

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:

