

# Jean-Baptiste Oudry Jean- Antoine Houdon



## Vermächtnis der Aufklärung

Sammlung Staatliches Museum Schwerin



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WAKO

# WATAKONSERVASI

Taman Nasional Way Kambas



EDISI PERDANA. 2005  
Januari - Maret

*Assalamu'alaikum .....*

*Salam Konservasi*

WAKO adalah salah satu resort di bawah seksi konservasi Way Kanan - Taman Nasional Way Kambas (TNWK), yang memiliki habitat sangat baik dan masih utuh terjaga. Resort WAKO didominasi oleh hutan gelam dan tempat tinggal beberapa spesies kunci seperti Harimau, Badak dan Gajah. Berawal dari maksud mempertahankan kawasan habitat yang masih utuh maka nama WAKO diambil menjadi nama Buletin triwulan TNWK, yang selanjutnya memiliki kepanjangan WARTA KONSERVASI TNWK. Dengan media ini diharapkan masyarakat dapat memiliki informasi tentang kawasan TNWK secara jelas dan periodik, sehingga pengelolaan TNWK tidak hanya dilaksanakan oleh petugas semata, tetapi dilakukan oleh berbagai pihak yang peduli. Buletin ini adalah terbitan pedana, redaksi tidak ingin buletin ini terhenti pembuatannya. Untuk kelanjutan buletin ini redaksi dengan senang hati dan penuh hormat mengajak siapapun yang peduli terhadap kelestarian TNWK untuk mengisi ruang-ruang pada buletin ini. Dengan segala kerendahan hati redaksi menerima segala kritik dan saran membangun untuk kelanjutan buletin ini.

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Marilah kita jaga dan lindungi Taman Nasional sesuai dengan kemampuan dan cara kita masing-masing.

Terima kasih kepada semua pihak yang telah membantu dalam proses pembuatan buletin ini.

*Wassalam.....*

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**PENGELOLAAN TAMAN NASIONAL WAY KAMBAS**

*Oleh Mega Hariyanto*

Berdasarkan SK Menhut Nomor 670/Kpts-III/1999 ditetapkan bahwa luas kawasan Taman Nasional Way Kambas (TNWK) adalah 125.621,30 ha. Sebagai kawasan pelestarian alam maka keberadaan TNWK mutlak perlu di jaga. Wilayah administratif sekitar kawasan TNWK adalah 3 kabupaten yaitu Lampung Timur, Lampung Tengah dan Tulang Bawang, 10 Kecamatan serta 35 Desa. Tujuan pengelolaan adalah mewujudkan fungsi TNWK sesuai dengan peranannya dalam upaya mendukung peningkatan kesejahteraan masyarakat.

**Pengelolaan Taman Nasional**  
 Dalam rangka mewujudkan tujuan pengelolaan TNWK, maka dalam kurun waktu 5 tahun kedepan ditetapkan 6 program sasaran pengelolaan, yaitu konservasi kawasan, perlindungan dan pengamanan hutan dan ekosistemnya, pengendalian kebakaran hutan, pengelolaan keanekaragaman hayati dan ekosistem, pengembangan wisata alam dan pemanfaatan jasa lingkungan serta ketatausahaan.

**Konservasi kawasan**  
 TNWK sebagai kawasan pelestarian alam yang merupakan benteng terakhir dalam penyelamatan keanekaragaman hayati dan ekosistemnya, maka perlu dikelola dengan efektif dan efisien untuk menjamin keterwakilan jenis dan ekosistemnya. Saat ini tantangan dalam pembangunan konservasi dirasakan semakin berat. Berbagai proses pembangunan

sektor lain terus berjalan dengan cepat, salah satunya adalah pembangunan Jalan Lintas Sumatera bagian Timur, dimana sebagian ruas jalannya melintasi dekat dengan perbatasan kawasan, sehingga ancaman dan tekanan terhadap kawasan TNWK akan semakin berat.

Agar suatu pengelolaan dapat berjalan dengan baik yaitu yang diwujudkan dengan adanya rencana pengelolaan yang jelas, batas kawasan yang jelas dan mendapat pengakuan semua pihak dan dukungan para pihak khususnya masyarakat sekitar kawasan, serta rencana kegiatan yang mampu diimplementasikan secara baik.

Dengan semakin berkembangnya pembangunan di sektor lain dan berbagai kemajuan yang telah diraih selama ini, telah menuntut beberapa perubahan arah dan kebijakan dalam pengelolaan TNWK yang telah disusun. Oleh karena itu perlu dilakukan kaji ulang terhadap rencana pengelolaan TNWK yang ada, karena jika dibiarkan saja akan meninggalkan dampak yang cukup besar. Dalam rangka melaksanakan berbagai program dan kegiatan yang direncanakan maka perlu disusun rencana karya tahunan untuk dijadikan acuan dalam pelaksanaan kegiatan dalam tahun berjalan.



..... melepas kepenatan dan menyalurkan minat serta kecintaan pada alam, melalui jalan alam dan kemah bersama.

Tujuan Hutan Pendidikan Lingkungan HPL di TNWK mempunyai tujuan pendidikan dengan perincian sebagai berikut:

- ◆ Menyampaikan informasi dan meningkatkan pengetahuan masyarakat tentang keadaan sumberdaya alam TNWK.
- ◆ Menumbuhkan kesadaran masyarakat tentang arti pentingnya kelestarian lingkungan hidup.
- ◆ Menumbuhkan sikap perilaku yang peduli terhadap kelestarian lingkungan hidup.

Lokasi Hutan pendidikan HPL TNWK terletak di Seksi Wilayah Konservasi III Kuala Penet Resort Plang Ijo (selanjutnya disebut HPL Plang Ijo). Resort Plang Ijo adalah salah satu resort yang berperan sebagai pintu gerbang masuk kawasan TNWK. Pemilihan RKPA Plang Ijo sebagai lokasi HPL karena diharapkan Plang Ijo menjadi *showing window information* bagi TNWK. Luas Resort Konservasi Pelestarian Alam (KPA) Plang Hijau adalah 13.000 ha. HPL Plang Ijo mempunyai jalur yang berbentuk menyerupai lingkaran yang mempunyai luasan sekitar 16,5 Ha dengan lokasi *camping ground* seluas 0,16 Ha.

Harapan Peranan HPL Plang Ijo bagi Taman Nasional Way Kambas Keberadaan HPL Plang Ijo mempunyai peranan yang cukup penting terhadap TNWK yaitu :

- ◆ Perwujudan fungsi TNWK di bidang pendidikan, konservasi keanekaragaman hayati dan kepariwisataan alam.
- ◆ Menambah daya tarik TNWK.
- ◆ Dapat menjadi maskot kunci dalam meningkatkan promosi TNWK ke dunia luar.
- ◆ Sebagai wahana tempat penelitian dan pengembangan TNWK.
- ◆ Secara tidak langsung dapat meningkatkan pengamanan kawasan TNWK.
- ◆ Pemeliharaan TNWK lebih tertata, khususnya di areal hutan pendidikan dan sekitarnya.



SAVE THE FOREST

## BADAK MASUK SD

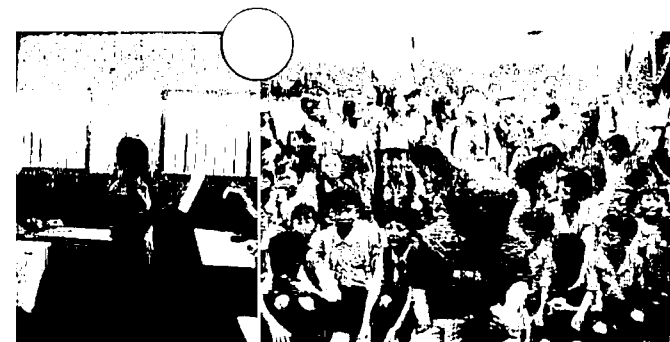
Oleh : Dedi Candra

*"Jangan ayah.....". "Jangan ayah jerat dan tangkap lagi badak bercula itu". "Kenapa anakku....". "Bukankah kau sembuh karena minum ramuan cula badak". "Tidak ayah ...". "Aku tidak meminumnya" kata Junaidi sambil mengeluarkan ramuan pemberian ayahnya dari saku celana. "Aku sembuh bukan karena cula badak, jadi ayah jangan menangkap badak lagi biarkan mereka hidup tenang di hutan". "Seketika sang ayah sadar lalu meletakkan jerat dan lembingnya...."*

Itu adalah sepenggal cerita tentang badak berbulu yang dibacakan Anggi Widiastuti bocah 11 tahun murid SDN 2 Labuhan Ratu VI Lampung. Cerita ini menjadi bagian dari kegiatan penyuluhan atau memperkenalkan badak kepada murid-murid Sekolah Dasar (SD) di sekitar kawasan Taman Nasional Way Kambas (TNWK), kegiatan ini sudah dilakukan di dua SD yang berbeda. SD pertama, disini hampir semua murid tidak mengenal badak, hal ini wajar karena desa mereka sedikit di luar batas kawasan dan mungkin karena tidak pernah diberikan informasi tentang keberadaan badak sumatera. Jauh berbeda ketika SD yang kedua, disini hampir seluruhnya sudah mengenal

badak, hal ini juga wajar karena mereka berasal dari desa yang berbatasan langsung dengan pintu gerbang TNWK dan berasal dari keluarga masyarakat yang bekerja di Suaka Rhino Sumatera (SRS) atau Rhino Protecting Unit (RPU). Tetapi secara umum, setelah dilakukan penyuluhan hampir semua murid SD tersebut mengerti badak dan habitatnya. Mereka berjanji akan ikut menjaga badak. Semoga janji tulus bocah-bocah polos ini dapat menyelamatkan kehidupan badak sumatera dikemudian hari.

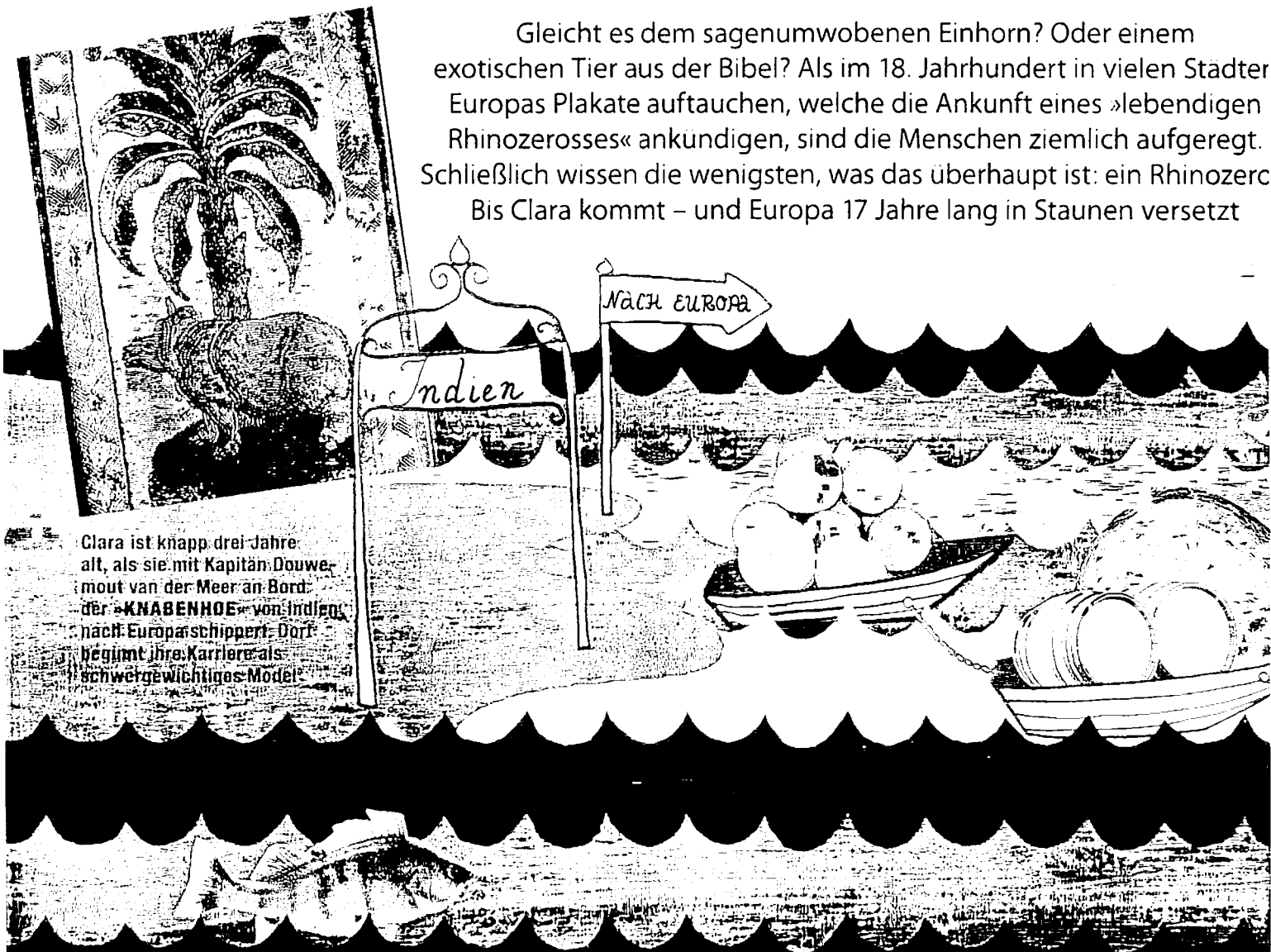
*Nah adik-adik kalau ada yang mau menangkap badak, adik-adik bilang apa ? "jangan ..... jangan menangkap badak". Adik-adik sayang badak nggak ? "sayang....." terdengar suara riuh bocah-bocah polos itu, kalau sayang badak diapakan? "Harus dijaga dan dilindungi". Begitu pula ketika diberikan informasi lain tentang beberapa satwa liar yang dilindungi seperti harimau, gajah, dll, mereka juga antusias dan senang. Ke hal 21 .....*



Ein Rhinoceros auf Reisen

# Verrückt nach

Gleicht es dem sagenumwobenen Einhorn? Oder einem exotischen Tier aus der Bibel? Als im 18. Jahrhundert in vielen Städten Europas Plakate auftauchen, welche die Ankunft eines »lebendigen Rhinoceroses« ankündigen, sind die Menschen ziemlich aufgeregt. Schließlich wissen die wenigsten, was das überhaupt ist: ein Rhinoceros. Bis Clara kommt – und Europa 17 Jahre lang in Staunen versetzt



Clara ist knapp drei Jahre alt, als sie mit Kapitän Douwemout van der Meer an Bord der »KNABENHOE« von Indien nach Europa schippert. Dort beginnt ihre Karriere als schwergewichtiges Modell.

**H**afen von Rotterdam, 22. Juli 1741: Die »Knabenhoe« hat gerade angelegt. Staunend drängeln und schubsen sich immer mehr Menschen an das Segelschiff heran, oder besser: an seine außergewöhnliche Fracht. Die trägt den Namen Clara und blinzelt müde in die Sonne. Merkt kaum, dass sie von allen Seiten angestarrt wird. Sechs anstrengende Monate auf See liegen hinter ihr. Sechs Monate, in denen sie die Hitze auf der Haut nur mit viel pflegender Creme ertragen konnte – aus bestialisch stinken-

dem Fischöl. Sechs Monate auch, in denen sie von einer Horde Seemänner wie eine Prinzessin umsorgt wurde. Erstaunlich, denn Clara ist ein Rhinoceros, genauer: ein indisches Panzernashorn.

Es war der Kapitän der »Knabenhoe«, der niederländische Seefahrer Douwemout van der Meer, der Clara einst entdeckte. In der Region Assam im Nordosten Indiens hatten Jäger die Mutter des Nashorns erschossen. Das Kalb aber hatte Glück im Unglück: Ein nobler Herr nahm es zu sich. Auf seinem Anwesen wuchs Clara zwischen teuren

# Clara

Text: Barbara Lich  
Illustration: Anna Beck



Möbelstücken auf, wurde zahm und lernte sogar, von Tellern zu essen. Doch bleiben konnte sie natürlich nicht: Schon mit knapp drei Jahren war das Tier viel zu groß, um weiter im Haushalt des Edelmanns zu leben. Da beschloss Kapitän van der Meer, der mit dem Hausherrn bekannt war, sie nach Europa mitzunehmen.

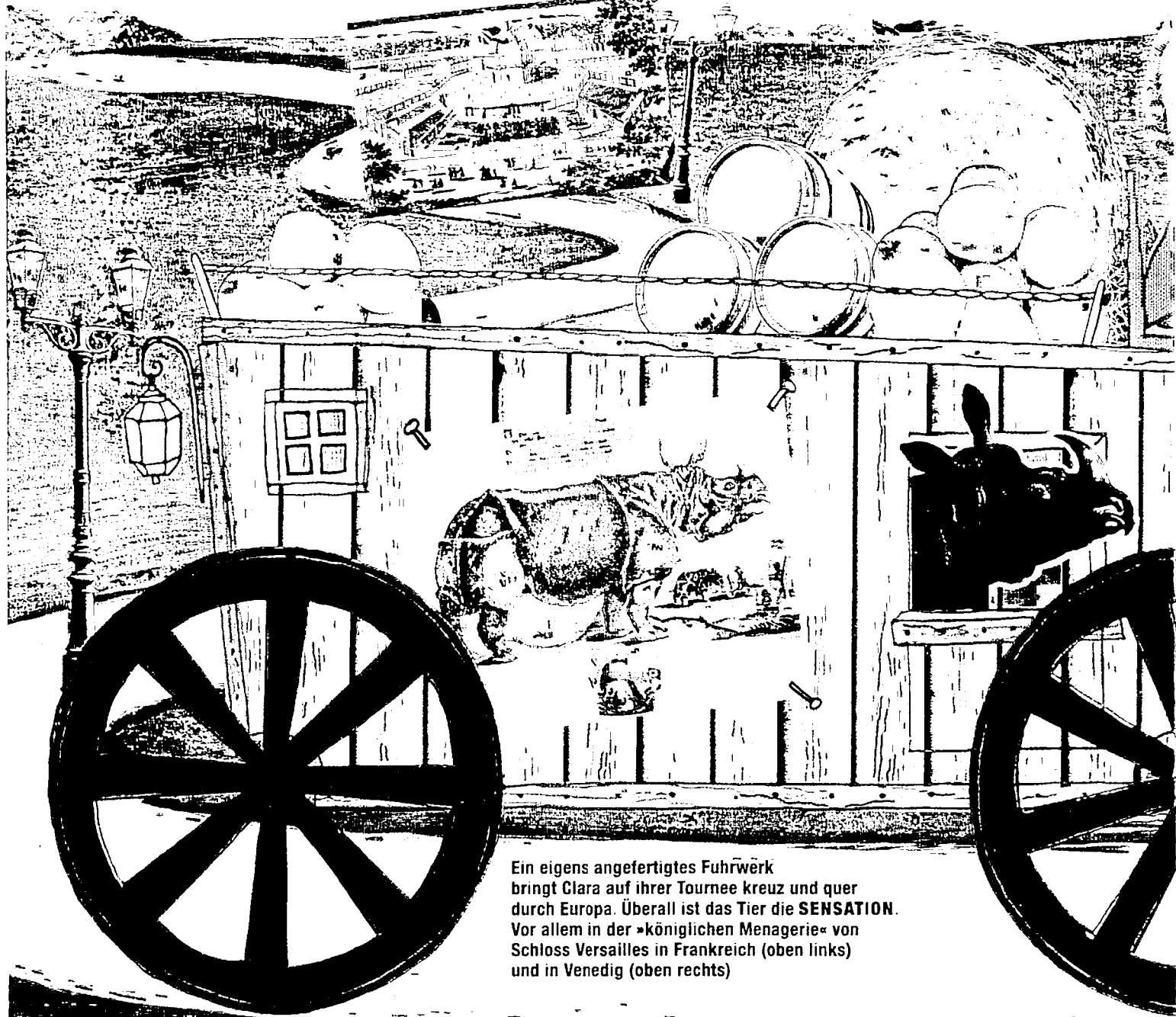
Das ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit. Kaum jemand im 18. Jahrhundert weiß schließlich, wie man mit einem leibhaftigen Nashorn umgeht – und

ob es eine so lange Seefahrt wie die von Kalkutta nach Rotterdam überstehen kann. Doch Clara bleibt gesund und von der Meer guter Dinge. Er denkt schon lange darüber nach, wie das Leben mit Clara weitergehen könnte. Das Tier in einem Gehege halten? Niemals! Clara soll die Welt sehen – und die Welt Clara. Es bleibt nur eine Frage: Wie kann er den Koloss durch die Gegend kutschieren?

Ein Wagen muss her, groß genug natürlich und vor allem stabil: Clara







Ein eigens angefertigtes Fuhrwerk bringt Clara auf ihrer Tournee kreuz und quer durch Europa. Überall ist das Tier die **SENSATION**. Vor allem in der »königlichen Menagerie« von Schloss Versailles in Frankreich (oben links) und in Venedig (oben rechts)

wiegt drei Tonnen. Van der Meer grübelt und tüftelt. Das Gefährt braucht riesige Räder. Und eine Rampe, damit der Dickhäuter ein- und aussteigen kann. Ein kleines Fenster soll für Licht und Luft sorgen, aber nicht zu viel preisgeben von der wertvollen Ladung – van der Meer ist schließlich Geschäftsmann: Wer Clara in ihrer ganzen Pracht sehen will, muss zahlen! Denn die Nashorndame ist eine kostspielige Begleiterin. Mehr als eine Tonne Heu und Brot verspeist sie im Monat, dazu kommen 450 Eimer Wasser. Ihr Lieblingsgetränk aber ist – Bier. Daran hat sie schon während ihrer Seereise auf

der „Knabenhoe“ Geschmack gefunden. Und: Sie liebt Orangen! Kein Wunder, dass bei all den Leckereien acht starke Pferde vor Claras Fuhrwerk gespannt werden müssen.

Es dauert knapp fünf Jahre, bis die Ausstellungstour vorbereitet ist. Zwar lockt Clara schon in dieser Zeit Schaulustige an. Jetzt aber soll sie richtig auf Reisen gehen. Van der Meer rührt die Werbetrömmel, lässt Plakate aushängen, die schon mal einen Vorgeschmack auf Clara liefern: „Dieses wundervolle Tier ist dunkelbraun. Gleich einem Elefanten hat es keine Haare, nur am Ende seines



Schwanzes sind einige Härlein; auf der Nase hat es ein krummes Horn, mit dem es den Boden viel geschwinder umgraben kann als ein Bauer mit einem Pflug.“

Dann endlich, im Frühling 1746, starten Clara und van der Meer ihre Reise (siehe Karte oben). Dass sie zwölf Jahre dauern wird, ahnen die beiden zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch nicht. Doch ganz gleich, wo das Gespann Station macht – das Nashorn ist eine Sensation! In Berlin, Wien und Mannheim. In Zürich, Ulm und Augsburg. In Marseille, Rom und London. Überall staunen die Menschen über Größe

und Gewicht, über Horn und Haut des Tieres. Selbst Prominenz mischt sich unter die Schaulustigen: Der preussische König Friedrich der Große etwa besichtigt Clara in Berlin, und August III., Kurfürst von Sachsen und König von Polen, lässt es sich nicht nehmen, den gewichtigen Gast in Dresden aufzusuchen. In seiner Porzellanfabrik steht das Nashorn sogar Modell: Wenig später gibt es zerbrechliche Clara-Figürchen als Andenken zu kaufen.

Nirgendwo aber ist der Rummel größer als in Frankreich. König Ludwig XV. empfängt das Nashorn in seiner „Menagerie“ – einem Tiergehege,

Alles Clara: Auch beim Karneval in Venedig macht die Dickhäuter-Dame eine gute Figur – ganz ohne Maskerade. Allerorten gibt es mittlerweile Nashorn-Andenken, von Porzellantellern bis hin zu schmucken Tischuhren. Künstler malen Clara, Schriftsteller verfassen Gedichte



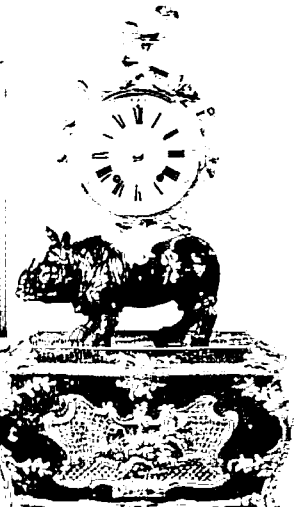
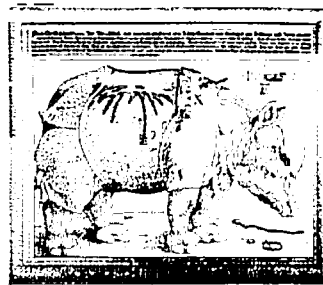
das zu seinem Schloss in Versailles gehört. Dort, in der Nähe der Hauptstadt Paris, sorgt Clara für mächtig Wirbel. Schriftsteller verfassen Gedichte und Lieder über sie, Forscher wissenschaftliche Texte. Der Künstler Jean-Baptiste Oudry malt ein lebensgroßes Porträt. Allenlei Schmuck – Uhren, Teetassen, Medaillen und Statuen – kursiert. Und mancher Fan trägt sogar Perücken „à la Rhinoceros“: mit einem Horn aus Haaren!

Paris ist ein voller Erfolg für das ungewöhnliche Paar. Erst nach ei-

nigen Monaten nehmen Clara und van der Meer Abschied von dem Trübel der Metropole. Das berühmte Nashorn aber bleibt ein Leben lang auf Tour und sieht mehr von Europa als die meisten Menschen dieser Zeit! Wo auch immer das tonnenschwere Model haltmacht, versetzt es alle Welt in einen Ausnahmezustand – in eine Claramanie.

1758 stirbt Clara im Alter von 20 Jahren recht unerwartet in London. Überreste des wohl berühmtesten Dickhäuters des 18. Jahrhunderts sind leider nicht erhalten.





## Ausstellungstipp *Clara hautnah!*



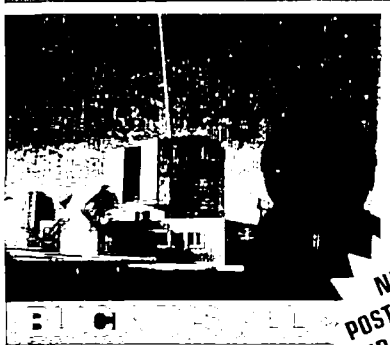
Vom 12. April bis 27. Juli 2008 zeigt das **STAATLICHE MUSEUM SCHWERIN** das drei mal fünf Meter große Clara-Gemälde von Jean-Baptiste Oudry (links). Der Franzose hat auch andere tierische Exoten gemalt, die damals in Versailles zur Schau gestellt wurden. Rund um die Ausstellung „Oudrys gemalte Menagerie“ gibt es eine Reihe von **Veranstaltungen** – viele davon extra für euch, unter anderem **FÜHRUNGEN** von Kindern für Kinder oder Projekttag in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Schweriner Zoo. Dort soll im September übrigens eine neue **NASHORNDAME** einziehen. Rätet mal, wie die heißen wird...? Infos und Termine unter [www.museum-schwerin.de](http://www.museum-schwerin.de) und unter [www.zoo-schwerin.de](http://www.zoo-schwerin.de)

# GEO

## lino



**AUSGETRICKST?**  
Warum oft mehr im  
Einkaufswagen landet,  
als wir brauchen



NEUE  
POSTERSERIE  
DER STERNEN-  
HIMMEL

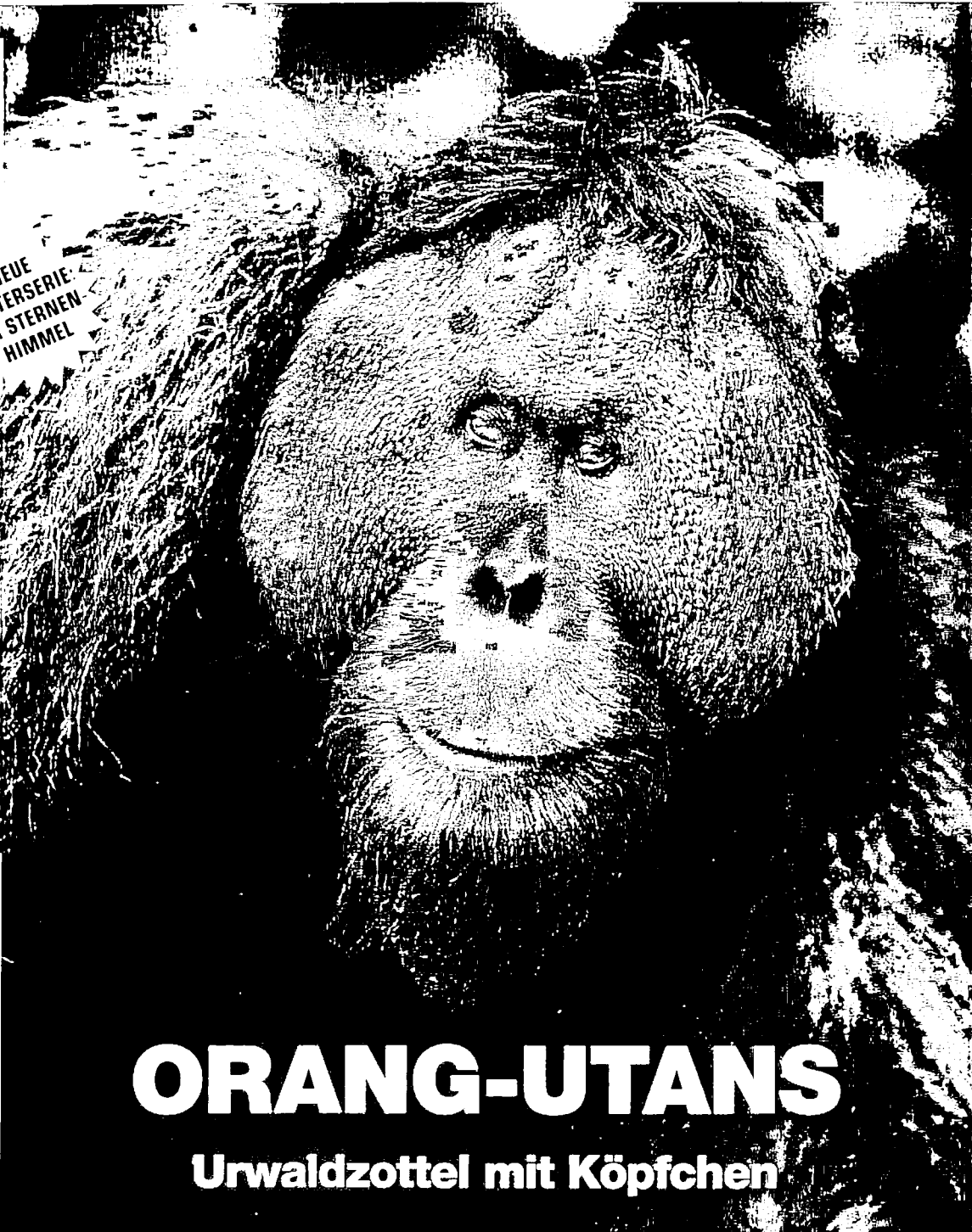
So funktioniert das  
größte Teleskop der Welt



**WANDWETTBEWERB**  
Führt Schiffler zum Kam  
mit Platanen und Eiche



Wie ein Nashorn  
Europa verzauberte



# ORANG-UTANS

## Urwaldzottel mit Köpfchen



9000-c.9306

# LAST CHANCE TO SEE . . .

Douglas Adams  
and Mark Carwardine



HEINEMANN : LONDON

1490

1X.208

thought, maybe it is not that they have yet to gain a language, it is that we have lost one.

The silverback seemed at last to tire of our presence. He hauled himself to his feet and lumbered easily off into another part of his home.

On the way back to the hut I discovered that I had a small tin of tuna in my camera bag, so we greedily devoured this on our return, along with a bottle of beer, and that, at two o'clock in the afternoon, marked the end of fun for the day, unless you count listening to a couple of German, sorry, Latvian students explaining how good their penknives are as fun.

At this Mark started to get quietly ratty, which meant that he grasped the beer bottle very tightly between his hands and stared at it a lot. Kurt asked us what we were planning to do next and we said we were flying up to Garamba National Park to see if we could find any northern white rhinos. Kurt nodded and said that himself he thought he would probably walk to Uganda tonight.

Mark's knuckles grew whiter round his beer bottle. Mark, like most zoologists, tends to prefer animals to people anyway, but in this case I was with him all the way. It occurred to me that we had spent a day rapt with wonder watching the mountain gorillas, and being particularly moved at how human they seemed, and finding this to be one of their most engaging and fascinating features. To find afterwards that a couple of hours spent with actual humans was merely irritating and a bit confusing.

Three days later I found myself standing on top of a termite hill staring at another termite hill through binoculars.

I knew that what I was standing on was a termite hill, but was disappointed that the thing I was staring at was not a northern white rhinoceros, since we had been walking determinedly towards it for upwards of an hour in the blazing midday sun in the middle of what can only be described as Africa.

Also we had run out of water. I could scarcely believe, having

been brought up on a rich diet of H. Rider Haggard, Noel Coward and *The Eagle*, that the first thing I would do on encountering the actual real savannah plains of Africa would be to march straight out into them in the midday sun and run out of water.

Though I wouldn't admit it, of course, having been brought up on a rich diet of H. Rider Haggard, etc., I was actually a bit frightened. The point about not running out of water in the middle of the savannah is that you do actually need the stuff. Your body regularly mentions to you that you need it, and after a while becomes quite strident on the subject. Furthermore we were miles from anywhere, and though there were a number of theories flying around about where we'd left the Landrover, none of them so far had stood up to rigorous testing.

I don't know how worried Mark or Chris were at this point, because it was difficult to get them – particularly Chris – to say anything coherent. Chris is from Edinburgh, and is an excellent specimen of one of the northern races: red-haired and fair-skinned, never happier than when carrying a DAT recorder and a microphone wrapped up in something that looks like a large dead rabbit across the Scottish moors with the wind and rain lashing at his gritted teeth. He is not a natural for the savannah. He was walking by now in smaller and smaller circles and discussing less and less sensible things while glowing like a traffic light. Mark was getting red and sullen.

The two women with us thought we were complete wimps. They were Kes Hillman-Smith, a rhino expert, and Annette Lanjouw, a chimpanzee expert.

Kes Hillman-Smith took over from me on the termite hill and scanned the horizon. Kes is in fact one of the world's leading experts on northern white rhinos, but she was not a world authority on where in a national park the size of Scotland, the twenty-two surviving white rhino were to be at that precise moment.

I may have got my facts wrong. I seem to have conflicting information on the size of Garamba National Park. One opinion



is that it is only 5,000 square kilometres, in which case I would have to say that it was only the size of part of Scotland, but it was a big enough part for twenty-two rhinoceroses to be very effectively hidden in.

Kes had been very sceptical about the termite hill from the outset, as it would befit a world expert on rhinoceroses to be, but since it had been the only thing in the distant heat haze that looked even remotely like a rhino, and we had come all this way, she had suggested that we might as well go for it.

Kes is a formidable woman, who looks as if she has just walked off the screen of a slightly naughty adventure movie: lean, fit, strikingly beautiful, and usually dressed in old combat gear that's had a number of its buttons shot off. She decided it was time to be businesslike about the map, which was a fairly rough representation of a fairly rough landscape. She worked out once and for all where the Landrover had to be, and worked it out with such ruthless determination that the Landrover would hardly dare not to be there, and eventually, of course, after miles of trekking, it was exactly there, hiding behind a bush with a thermos of tea wedged behind the seat.

Once we had revived ourselves with the sort of mug of tea which makes the desert bloom and angels sing, we rattled and rolled our way back to our base, which was a small visitors' village of huts on the edge of Garamba National Park, separated from it by a small river. We were currently the only visitors to the park which, as I say, is the size of part of Scotland. This is quite surprising because the park is one of Africa's richest. It is situated in north-east Zaïre, on the border with Sudan, and takes its name from the Garamba river which meanders from east to west through the park. Its habitat is a combination of savannah, gallery forest and papyrus marshes and contains currently 53,000 buffalo, 5,000 elephants, 3,000 hippos, 175 Congo giraffes, 270 species of birds, 60 odd lion and some giant eland, which are large, spiral-horned antelopes. They know there are giant eland in the park because we saw one. The last time anybody

saw one there was in the nineteen-fifties. We were rather pleased about that.

The park is very scantily visited, partly, I imagine, because of the insane bureaucratic nightmares which assail any visitor to Zaïre, but also because the park is three days' overland journey from Bunia, the nearest airport, so only the most determined visitors actually make it.

We were lucky. The Senior Management Adviser on the Garamba Rehabilitation Project, Charles Mackie, came to pick us up from Bunia in an anti-poaching patrol Cessna 185. The runway on which we landed just outside the boundaries of the park was merely a flattened piece of grass along which we bounded and hopped before finally slewing to halt. It was a dramatic change from the cold mistiness of the Virunga volcanoes – grassland as far as the horizon in every direction, hot, dry air, a Landrover bounding along dusty roads through the savannah, and elephants heaving themselves along in the hazy distance.

That evening we went to have a meal at the house which Kes shares with her husband Fraser, a park conservation manager. It was a house they built themselves, out in the bush on the edge of the river. The house is a long, low, rambling structure, full of books, and largely open to the weather – when it rains they lower tarpaulins over the spaces where the windows aren't. For the two years it took them to build the house they lived in a tiny mud hut with a pet mongoose that used to dig up the floor looking for worms, a dog, two cats – and a baby.

Because their house is so open, it is regularly full of animals. A young hippo, for instance, frequently comes to chew on the pot plants in their living room. It often spends the night asleep in their bedroom with its head resting next to the (second) baby's cot. There are snakes and elephants in the garden, rats which eat all their soap, and termites gradually nibbling away at the support poles of the house.

The only animals that really worry them are the crocodiles.



which live in the river at the bottom of the garden. Their dog was eaten by one.

'It is a bit of a worry,' Kes told us. 'But we just have to make our lives as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. If we lived in the city we'd be just as concerned about the children getting run over by a bus or abducted as we are about them being attacked by a crocodile.'

After dinner they said that if we wanted to stand a hope in hell of actually seeing any rhino then it would help considerably if we could find out where they actually were. They suggested that we ask Charles to take us up in the Cessna the next day, and then perhaps we could go out by Landrover again the day after that and see how close we could get to them. They contacted Charles over their battered old field radio, and made the arrangements.

Charles flies his plane the same way my mother drives her car round the country lanes in Dorset. If you didn't know she had done it invincibly every day of her life for years you would be hiding in the footwell gibbering with fear instead of just smiling glassily and humming 'Abide With Me'.

Charles is a thin and slightly intense man, and also rather shy. Sometimes you think you must have done something which has mightily offended him, and then realise that the sudden silence is only because he can't think of anything to say next and has given up. In the plane, though, there is so much to see that he is very talkative and also, of course, very hard to hear.

He had to say it three times before I finally believed that I wasn't dreaming it – he said he just wanted to count the eggs in the nest of a saddlebilled stork at the top of the tree we were fast approaching.

He banked sharply over the top of the tree, and then appeared to put the hand brake on while he leant out of the window and counted the eggs. The cockpit was thick with the sound of 'Abide With Me' as the plane seemed slowly to start tumbling sideways out of the sky. He seemed to miscount twice before he was happy

with the final tally, whereupon he hauled his head back through the window, turned to ask if we were doing all right, then turned back, refastened the window, and at last scooped the plane back up into the air moments before death.

From the air, the savannah looks like ostrich skin stretched across the land. We passed a small group of elephants nodding and bowing their way across the plains. Charles shouted over his shoulder at us that they have a project in Garamba National Park for training elephants, and have achieved the first major success in this field since Hannibal. African elephants are intelligent but notoriously difficult to train, and in the old Tarzan movies they used to use Indian elephants and stick bigger ears on them. The ultimate aim of this project is to use elephants on anti-poaching patrols, and also on tourist safaris. Once again, tourist revenue is seen as the one certain way of ensuring the future survival of the threatened wildlife of the area.

We wheeled around in ever increasing circles, looking out for anything resembling a rhinoceros. From up here they would clearly be much easier to distinguish from termite hills, if only for the sheer speed with which they move.

Suddenly there was one.

And there, as we passed a screen of trees, was another.

There, in fact, were another two: a mother and daughter, quite close to us moving rapidly across the plain like trotting boulders. Even seen from a couple of hundred feet in the air the sense of massive weight on the move is extraordinarily impressive. As we crossed the steady path the mother and daughter were keeping and wheeled round back over them, descending as we did so, it felt as if we were participating in a problem of three-body physics, swinging round in the gravitational pull of the rhinos.

We took another pass over them, lower and slower, directly following their path, coming as close to them as we could, and this time the sense was of taking part in military manoeuvres in which we were giving air cover to some monstrous cavalry hurtling across the plain.

Shouting above the noise in the cockpit we asked Charles if it didn't worry the rhinos having us flying so close to them.

'Not half as much as it worries you,' he said. 'No, it doesn't bother them at all really. A rhino isn't scared of anything very much and is only really interested in what things smell like. We fly down low over them pretty regularly to get a good look at them, identify them, see what they're up to, check that they're healthy and so on. We know them all pretty well, and we'd know if they were upset about anything.'

I was struck again by something that was becoming a truism on these travels, that seeing animals such as these in a zoo was absolutely no preparation for seeing them in the wild – great beasts moving through seemingly limitless space, utterly the masters of their own world.

Or almost the masters. The next rhino we found, a mile or so further on, was engaged in a stand-off with a hyena. The hyena was circling warily round the rhino while the rhino peered at it myopically over its lowered horns. A rhino's eyesight is not particularly acute, and if it wants to get a good look at something it will tend to look at it first with one eye and then with the other – its eyes are on either side of its skull and it can't see straight ahead. Charles pointed out as we flew over that this rhino had had problems with hyenas before: half of its tail was missing.

By now I was beginning to feel seriously airsick and we started to head back. The purpose of the trip was just to find out where the rhinos were, and out of a total wild population of twenty-two rhinos, we had seen altogether eight. Tomorrow we would set out overland to see if we could get close to one on ground level.

One of the things that people who don't know anything about white rhinoceroses find most interesting about them is their colour.

It isn't white.

Not even remotely. It's a rather handsome dark grey. Not even a sort of pale grey that might arguably pass as an off-white. just

plain dark grey. People therefore assume that zoologists are either perverse or colour-blind, but it's not that, it's that they're illiterate. 'White' is a mistranslation of the Afrikaans word '*weit*' meaning 'wide', and it refers to the animal's mouth, which is wider than that of the black rhino. By one of those lucky chances the white rhino is in fact a very slightly lighter shade of dark grey than the black rhino. If the white rhino had actually been darker than the black rhino people would just get cross, which would be a pity since there are many better things to get cross about regarding the white rhino than its colour, such as what happens to its horns.

There is a widespread myth about what people want rhino horns for – in fact two myths. The first myth is that ground rhino horn is an aphrodisiac. This, I think it's safe to say, is just what it appears to be – superstition. It has little to do with any known medical fact, and probably a lot to do with the fact that a rhino's horn is a big sticky-up hard thing.

The second myth is that anyone actually believes the first myth.

It was probably the invention of a journalist, or at best a misunderstanding. It's easy to see where the idea came from when you consider the variety of things that the Chinese, for example, believe to be aphrodisiacs, which include the brain of a monkey, the tongue of a sparrow, the human placenta, the penis of a white horse, rabbit hair from old brushes, and the dried sexual parts of a male tiger soaked in a bottle of European brandy for six months. A big sticky-up hard thing like a rhinoceros horn would seem to be a natural for such a list, though it's perhaps harder to understand, in this context, why grinding the thing down would be such an attractive idea. The fact is that there is no actual evidence to suggest that the Chinese do believe rhino horn to be an aphrodisiac. The only people who do believe it are people who've read somewhere that other people believe it, and are ready and willing to believe anything they hear that they like the sound of.

There is no known trade in rhino horn for the purposes of

aprodicia. (This, like most things, is no longer strictly true. It is now known that there are a couple of people in Northern India who use it, but they only do it to annoy.)

Much horn is used in traditional medicine in the Far East, but a major part of the trade in rhino horn is caused by something much more absurd, and it's this: fashion. Dagger handles made of rhinoceros horn are an extremely fashionable item of male jewellery in the Yemen. That's it: costume jewellery.

Let's see the effect of this fashion.

Northern white rhinos were unknown to the western world until their discovery in 1903. At the time, there were enormous numbers of them in five different countries: Chad, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda and Zaïre. But their discovery spelt disaster, because unfortunately for the northern white rhino it has two horns – which makes it doubly attractive to poachers. The front one, the longest, averages two feet in length; the world record-holder had an incredible horn six feet long and, sadly, was worth some US\$5,000.

By 1980, all but 1,000 had been killed by poachers. There were still no serious efforts to protect them and, five years later, the population reached an all-time low of just thirteen animals, all living in Garamba National Park. The animal was on the verge of extinction.

Until 1984, Garamba's 5,000 square kilometres were under the protection of a small number of staff. These staff were untrained, often unpaid, had no vehicles and no equipment. If a poacher wanted to kill a rhino, all he had to do was turn up. Even local Zaïrois occasionally killed the rhinos to fashion small pieces of horn into rings which they believed would protect them against poison and harmful people. But most of the horn was taken by heavily armed Sudanese poachers. It was taken back to Sudan and, from there, entered the illegal international marketplace.

The situation in Garamba has improved dramatically since then, with the rehabilitation project which began in 1984. There is now a total of 246 trained staff, with eleven vehicles, a light



A team of bearers carrying half the collected works of Dickens, some dirty laundry, a dozen computer magazines and a tin of pear halves up to the gorillas in the Virunga volcanoes.

A mountain gorilla and a twig. This is where all the trouble started.





A mountain gorilla, mooching.

A zoologist, mooching.



Kes Hillman-Smith standing on one termite hill, looking at another.



A northern white rhino explaining to a hyena that it wishes to retain the rest of its tail.

A not-even-remotely-white northern white rhinoceros, making off across the plain like a nimble young tank.

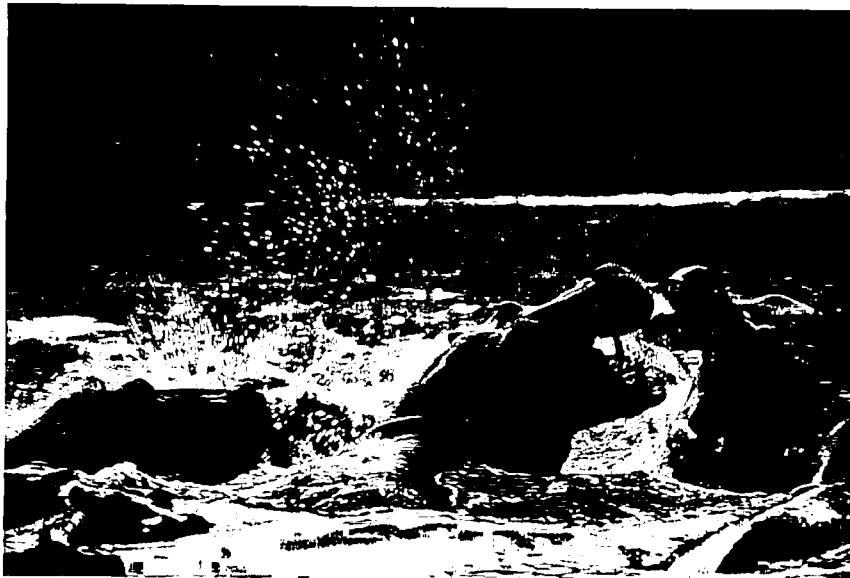


Mark demonstrating the most effective way of catching the world's most common disease after tooth decay.



African elephants are very difficult to train.  
Hannibal tried to conquer Rome with them without success.  
In Zaïre they are just trying to train them to carry tourists.

A rare moment of excitement in the hippo pool.



aircraft, permanent guard posts throughout the park and mobile patrols all in radio contact with one another. Two rhinos poached in May 1984, immediately after the rehabilitation work began, were the last to be killed in the park. The poacher was caught and imprisoned, but later allowed to escape. Attitudes have changed so much now that it is unlikely he would be allowed to escape again. Other species are still poached, but intensive protection over the past five years has at last begun to have an effect. In fact, there have been a number of rhino births and the population now stands at a slightly better twenty-two.

Twenty-two.

An astounding feature of the situation is this: the eventual value of a rhino horn, by the time it has been shipped out of Africa and fashioned into a piece of tasteless costume jewellery for some rich young Yemeni to strut around and pull girls with, is thousands of US dollars. But the poacher himself, the man who goes into the park and risks his life to shoot the actual rhino which all of this time, effort and money is going into protecting, will get about ten or twelve or fifteen dollars for the horn. So the difference between life or death for one of the rarest and most magnificent animals in the world is actually about twelve dollars.

It's easy to ask – in fact I asked this – why not simply pay the poachers more *not* to kill the animals? The answer, of course, is very simple. If one person offers a poacher, say, twenty five dollars not to shoot an animal, and then someone else offers him twelve dollars to shoot it, the poacher is liable to see that he can now earn thirty-seven dollars from the same animal. While the horns continue to command the amount of money they do, there is always going to be an incentive for someone to go and earn that money. So the question really is this. How do you persuade a young Yemeni that a rhino horn dagger is not a symbol of your manhood but a signal of the fact that you need such a symbol?

Recently, there have been two separate, though unconfirmed, sightings of northern white rhinos in Southern National Park.

Sudan. But the current political situation there means that very little can be done about them and, effectively, the only animals with any chance of survival have been restricted to Garamba since the mid-eighties. They are still in a precarious position, but there is one ray of hope: experience with the southern white rhino.

Northern white rhinos and southern white rhinos belong to the same species but their populations have been separated for such a long time that they have evolved a range of ecological and behavioural differences. More importantly, the genetic differences are so great that scientists consider them to be separate sub-species and, consequently, believe they have lived apart for more than two million years. Nowadays, they are permanently separated by a thousand miles of African rain forest, woodland and savannah.

Without experience, the two animals are virtually impossible to tell apart – though the northern generally holds its head higher than its southern counterpart and their body proportions are also rather different.

At the time of its discovery, the northern white was by far the commoner of the two. The southern white had been discovered nearly a century earlier but, by 1882, it was considered to be extinct. Then, at the turn of the century, a small population of about eleven animals was discovered in Umfolozi, Zululand. All the stops were pulled out to save them from extinction and, by the mid-sixties, their number had increased to about five hundred. It was enough to begin translocating individuals to other parks and reserves and to other countries. There are now more than 5,000 southern rhinos throughout southern Africa, and they are out of immediate danger.

The point is that we are not too late to save the northern white rhino from extinction.

As the sun began to go down we went and sat by the local hippos. At a wide bend in the river the water formed a deep, slow moving

pool, and lying in the pool, grunting and bellowing were about two hundred hippopotamuses. The opposite bank was very high, so that the pool formed a sort of natural amphitheatre for the hippos to sing in, and the sound reverberated around us with such startling clarity that I don't suppose there can be a better place in the whole of Africa for hearing a hippo grunt. The light was becoming magically warm and long, and I sat watching them for an hour, aglow with amazement. The hippos nearest to us watched with a kind of uncomprehending belligerence such as we had become used to at the airports in Zaïre, but most of them simply lay there with their heads up on their neighbours' rumps wearing huge grins of oafish contentment. I expect I was wearing something similar myself.

Mark said that he had never seen anything like it in all his travels in Africa. Garamba, he said, was unique for the freedom it allowed you to get close to the animals and away from other people. There is, of course, another side to this. We heard recently that, a few weeks later, someone sitting in the exact same spot where we were sitting had been attacked and killed by a lion.

That night, as I turned in for the night, I discovered something very interesting. When I had first checked into my hut the day before I had noticed that the mosquito net above the bed was tied up into a huge knot. I say 'noticed' in the loosest possible sense of the word. It was tied up in a knot, and when I went to bed that night I had had to untie it to drape it over the bed. Further than that I had paid no attention to it whatsoever.

Tonight I discovered why it is that mosquito nets get tied up into knots. The reason is embarrassingly simple, and I can hardly bear to admit what it is. It's to stop the mosquitoes getting into it.

I climbed into bed and gradually realised that there were almost as many mosquitoes inside the net as outside. The action of draping the net over myself was almost as much use as the magnificent fence which the Australians built across the whole

of their continent to keep the rabbits out when there were already rabbits on both sides of the fence. Nervously I shone my torch up into the dome of the net. It was black with mozzies.

I tried to brush them out, and lost a few of them. I unhooked the net from the ceiling and flapped it vigorously round the room. That woke them up and got them interested. I turned the thing completely inside out, took it outside and flapped it about a lot more till it seemed that I had got rid of most of them, took it back into the room, hung it up and climbed into bed. Almost immediately I was being bitten crazy. I shone my torch up into the dome. It was still black with mozzies. I took the net down again, laid it out on the floor, and tried to scrape the mosquitoes off with the edge of my portable computer, which the batteries had fallen out of, thus making it useful for little else. Didn't work. I tried it again with the edge of my writing pad. That was a bit more effective, but it meant that I was trying to write between dozens of smeared mosquito corpses for the next few days. I hung the net up again and went to bed. It was still full of mosquitoes, all of which were now in a vigorous biting mood. They buzzed and zizzed around me in an excited rage.

Right.

I took the net down. I laid it on the floor and I jumped on it. I continued jumping on it for a good ten minutes, till I was certain that every square centimetre of the thing had been jumped on at least six times, and then I jumped on it some more. Then I found a book and smacked it with the book all over. Then I jumped on it some more, smacked it with the book again, took it outside, shook it out, took it back in, hung it up and climbed into bed underneath it. The net was full of very angry mosquitoes. It was by now about four in the morning and by the time Mark came to wake me at about six to go looking for rhinoceroses I was not in the mood for wildlife, and said so. He laughed in his cheery kind of way and offered me half of a tinned sausage for breakfast. I took that and a mug of powdered coffee, and walked down to the riverbank which was about fifty yards away. I stood

ankle deep in the cool quietly flowing water, listening to the early morning noises of the birds and insects, and biting the sausage, and after a while began to be revived by the dawning realisation of how absurd I must look.

Charles arrived in the Landrover along with Annette Lanjouw and we piled our stuff for the day into it and set off.

As we bumped and rattled our way out into the savannah once more, deep into the area where we had seen the rhino the previous day from the plane, I asked in a very casual, matter of fact, just out of interest kind of way, whether or not rhino were actually dangerous.

Mark grinned and shook his head. He said we'd be very unlucky indeed to be hurt by a rhino. This didn't seem to me entirely to answer the question, but I didn't like to press the point. I was only asking out of mild curiosity.

Mark went on anyway.

'You hear a lot of stuff that simply isn't true,' he said, 'or at least is blown up out of all proportion, just because it sounds dramatic. It really irritates me when people pretend that animals they meet are dangerous, just so it makes them seem brave or intrepid. It's like fishermen's tales. A lot of early explorers were really terrible exaggerators. They would double or quadruple the length of the snakes they saw. Perfectly innocent anacondas became sixty foot monsters that lay in wait to crush people to death. All complete rubbish. But the anaconda's reputation has been damaged for good.'

'But rhinos are perfectly safe?'

'Oh, more or less. I'd be a bit wary of black rhinos if I was on foot. They have got a reputation for unprovoked aggression which I suppose they've pretty much earned themselves. One black rhino in Kenya caught me off guard once, and severely dented a friend's car which I'd borrowed for the day. He'd only had it a few weeks. His previous car, which I had borrowed for the weekend, had been written off by a buffalo. It was all very embarrassing. Hello, have we found something?'



Charles had brought the Landrover to a halt and was peering at the horizon through his binoculars.

'OK,' he said. 'I think I can see one. About two miles away.'

We each looked through our own binoculars, following his directions. The early morning air was still cool, and there was no heat haze frying the horizon. Once I had worked out which group of trees in front of a tussocky hill it was we were meant to be looking just to the left and slightly in front of I eventually found myself looking at something that looked suspiciously like the termite hill we had almost killed ourselves tracking down two days earlier. It was very still.

'Sure it's a rhino?' I asked, politely.

'Yup,' said Charles. 'Dead sure. We'll stay parked here. They have very keen hearing and the noise of the Landrover would send it away if we drove any closer. So we walk.'

We gathered our cameras together and walked.

'Quietly,' said Charles.

We walked more quietly.

It was difficult to be that quiet struggling through a wide, marsh-filled gully, with our boots and even our knees farting and belching in the mud. Mark entertained us by whispering interesting facts to us.

'Did you know,' he said, 'that bilharzia is the second most common disease in the world after tooth decay?'

'No, really?' I said.

'It's very interesting,' said Mark. 'It's a disease you get from wading through infected water. Tiny snails breed in the water and they act as hosts to tiny parasitic worms that latch on to your skin. When the water evaporates they burrow in and attack your bladder and intestines. You'll know if you've got it, because it's like really bad flu with diarrhoea, and you also piss blood.'

'I think we're meant to be keeping quiet,' I said.

Once we were on the other side of the gully we regrouped again behind some trees and Charles checked on the wind direction and gave us some further instructions.

'You need to know something about the way that a rhino sees his world before we go barging into it,' he whispered to us. 'They're pretty mild and inoffensive creatures for all their size and horns and everything. His eyesight is very poor and he only relies on it for pretty basic information. If he sees five animals like us approaching him he'll get nervous and run off. So we have to keep close together in single file. Then he'll think we're just one animal and he'll be less worried.'

'A pretty big animal,' I said.

'That doesn't matter. He's not afraid of big animals, but numbers bother him. We also have to stay down wind of him, which means that from here we're going to have to make a wide circle round him. His sense of smell is very acute indeed. In fact it's his most important sense. His whole world picture is made up of smells. He "sees" in smells. His nasal passages are in fact bigger than his brain.'

From here it was at last possible to discern the creature with the naked eye. We were a bit more than half a mile from it. It was standing out in the open looking, at moments when it was completely still, like a large outcrop of rock. From time to time its long sloping head would wave gently from side to side and its horns would bob slightly up and down as, mildly and inoffensively, it cropped the grass. This was not a termite hill.

We set off again, very quietly, constantly stopping, ducking and shifting our position to try and stay down wind of the creature, while the wind, which didn't care one way or the other, constantly shifted its position too. At last we made it to another small clump of trees about a hundred yards from the creature, which so far had seemed to be undisturbed by our approach. From here, though, it was just open ground between us and it. We stayed for a few minutes to watch and photograph it. If any closer approach did in fact scare it off, then this was our last opportunity. The animal was turned slightly away from us, continuing gently to crop the grass. At last the wind was well established in our favour and, nervously, quietly, we set off again.

It was a little like that game we play as children, in which one child stands facing the wall, while the others try to creep up behind and touch her. She will from time to time suddenly turn around, and anyone she catches moving has to go all the way to the back and start again. Generally she won't be in a position to impale anyone she doesn't like the look of on a three foot horn, but in other respects it was similar.

The animal is, of course, a herbivore. It lives by grazing. The closer we crept to it, and the more monstrously it loomed in front of us, the more incongruous its gentle activity seemed to be. It was like watching a JCB excavator quietly getting on with a little weeding.

At about forty yards' distance, the rhinoceros suddenly stopped eating and looked up. It turned slowly to look at us, and regarded us with grave suspicion while we tried very hard to look like the smallest and most inoffensive animal we could possibly be. It watched us carefully but without apparent comprehension, its small black eyes peering dully at us from either side of its horn. You can't help but try and follow an animal's thought processes, and you can't help, when faced with an animal like a three ton rhinoceros with nasal passages bigger than its brain, but fail.

The world of smells is now virtually closed to modern man. Not that we haven't got a sense of smell – we sniff our food or wine, we occasionally smell a flower, and can usually tell if there's a gas leak, but generally it's all a bit of a blur, and often an irrelevant or bothersome blur at that. When we read that Napoleon wrote to Josephine on one occasion, 'Don't wash – I'm coming home,' we are simply bemused and almost think of it as deviant behaviour. We are so used to thinking of sight, closely followed by hearing, as the chief of the senses that we find it hard to visualise (the word itself is a giveaway) a world which declares itself primarily to the sense of smells. It's not a world our mental processors can resolve – or, at least, they are no longer practised in resolving it. For a great many animals, however, smell is the chief of the senses. It tells them what is good to eat and

what is not (we go by what the packet tells us and the sell-by date). It guides them towards food that isn't within line of sight (we already know where the shops are). It works at night (we turn on the light). It tells them of the presence and state of mind of other animals (we use language). It also tells them what other animals have been in the vicinity and doing what in the last day or two (we simply don't know, unless they've left a note). Rhinoceroses declare their movements and their territory to other animals by stamping in their faeces, and then leaving smell traces of themselves wherever they walk, which is the sort of note we would not appreciate being left.

When we smell something slightly unexpected, if we can't immediately make sense of it and it isn't particularly bothersome, we simply ignore it, and this is probably equivalent to the rhino's reaction to seeing us. It appeared not to make any particular decision about us, but merely to forget that it had a decision to make. The grass presented it with something infinitely richer and more interesting to its senses, and the animal returned to cropping it.

We crept on closer. Eventually we got to within about twenty-five yards, and Charles signalled us to stop. We were close enough. Quite close enough. We were in fact astoundingly close to it.

The animal measured about six feet high at its shoulders, and sloped down gradually towards its hindquarters and its rear legs, which were chubby with muscle. The sheer immensity of every part of it exercised a fearful magnetism on the mind. When the rhino moved a leg, just slightly, huge muscles moved easily under its heavy skin like Volkswagens parking.

The noise of our cameras seemed to distract it and it looked up again, but not in our direction. It appeared not to know what to think about this, and after a while returned to its grazing.

The light breeze that was blowing towards us began to shift its direction, and we shifted with it, which brought us round more to the front of the rhino. This seemed to us, in our world

dominated by vision, to be an odd thing to do, but so long as the rhino could not smell us, it could take or leave what we looked like. It then turned slightly towards us itself, so that we were suddenly crouched in full view of the beast. It seemed to chew a little more thoughtfully, but for a while paid us no more mind than that. We watched quietly for fully three or four minutes, and even the sound of our cameras ceased to bother the animal. After a few minutes we became a little more careless about noise, and started to talk to each other about our reactions, and now the rhino became a little more restive and uneasy. It stopped grazing, lifted its head and looked at us steadily for about a minute, still uncertain what to do.

Again, I imagine myself, sitting here in my study writing this through the afternoon and gradually realising that a slight smell I had noticed earlier is still there, and beginning to wonder if I should start to look for other clues as to what it could be. I would start to *look* for something, something I could see: a bottle of something that's fallen over, or something electrical that's overheating. The smell is simply the clue that there's something I should look for.

For the rhino, the sight of us was simply a clue that there was something he should sniff for, and he began to sniff the air more carefully, and to move around in a slow careful arc. At that moment the wind began to move around and gave us away completely. The rhino snapped to attention, turned away from us, and hurtled off across the plain like a nimble young tank.

We had seen our northern white rhinoceros, and it was time to go home.

The next day Charles flew us back across the ostrich skin savannah to Bunia airport where we were due once more to pick up a missionary flight returning to Nairobi. The plane was already there waiting and a representative from the airline assured us, against the evidence of all our previous experience, that there would be no problems, we could go straight to the plane. Then,

a few minutes later we were told that we would just have to go quickly to the immigration office. We could leave our bags. We went to the immigration office, where we were told that we should bring our bags. We brought our bags. Expensive looking camera equipment.

We were then confronted by a large Zairois official in a natty blue suit whom we had noticed earlier hanging around watching us take our baggage out of Charles's plane. I had had the feeling then that he was sizing us up for something.

He examined our passports for a goodish long time before acknowledging our presence at all, then at last he looked up at us, and a wide smile crept slowly across his face.

'You entered the country,' he asked. 'at Bukavu?'

In fact he said it in French, so we made a bit of a meal of understanding him, which was something that experience had taught us to do. Eventually we admitted that, insofar as we had understood the question, yes, we had entered at Bukavu.

'Then,' he said, quietly, triumphantly, 'you must leave from Bukavu.'

He made no move to give us back our passports.

We looked at him blankly.

He explained slowly. Tourists, he said, had to leave the country from the same port by which they had entered. Smile.

We utterly failed to understand what he had said. This was almost true anyway. It was the most preposterous invention. He still held on to our passports. Next to him a young girl was sitting, studiously copying down copious information from other visitors' passports, information that would almost certainly never see the light of day again.

We stood and argued while our plane sat out on the Tarmac waiting to take off to Nairobi, but the official simply sat and held our passports. We knew it was nonsense. He knew we knew it was nonsense. That was clearly part of the pleasure of it. He smiled at us again, gave us a slow contented shrug, and idly brushed a bit of fluff off the sleeve of the natty blue suit towards

the cost of which he clearly expected a major contribution.

On the wall above him, gazing seriously into the middle distance from a battered frame, stood the figure of President Mobuto, resplendent in his leopardskin pillbox hat.

## HEARTBEATS IN THE NIGHT

If you took the whole of Norway, scrunched it up a bit, shook out all the moose and reindeer, hurled it ten thousand miles round the world and filled it with birds then you'd be wasting your time, because it looks very much as if someone has already done it.

Fiordland, a vast tract of mountainous terrain that occupies the south-west corner of South Island, New Zealand, is one of the most astounding pieces of land anywhere on God's earth, and one's first impulse, standing on a cliff top surveying it all, is simply to burst into spontaneous applause.

It is magnificent. It is awe-inspiring. The land is folded and twisted and broken on such a scale that it makes your brain quiver and sing in your skull just trying to comprehend what it is looking at. Mountains and clouds jumbled on top of each other, immense rivers of ice cracking their way millimetre by millimetre through the ravines, cataracts thundering down into the narrow green valleys below, it all shines so luminously in the magically clear light of New Zealand that to eyes which are accustomed to the grimier air of most of the western world it seems too vivid to be real.

When Captain Cook saw it from the sea in 1773 he recorded that 'inland as far as the eye can see the peaks are crowded together as to scarcely admit any valleys between them'. The great forked valleys have been carved out by glaciers over millions of years, and many are flooded by the sea for many miles inland.