

Specialist Group Updates

African Elephant

African Elephant Status Report 2002

The African Elephant Status Report 2002 provides the most up-to-date information available on the continental numbers and distribution of African elephants. For the first time ever, the report is printed in color and includes a number of new features, including brief historical backgrounds on each elephant range state. This report is expected to become the standard global reference on the status of elephants in Africa. It is also available on our website at: www.iucn.org/afesg.

Guidelines for African elephant translocation

The Group's guidelines for African elephant translocation, currently in final edit, are designed to inform elephant translocation practitioners and their donors of "best practices" for the translocation of African elephants for re-introduction, supplementation or management purposes. A lack of such guidance has previously resulted in many poorly planned translocations with adverse consequences to both elephants and humans. These guidelines, produced in collaboration with the SSC Re-introduction and Veterinary Specialist Groups, will be available in English, French and Portuguese. A draft is available at: <http://iucn.org/afesg/tools/pdfs/tmsgdlnft9.pdf>

Human-Elephant Conflict Working Group

The Group's Human-Elephant Conflict Working Group has focused on implementation of the ongoing WWF-funded site-based mitigation project. This project aims to build the capacity of wildlife managers and local communities at 10 different sites across Africa to assess and mitigate human-elephant conflict. Activities began with a project leader visit to Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, to set up a comprehensive human-elephant conflict data collection system essential for designing an effective mitigation strategy for this site. This was followed by a training workshop in the Selous National Park where local students were trained in the use of the Group's data collection and analysis protocol. In April 2003, a workshop in the South Luangwa National Park, Zambia, resulted in the establishment of a clear institutional set-up to deal with human-elephant conflict in the Lupande Game Management Area neighboring the park.

Central and Western Africa Programme Office

All seven Central African elephant range states have now provided the Group with ministerial-level endorsement to assist in the facilitation and development of a Central African Elephant Conservation Strategy. In June 2003, the Group organized a workshop to discuss and identify the main conservation threats and opportunities facing five of the largest remaining cross-border elephant populations in West Africa and to make

recommendations on appropriate conservation and management actions. The workshop, which involved West African governmental technical experts, local and international NGOs, resulted in the production of site-specific action plans. Thanks to Conservation International's Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund for funding this workshop.

Small Grants and Members Meeting

Aiming to help build the capacity of African students, researchers and organizations, the Group is continuing to look for small-scale applied research projects for funding from its Small Grants Fund. You can find more information on our website.

The sixth members' meeting, 4–8 December in Namibia funded by the European Commission, consisted of a series of plenary and work sessions to discuss priority issues relating to the conservation and management of Africa's elephants.

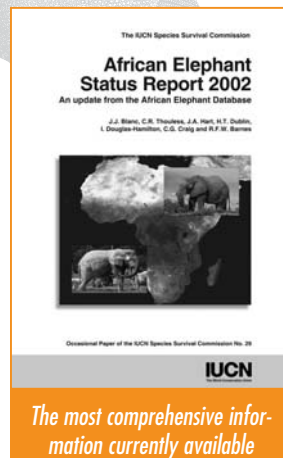
Leo Niskanen, Programme Officer

African Rhino

Since *Species 39*, five black rhino donated by South African National Parks to Zambia, were reintroduced into the fenced sanctuary in North Luangwa National Park. These rhinos have all settled into their new home and the next challenge is to introduce a further 15 animals to raise the population number up to the recommended minimum. In another encouraging cross-border initiative, additional white rhino from South Africa have also been introduced into the Mombo area of Moremi Game Reserve, Botswana.

The African Rhino Specialist Group continues to provide technical input to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation. The Group's Scientific Officer attended a workshop to help develop a national rhino policy for Zambia and provided some technical support for post-release monitoring of the black rhinos in North Luangwa. On the security side, a beta version of the Law Database has been completed and is currently being field-tested.

The rapid visual browse-availability assessment procedure, which forms part of the SADC Rhino Management Group's Carrying Capacity Estimation model, now includes a series of reference photographs. The procedure will now be



tested for inter-observer repeatability. Sets of laminated educational cards, designed to raise awareness of rhino conservation in rural schools, are currently being tested in Zimbabwe.

The "Sandwith" rhino monitoring training course for field rangers/trainers course (see *Species 39*) was a resounding success with 19 trainers from nine different conservation organizations throughout Africa accredited. The new materials, and especially the new trainees' booklet and laminated field pocket ageing and condition assessment cards, were well received. The "training of trainers" course was also held for the Kenya Wildlife Service's Rhino Programme as part of the Darwin Initiative project in Kenya to build rhino monitoring capacity and assist the Rhino Programme implement and institutionalize a system of annual black rhino status reporting. It will be followed by field visits to all Kenyan rhino areas.

The joint WWF Netherlands/Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife project which aims to expand black rhino range and re-establish black rhinos using Specialist Group recommended best practice has started in South Africa. Coordinated by experienced rhino veterinarian, Dr. Jacques Flamand, the program seeks, through landowner partnerships, to facilitate the setting up of founder populations in areas with the potential to hold in excess of 67 black rhino. This project has also been actively promoting the importance of biological management. Thus the results and recommendations of the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation-funded workshop on Biological Management of Black Rhinos continue to have an impact.

The Group will next meet 6–11 June 2004 in Tsavo National Park, Kenya. Planning for this is underway although significant funding is still required. These meetings are critical for capacity building and strategy development so a response from any interested sponsors would be much appreciated.

Once again we would like to thank WWF's Africa Rhino Programme and WWF-US and WWF-SA for their support.

Martin Brooks, Chair

Cracid

Many exciting cracid field projects are currently underway, with a few highlights including:

Sara Bennett of the Humboldt Foundation is continuing her cutting-edge work in the southern Colombian Amazon on wattled curassows (*Crax globulosa*), empowering the local community to help study these rare birds and creating local long-term conservation interest in them. This project is supported by the Columbus Zoo and Disney. Also, Bennett Hennessey of ARMONIA has received support from the Chicago Zoological Society to work on community education in relation to what is probably the last population of

wattled curassow (*Crax globulosa*) in Bolivia. The project aims to educate communities along the Rio Beni of the fragile situation of the threatened wattled curassow, create a community-imposed hunting sanction on the species, and educate communities as to the sustainable ecotourism potential of recuperated populations.

Rob Clay of Guyra, Paraguay conducted biological fieldwork at nine sites within San Rafael, Paraguay, primarily through funding provided by USAID-Paraguay, the American Bird Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and World Parks Endowment. Unfortunately, the black-fronted piping-guan (*Pipile jacutinga*) was not recorded at any of these sites, and the population within San Rafael must at best be small and fragmented. Consequently, the only large forest block in Paraguay known to maintain a sizeable (though apparently declining) population of *P. jacutinga* is the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve.

Ivan Jimenez of the University of Missouri—St. Louis has completed his fieldwork in Cocha Cashu, Peru for his dissertation, funded by the St. Louis Zoo. He is studying foraging behavior and habitat use of razor-billed curassows (*Mitu tuberosa*) and developing methods to count curassows aurally, as well as comparing such methods to counts based on visual detections. John Blake supervised both his thesis and dissertation.

Miguel Angel Martinez-M of Instituto de Ecología, Morelia, received funds from the Brookfield Zoological Society to continue his long-term study of the extremely rare subspecies of great curassow (*Crax rubra grisea*), the Cozumel Island endemic. Miguel will use radio telemetry equipment to provide baseline information for a management program to conserve the curassow and its habitats, define the most critical areas of the island to be considered for protection to conserve the curassow population, and increase ecological awareness of the local human population and tourists in conjunction with the Museo de la Isla de Cozumel.

Marco Tulio Pérez and Ivan Pinedo of Universidad del Atlántico, Colombia have completed their thesis work on population status and behavior of the crested guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) in Colombia. This is not only the first intensive work of *P. purpurascens* in Colombia, but is perhaps the first work on Colombian cracids in the northern coastal region. For the next project, they are interested in initiating a study to determine status and habitat association of the endangered blue-billed curassow (*Crax alberti*) in the Colombian Serranía de Pintura and nearby zones.

Contact us at dbrooks@hmns.org or check out our website at www.angelfire.com/ca6/cracid for more information.

Dan Brooks, Chair

