

**Black Rhino Species Survival Plan (SSP) Report \***

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**1986**

In 1985, estimated populations of black rhino on the African continent totalled 8,000 animals. Due to continued poaching, it has been reduced to 4,000. As a result of the concern for the drastic decline, the Cincinnati Zoo, Kings Island Wild Animal Habitat, and the AAZPA Species Survival Plan (SSP) in consultation with the IUCN/SSC African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG) organized a workshop in Cincinnati. Everyone felt that the workshop was extremely successful, and the results will have short- and long-term benefits for African rhino.

The North American regional studbook keeper for black rhino reports that the current status for the captive population of black rhinos is 67 animals (28.39). For the first time since the SSP program was formed, this represents an increase, although small, in black rhino numbers in the past year. Five animals were born in 1986 (3.2) at Busch Gardens, Los Angeles, Metro Miami, St. Louis, and San Antonio, respectively, whereas, there were three deaths in 1986 (2.1) at Dallas, Granby, and St. Louis, respectively.

The Propagation Group has now completed publication of the Rhino Management Survey which summarizes the results of the international survey that was sent to all institutions housing black rhino, past and present.

In September, 1986, the Species Coordinator and member of Rhino Rescue USA appeared before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment, Committee on Science and Technology along with Jack HANNA, Columbus Zoo; Daniel SANDIYO, Wildlife Conservation and Management, Kenya; and Esmond BRADLEY-MARTIN, Deputy Chairman, IUCN/SSC AERSG on behalf of the African rhino. The results of this hearing will help to bring public awareness, at the legislative level, to the problem of rhino conservation and the use of rhino products and will have far-reaching implications to the future of rhinos. This congressional hearing will be particularly important in encouraging countries allowing use to prohibit the entrance of rhino products and will aid in providing the stricter reinforcement of laws in countries already banning use.

**1987**

The North American regional studbook keeper for black rhino reports that the current status for the captive population of black rhinos is 70 animals (31.39) which includes 1.1 in Canada at St. Felicien and 1.1 at the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City.

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\* Dedicated to Colleague Heinz-Georg Klös on the occasion of his 65th birthday by his American Black Rhino-SSP counterpart.

Three animals were born in 1987 (3.0) at Denver, San Diego and the Bentsen Ranch in Texas, respectively, and unfortunately four deaths in 1987 (3.1) at Atlanta, Busch Gardens, Bentsen Ranch and Garden City, Kansas, respectively. A current list of animals in the North American population is available from the Species Coordinator.

The Propagation Group has now completed publication of the Black Rhino Masterplan. Copies have been provided to all institutions holding black rhino and action plans are being undertaken in order to move some animals into new breeding situations to enhance reproduction. No animals were added in 1987 to the North American SSP program from Africa but the possibility exists for 1988.

The population of black rhino in the wild is still declining. An outstanding effort to reproduce these animals in captivity must be made in the upcoming years or the species will be lost. One of the last strongholds in the wild with an estimated 700 black rhino is the lower Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe. The Species Coordinator and AAZPA Conservation Coordinator attended the CITES Meetings held in Ottawa, Canada, this year to meet with delegates from Zimbabwe, Zambia and the Camaroons, and discussed co-operative programs for black rhino.

Diet studies have been proposed and are ongoing since there is suspicion that the hemolytic anemia problem seen in black rhino may be related to diet. Until these studies are evaluated and published, institutions are encouraged to feed a good quality alfalfa hay and a vitamin fortified feed supplement.

#### 1988

The black rhino population in North America at the close of 1988 totals 71 animals (31.40) which includes 1.1 in Mexico City. During this year there were five (2.3) births (Brookfield, Cincinnati, Miami Metrozoo, San Diego Wild Animal Park, San Francisco) and two (1.1) deaths (Kansas City, Miami Metrozoo). Also reported in 1988 but actual date of deaths not known were 1.1 animals at the St. Felicien Zoo in Quebec, Canada. There were eight animals moved to different institutions to organize new breeding pairs or accomodate youngsters (Brookfield and Miami Metrozoo to Caldwell Zoo, Prospect Park to Detroit, Atlanta to Miami Metrozoo, Los Angeles to Oklahoma City, Sedgwick to San Diego, Oklahoma City to Sedgwick and Denver to Washington Park).

In addition to the SSP Meeting in Milwaukee, there were several other meetings held in 1988 involving black rhino. As a continuation of recommendations from the African Rhino Workshop held in Cincinnati in 1986 two working group meetings were organized in May (Minnesota) and June (Cincinnati) to address the concerns about research on rhinos, what has been done and what needs to be done. Zoo directors, managers and related scientists participated and discussed the research needs of the rhino species in captivity. General and specific objectives were outlined and are available from the Species Coordinator. Also reaffirmed was the need for the proposal to recruit a rhino research

coordinator. The Cincinnati Zoo has agreed to fund this position and is now actively seeking applications. Groups of black and white rhinos at many institutions are being identified to be included in various research projects. A Rhino Workshop was also held during the 5th World Conference on Breeding Endangered Species in Captivity in October in Cincinnati. Formal presentations on aspects of research involving nutrition, reproduction, genetics, endocrinology, health and husbandry were shared. Of particular interest was information on projects ongoing overseas which supplemented information from the previous workshops.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Game Conservation International, AAZPA and the Government of Zimbabwe in accordance with the Action Plan of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group has been signed whereby 10 (4.6) *Diceros b. minor* will be donated by Zimbabwe to the U.S. for placement at the following institutions: LaComa and Bass Ranches (1.2), San Diego (0.1), Fort Worth (1.1), Dallas (1.1), Milwaukee (1.1). These animals will establish an additional gene pool as only five presently exist in North America. In return financial support will be provided for the establishment of a captive breeding program for black rhino in Zimbabwe.

1989

Total black rhino in the North American SSP population as of December 1, 1989 = 81

28.35 *Diceros b. michaeli*;  
7.11 *Diceros b. minor*.

Births for 1989: 3.3

2.1 *Diceros b. michaeli*;  
(Lincoln Park, Detroit, Denver),  
1.2 *Diceros b. minor*;  
(Ft. Worth, Bentsen, Bass)

Deaths for 1989: 2.5

1.4 *Diceros b. michaeli*;  
(Miami 3, Cincinnati, Oklahoma City);  
1.1 *Diceros b. minor*;  
(Bentsen, Bass Ranches).

1.0 *Diceros b. michaeli* was acquired from Dvur Kralove, CSSR, by Zoo Atlanta.

There were five animals moved in 1989:

2.3 *Diceros b. michaeli*:  
0.2 Cincinnati to Columbus  
0.1 New Delhi, India, to Oklahoma City  
1.0 Cincinnati to Oklahoma City  
1.0 San Diego Wild Animal Park to Columbus.

A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between Game Conservation International (Game Coin), AAZPA and Zimbabwe allowed for the importation of 10 *Diceros b. minor* into the U.S. from Zimbabwe. Since the population of *Diceros b. minor* will be managed as a separate population from *Diceros b. michaeli*, and with the addition of 12 new animals in 1989, imports and births, the current population total is 7.11 = 18. Dr. Don FARST has been designated as the new subcoordinator for the SSP program for *Diceros b. minor* and will be managing the southern rhino under the overall umbrella of the SSP program.

Locations of the imported South African animals are: 4.6 Zimbabwe to U.S. (1.1 Dallas; 1.1 Ft. Worth; 1.1 Milwaukee; 0.1 San Diego Zoo; 0.1 Bentsen which subsequently died; 1.1 Bass Ranch, (1.0 subsequently died), and 0.1 from Natal also went to Bentsen. Shortly after arrival from Zimbabwe one female at Bass Ranch and one female at Ft. Worth gave birth. All arrangements for the animals from Zimbabwe were made by Harry TENNISON, Game Coin President.

As a result of recommendations made from the African Rhino Workshop held in Cincinnati in 1986, a Rhino Research Coordinator, Dr. Bob GODFREY, was hired by the Cincinnati Zoo with funds received from a grant from the Institute of Museum Services. Dr. GODFREY was selected to coordinate research involving SSP program rhinos. A research plan for North American and European zoos with rhinos is currently being developed.

#### **Zusammenfassung**

Es wird ein Überblick zur Entwicklung des nordamerikanischen Spitzmaulnashorn-Erhaltungszuchtprogrammes (Black Rhino SSP) seit 1985 gegeben, der sowohl zoologische als auch politische Aktivitäten der in der nordamerikanischen Vereinigung der Zoologischen Gärten und Aquarien (AAZPA) zusammenschlossenen Spitzmaulnashornhalter behandelt.

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