



Nature Conservation is now paying people on a regular basis to collect information, as well as giving reward money (raised from individual donors and a collection box at Chitwan).

Though higher budgets have been allocated to improve park management in India, more financial aid must be given to the neighboring villagers because rhinos damage crops and even kill people. Success should not fall prey to complacency. In Assam, nine rhinos were killed in Orang Wildlife Sanctuary in 1995 due to mismanagement and lack of adequate patrols. In Manas National Park there are perhaps only 20 out of 90 rhinos left due to political disturbance in the area. According to S. Deb Roy, formerly Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Assam, "The rhinos will be gone in 25 years if there is not the political will to save them". The same fear exists for Nepal now that the King, a supporter of rhinos, no longer has so much power with the advent of multiparty democracy.

Rhinos can be saved if adequate funds are provided for their protection and if there is effective leadership in the field. The situation in both India and Nepal has improved and will continue to do so in the future as long as there is significant support from senior politicians and bureaucrats and YOU!

## *New breed of shooters hunts the endangered Javan rhinoceros*

[San Diego Union-Tribune, April 13, 1996, A-26]

A hundred years ago Europeans came to Ujung Kulon, an isolated peninsula on the tip of Java to hunt endangered Javan rhinos. Today, increasing numbers of tourists come to shoot the shy beast, not with a gun but with a camera.

Park rangers estimate only about 60 rhinos still live in the thick undergrowth of the park that 60 years ago was a game reserve and, in 1992, was declared along with the Komodo Islands, one of Indonesia's first world Heritage areas.\* Rangers say there is no evidence of poaching of the rhino, which fetches a high price in the illegal wildlife trade.

A new breed of eco-tourists trek below the lush and humid jungle canopy in hopes of seeing a rhino even though the chances of actually seeing one is slight. "It's very difficult to see a rhino," Sumanta, a forest guide who has worked in the Ujung Kulon park for 31 years, said recently while guiding visitors on a jungle hike. "You need to spend much time, at least a month, here, to be sure of success."

Ironically, in the 18th century rhinos were so numerous and damaging to plantations in Java that the government paid money to have them killed;



500 were bagged within two years. Despite its proximity to a big population center (the most densely populated island on Earth), official figures show only about 3,000 people stayed overnight last year on Peucang Island. Conservationists say one of the reasons Ujung Kulon remains an untouched area of wilderness on Java is the 1883 eruption of the Krakatoa volcano.

The rhino is just one jewel in a sparkling crown of natural welthony 124 miles from Indonesia's heavily polluted capital of Jakarta. The 296,520-acre park, which includes a number of islands, is also home to five species of primates, of which three are endemic to Java, and the endangered Javan wild dog. Population pressures remains one of the greatest threats to the park as people living in adjacent villages violate the park to cultivate crops, gather wood and hunt animals.

\* It is reported that Javan rhinos have been sighted in Vietnam.