

#### IV. (9.05 10.25 AM) Day 3

##### M - STATUS OF RHINO POACHING IN ASSAM AND TRADE ON RHINO HORN

Mr. Mrigen Baura and Dr. Bibhab Talukdar

The Assam Forest Department has been making major contribution towards conservation and protection of rhinos in Assam. Mr. Mrigen Baura and Dr. Bibhab Talukdar emphasized that though rhino bearing areas like Kaziranga, Orang, and Pabitora witness continuous growth in the rhino population the other areas like Laokhwa Wildlife Sanctuary and Manas National Park face the threat of poachers and wild life traders. Orang National Park has witnessed severe poaching threats during 1994-2000. However, the officials and NGOs taking this matter seriously have sponsored equipments to strengthen anti-poaching patrols and this has certainly played a significant role in decreasing the poaching of rhinos to a great extent. Similarly, in Pabitora the maximum number of rhinos were poached in the sanctuary in 1988.

The poachers in Pabitora often use electrocution. Kaziranga National Park, although an outstanding example of conservation of Asiatic rhinos, has also witnessed threat of poaching. From 1987-2005, a total 358 rhinos were poached while 1137 died due to natural causes. Laokhwa Wildlife Sanctuary had 70 rhinos and Manas had about 80. But during the period of ethnic unrest, most of the rhinos were poached; currently there are no rhinos available. But considering the habitat types, rhinos could still be placed there, according to Dr. Talukdar. Considering increase in poaching activities, legal orientation strategies to mitigate wildlife crime, strengthening antipoaching capabilities by arranging adequate staff and funds providing trainings are required to control poaching in Assam.

##### N - RHINO POACHING TRADE AND IMPLICATION ON NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY OF NEPAL

Mr. Prasanna Yonzon

The number of rhinos in Nepal is decreasing due to increased poaching in 2005. Of Nepal's 372 rhinos, 49 died in the past year.

##### Route of rhino horn transport

Rhino horn smugglers of rhino horn take advantage of international border and lack of proper coordination between the enforcement agencies of the two countries, and use the townships in the border areas for carrying out smuggling activities.

Saktikhor, Siddhi, Korak, Dahakhane, passage to Dhading and Kalanki, Balkhu, Balaju and Boudha are the main areas in Kathmandu where rhino horn trading are the highest. The poachers and wildlife traders are mainly people from mountain communities, Indian Bawarras and Behalayas and Tibetians, who have linkages to Tibet. Poaching of rhinos takes place primarily because of the tremendous demand for its horn in the international market. Due to the increase in poaching of rhino horn, there is a need to institutionalize Anti Poaching Units, severe penalties, seizures and arrests.

It is also necessary to undertake awareness campaigns to help develop some positive attitudes among local community surveillance in protecting rhinos, including awards to communities involved in protecting this endangered species. Livelihood support to poachers' families could also be provided. Cooperation and support from local people and different enforcement agencies play an important role in conserving rhinos. It is also important to amend policies to include grassroots efforts in rhino conservation. Most importantly, urban traders and poachers need to be monitored on a regular basis.