

Technical Session

Minutes of Meeting Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) and Working Group Result, Kaziranga National Park, Assam India (5-7 March 2007)

I. (9.15-10.50 AM) DAY 2.

A - STATUS OF RHINO AND HORN STOCKPILES IN KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Utpal Bora

Kaziranga National Park (KNP), with an area of 429.93 km², is known worldwide for its success in the conservation of greater one-horned rhino. It harbors the world's largest population of one-horned rhino: 1855 animals in 2006. Utpal Bora briefly explained that the first rhino census in KNP was initiated in 1996 and since then there has been a steady increase in its population. Table 1 shows the successive rhino population in 2006.

Table 1: Successive Rhino Population in 2006.

Year	Male	Female	Young	Un sex	Total
1966	67	83	44	172	366
1972	203	188	148	119	658
1978	331	332	243	43	939
1984	283	296	201	166	946
1991	338	357	190	184	1069
1993	387	379	176	222	1164
1999	556	586	257	153	1552
2006	545	693	409	208	1855

Mr. Bora further stated the success behind the increase in population in KNP was the commendable motivation and dedication of staff officers along with the teamwork and help from the local people who have good awareness of the wildlife and wilderness. Increasing infrastructure such as roads, wireless vehicle network, and an increased level of intelligence have been an added advantage. To continue current high standards, it is necessary to utilize modern scientific management, including checking the straying of rhino which is one of the biggest problems. A united, cost-effective approach, including increasing facilities for staff officers, will further enhance and strengthen the conservation and population of rhinos in Kaziranga.

B - STATUS OF RHINO AND HORN STOCKPILES IN JALDAPARA AND GORUMARA NATIONAL PARKS

Dr. P. T Bhutia

Dr. P.T Bhutia commenced his presentation with a brief introduction on Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary and Gorumara National Park and said that West Bengal is not significant compared to Kaziranga and Chitwan National Parks. He informed that the greater one-horned rhino was distributed in Sundarbans, Malda districts and over areas of the Gangetic Plains about 160 years ago. Javan rhinos once inhabited Bengal's dense forests, but have become extinct. The only surviving species of Asiatic rhino in [WB??] western Bengal is *Rhinoceros unicornis* which are presently confined only in two ranges in protected areas of state (Gorumara and Jaldapara) located in the flood plains of northern west Bengal, Duars. The rhino populations in Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary and Gorumara National Park are shown in Tables 2 and 3.