

**F - STATUS OF RHINOS AND HORN STOCKPILES
IN NEPAL**
Mr. Shiva Raj Bhatta

Shiva Bhatta commenced his presentation by saying that three Terai protected areas (Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve contain rhino. The government's efforts to conserve rhinoceros through the establishment of Chitwan National Park, implementation of a buffer zone program and translocation of rhinos to other protected areas has improved the rhino's prospects in Nepal. The population in Chitwan has increased significantly. The current status and distribution of rhino are shown in Table 6:

Table 6. Rhino populations in Nepal

Name Of PA	Rhino Population									Total	Count/ estimate
	Adult			Sub Adult			Calves				
	Male	Female	Unsex	Male	Female	Unsex	Male	Female	Unsex		
Chitwan NP	113	129	20	9	25	8	11	19	38	372	2005
Bardia NP	9	11		4	3				3	30	2007
Suklaphanta WR	3			2					2	7	2007
Grand Total	125	140	20	15	28	8	11	19	43	409	

In Nepal, the main reason for the rapid reduction in the rhino population are the disappearance of most of alluvial plain grasslands, combined with massive poaching. Major steps taken so far include arresting illegal traders - more than 100 people are in custody with a provision of up to 15 years in jail and a fine of NRs100,000.00, or both.

Mr. Bhatta has stressed that in addition to increasing the efficiency of park staff in rhino conservation, training needs to be provided on a regular basis to enhance staff skills and capabilities. Horn stockpiles are collected and stored in Chitwan National Park.

With the increase in political commitments, the action plan, which is based on regular monitoring of rhino population and their habitats and generating resources for plan implementation, the future of rhino looks promising in Nepal.

III. (2.00 3.00 PM)
G - INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020
Mr. Tariq Aziz

Tariq Aziz said 2000 rhinos survive in about 970 km² of habitat in three Indian Protected Areas (Pabitora, Orang and Kaziranga). Threats faced in Assam include poaching and illegal trade, habitat destruction, conflict with people, and fragmented populations. Improvement in the conservation status of the rhinos in India means improving protection of the existing rhino populations and recreating lost rhino populations via translocations.

Successful translocations need:

- Buy-in from the government
- Technical expertise on rhino translocations
- Sufficient resources

Indian Rhino Vision 2020's first phase has a 3-year duration, with the aim to conduct

- Assessment of security in target protected areas
- Assessment of rhino habitat and rhino population status and potential
- Development of improved security infrastructure and operations in Manas and Orang
- Training of Assam Forest Department staff in translocation of rhinos
- Translocation of 20-30 rhinos into Manas National Park in Feb-March 2007
- Monitoring of translocated rhinos in Manas.

Phase one stresses protection work. Some new roads are now operational, and many more plans are in place. The Southern Boundary Road, as yet unbuilt, is very critical for protection of Manas. Local communities are involved in various activities, and more than 130 young men from villages around Manas have been engaged for its protection. Mr. Aziz mentioned that the village communities actively participated in the Manas Centenary Celebrations (January 2006), where many poachers surrendered their arms.

The commitment of the Government of India has created greater interest and attracted attention. There is marked improvement in patrolling; issues relating to staff welfare and shortage of personnel are yet to be addressed

H RHINO CENSUS METHODOLOGY

Mr. Bhupen N. Talukdar

Mr. Bhupen N. Talukdar delivered a presentation on Ecological Change of Rhino Habitat in Orang within 15 years. He mentioned that from 1890 to 1900, Orang was heavily settled, but villagers left the area because of chronic black-water fever. Mr. Talukdar discussed the composition of the vegetation cover in Orang National Park and population estimates of rhino in the park from various censuses carried out by the Assam Forest Department. He pointed out the change in grassland composition in the park and impact of Mimosa a weed that retards the growth of grassland in the park. Mr. Talukdar also stressed the need to check illegal cattle grazing in the park and in that matter massive awareness in the fringe villages is necessary. Periodic monitoring of vegetation in Orang National Park is essential to initiate corrective measures to ensure long-term conservation of rhino and habitat in the park.

I REHABILITATION OF RHINOS IN ASSAM

Dr. Anjan Talukdar and Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury

Dr. A. Talukdar and Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury discussed treatment and temporary care of injured, sick, orphan animals and release of fit individuals back to appropriate habitat (International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council).

Chronology of Rhino rehabilitation:

