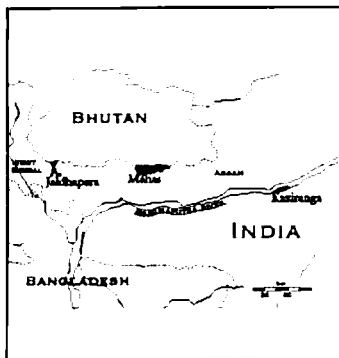


## COUNTRY REPORTS

### INDIA

#### MANAS SITUATION



In the late 1980's, Manas National Park was estimated to contain 80 or more Indian rhinos. The Park has been occupied by Bodo tribesmen since 1987. The Bodo expelled and have excluded wildlife officials. The information that is available indicates that rhino poaching has been

severe. At the AsRSG meeting, P. Lahan reported that perhaps 50% of the rhino had been lost. More recent albeit unofficial reports suggest that virtually all of the rhino have been exterminated. Manas was probably the origin of 22 Indian rhino horns seized by Hong Kong customs officials from a Bhutanese princess in 1993.

Source: *Earth Island Journal*, Winter 1994-1995.

### NEPAL

#### NEW CENSUS REPORTS



In March-April 1994, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) of Nepal conducted Count Rhino '94 in the Royal Chitwan National Park. This project was a collaborative effort of major governmental and non-governmental conservation organizations in the

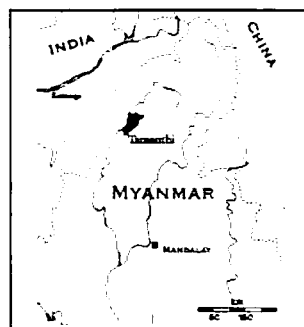
country: DNPWC, the King Mahendra Trust, the Nepal Conservation Research and Training Center, The World Wildlife Fund, and Resources Nepal. Elephants were used for block transect counts.

The resulting census reports that there are 446-466 rhino in Chitwan, a larger number than reported in 1993 at the AsRSG meeting. These numbers indicate that the rhino population has increased at about 3.7%/year from 1998 to 1994. Moreover, the current population of ~450 rhinos represents a healthy recovery from the estimated 60-80 rhinos in the area in the late 1960's. A total of 23 are known to have been lost to poaching since 1988.

Source: *Count Rhino '94*, Dr. Pralad B. Yonzon, Resources Nepal, GPO Box 2448, Kathmandu, Nepal, Fax 977/1/227132.

### MYANMAR

#### TAMANTHI SURVEY



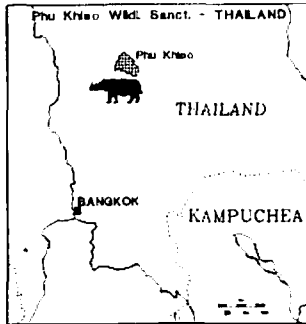
The Wildlife and Sanctuaries Division of the Myanmar Forest Department and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) conducted a joint survey of Sumatran rhino and other large mammals in Tamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary in February-March 1994. No

definite rhino sign was observed although a total of 33 rhino records for the years 1971-1993 were documented. At least 9 rhino kills were also documented during the 1980s (notably all before 1985). The report concludes that the rhino has been reduced to near extinction. One of the guides for the survey team, a former rhino hunter, had observed footprints in 1991. Several sightings of tracks since 1991 suggest that 1 or 2 rhino may survive in the northeast corner of the Sanctuary. Other recent sightings further suggest 1 or 2 rhino in the forests between Tamanthi and Indawgyi Lake and a similar number in vicinity of Saramati on the Indian border.

Source: *The Status of the Sumatran Rhinoceros and Other Large mammal Species in Tamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary*, Upper Chindwin District, Northern Myanmar; Dr Alan Rabinowitz, Dr. George Schaller, Mr. U Uga. Wildlife Conservation Society, 1994. A published report will appear in *ORYX* 29, Vol. 2.

## THAILAND

### SUMATRAN RHINO IN PHU KHIEO



There is very little hard evidence of the continued existence of the Sumatran Rhino in Thailand. Very small numbers are supposed to exist on the Thailand-Malaysia border, along the border with Myanmar, and in Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary.

In November 1993 a 4-day survey was conducted in several parts of the Phu Khieo Sanctuary, particularly searching for sign of Rhino. "Old, suspected rhino footprints" were located at several places, but no recent evidence was encountered. There were no fresh prints, dung, scrapes, wallows or feeding sign of rhino. The survey could not confirm nor refute the existence of the Sumatran rhino in Phu Khieo. This information, from what was considered to be the "best" Rhino area in Thailand, offers little hope for the future of the Sumatran rhino in this country.

*Source: A preliminary survey of the Sumatran Rhinoceros (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis) and other large mammals in Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary, north-east Thailand. Royal Forestry Department, Thailand; Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia; Japan Wildlife Research Center, Japan.*

## VIETNAM

### JAVAN (?) RHINO IN VIETNAM

distribution is about 35,000 ha (but on the accompanying map the rhino core area measures only ~ 3,500 ha).

During surveys covering more than half of the core area, a total of 19 rhino tracks were encountered and measured. Based on differences in widths it could be concluded that there were 7 to 9 individuals in the survey area.

Interestingly the majority of the footprints detected are small (14 out of 19 are less than 25 cm in diameter) and would be from young animals, less than 2 years of age, if produced by Javan rhino. Only two tracks of adult Javan Rhino size were discovered (30 cm). The report concludes that there are 6-7 young, 1 subadult, and 1 adult rhino.

The age distribution, if correct, is quite unusual and one wonders whether it is really Javan Rhino that is occurring in Cat Loc. All small prints fall well within the range of the Sumatran rhino. The few larger tracks are certainly too large for Sumatran rhino, but could have been measured from vague prints. Judging from the tracks sizes alone one would conclude that there are Sumatran Rhinos in Cat Loc.

There are early reports of Sumatran rhino from this part of Vietnam, and although they have generally been dismissed as unsubstantiated since Rookmaaker's study of the rhino distribution in Indochina (Zool. Anz. 205 (1980), 253-268), the existence of the Sumatran rhino in Vietnam cannot be excluded (as also Rookmaaker concluded!)

*Editor's Note: So far the editors of this newsletter have not observed proof of the identity of the Vietnamese rhinos as Javan Rhinos. Therefore we request our readers to help by communicating to us whatever evidence there is on the specific identity of the Vietnamese rhinos. We hope that in the next issue we can provide the final*