conducted in Kaziranga National Park February 1999 for South Asian rhino range states, i.e. India and Nepal. A fuller report on this meeting will be published as a separate report by the AsRSG and will be discussed further in the next issue of *Asian Rhinos*. However, in the interest of timeliness, the points of agreement and recommendations are also presented below.

JAVAN RHINO COLLOQUIUM, Bogor, Indonesia, July 1997

This Colloquium was conducted in Bogor, Indonesia from 1-3 July 1997. The goal was to assemble all the principle parties involved or interested in conservation efforts for the Javan Rhino in Ujung Kulon National Park, Java, as well as those working with the species in Vietnam. The participants had an intensive program consisting of both plenary sessions and working groups. These working groups considered five aspects of the situation of the rhino in Ujung Kulon, i.e. Census and Survey Methods; Intensive Protection and Institutional Aspects; Habitat Research and Management; Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) Considerations; and Community Interactions. The *Report & Recommendations* was published in 1997, compiled by an editorial committee co-chaired by Dr. Tom Foose and Dr. Nico van Strien. Copies are available from Dr. Tom Foose.

There are about 50-60 Javan Rhino in Ujung Kulon National Park. Despite considerable activity and investment during the past years, the workshop observed that there was still incomplete information on the size and structure of the rhino population, rhinos continued to be lost to poachers, anti-poaching patrols were insufficiently intensive, and the rhino population had not increased for at least a decade. Furthermore, major habitat changes seemed to be occurring in the park, and the rhino population continues to be subject to risks which can imperil

small, isolated and unique populations.

The meeting agreed on three major recommendations concerning the Javan Rhino in Ujung Kulon National Park, Indonesia.

1. To establish 2-3 rhino protection units (RPUs);
2. To improve rhino census by intensifying the transect counts in conjunction with extensive photo trapping;
3. To initiate habitat management experiments, endeavoring to expand carrying capacity in order to attain a target population of 100 Javan Rhinos.

For the Vietnamese Rhino in Cat Loc Wildlife Reserve and Cat Tien National Park, it was recommended to conduct a track count of rhino, to initiate habitat analysis work, and to encourage the large WWF project in the park to provide for specific rhino action, including an increase of the number of guards in Cat Loc from 8 to 40. It should be noted that all of these recommendations have been or are being implemented.

REGIONAL MEETING OF AsRSG - Kaziranga N.P. , Assam, India - February 1999

The Points of Agreement and Recommendations

1. The primary priority of funding of Rhino conservation is *in situ* activities, especially anti-poaching and habitat management combined with eco-development.
2. Conservation success achieved in India and Nepal in the case of the rhino has been possible due to the extraordinary dedication and commitment of the field staff. The service conditions of these field staff, who are the guardians of this species as part of the world's wildlife heritage, needs to be adequately upgraded commensurate with their selfless struggle.
3. The intelligence gathering systems for rhino conservation in India and Nepal are inadequate. External funds should be used to support this intelligence gathering until an effective government-support system can be developed.
4. The Meeting reaffirmed that there should be a viable population of minimally 2,500 *Rhinoceros unicornis* in the wild in at least 10 populations of minimally 100 rhino each, with an ultimate optimal objective of a total wild population of 5,000 individuals.
5. To develop more recognition and support for rhino conservation, the AsRSG recommends that the

Government of India establish a PROJECT RHINO, similar to Project Tiger and Project Elephant.

6. The Government of India and Nepal are already providing considerable funds to conserve the rhino and their habitat. These government efforts have been very successful for *in situ* rhino conservation. However, because of the human demographic pressures in both of these countries, to carry this success forward into the next millennium, the efforts of the Governments of India and Nepal should be augmented with significant funds from international (external) sources.
7. The AsRSG should have more interface with the *Rhinoceros unicornis* range state governments, so that rhino conservation receives continuing and increasing support.
8. Toward this objective, the AsRSG will sponsor a technical management advisory group comprising

representatives from all major rhino areas in India and Nepal.

Financial support for the meeting was provided by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF), WWF-Netherlands, WWF-U.S., and WWF-UK. Some funds from the meeting budget that were not used for the session due to the frugality of the organizers were applied to support census in March/April 1999 of the rhino in Kaziranga, Orang, and Pabitora where full counts have not been conducted since 1993.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The AsRSG is planning to have a Regional Meeting for South-East Asia in 2000 or 2001. It has been proposed to convene this meeting in Vietnam. The actual dates and place will be announced as soon as the details are available.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RHINO RANGE STATES

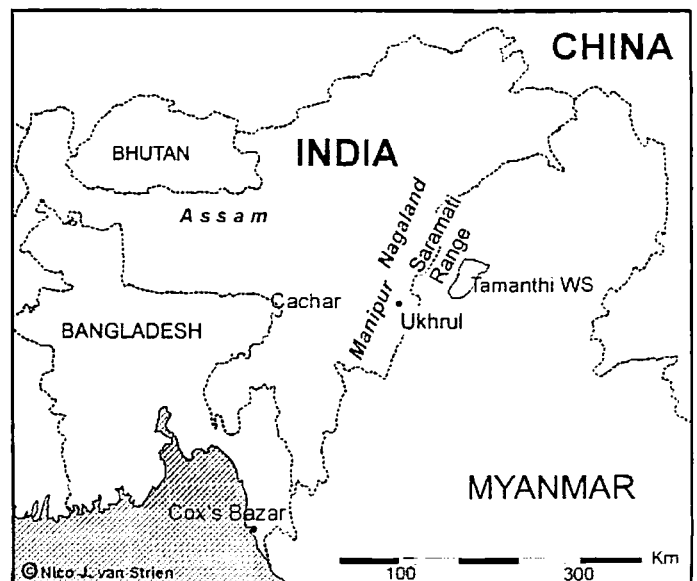
INDIA

Sumatran Rhino Sightings in N. E. India

There are still occasional reports about the presence of rhinos in the mountainous parts of North-East India, possibly referring to the Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). In 1967, a rhinoceros was killed near Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. An animal was sighted by locals in Punikhali of Sonai Reserved Forest, Cachar District, Assam, India.

In January 1996, Anwaruddin Choudhury visited the Anko Range in the Ukhrul District of the state of Manipur. He learned that villagers at Konkan (88 km SE of Ukhrul town) had observed signs of rhinos in the area in the early 1990's. In the 1970's a rhino was shot near Khamsong vilage, N.E. of Ukhrul town. In Nagaland, where he visited in June 1996, he received reports of rhinos in the Saramati range on the Myanmar border dating from 1967-68, as was also recorded by the 1994 survey around Tamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary in Northern Myanmar (see *Asian Rhinos*, No.1, p.10 and *Oryx* 29 (2): 123-128, 1995). The two areas in Manipur and on the Nagaland-Myanmar border are still virtually inaccessible and covered with mature forests. Further investigation and protection is recommended.

Source: A. Choudhury, The status of the Sumatran



rhinoceros in north-eastern India. *Oryx*, 31 (2): 151-152, 1997; and A. Choudhury, Sumatran rhinoceros rediscovered in India, *Newsletter of the Rhino Foundation for Nature in NE India*, vol. 2 no.1, June 1998.