1. Monitoring of degradation and regeneration of the typical floodplain pastures around Waza, downstream of the Semry II project.
2. Wildife research to clarify the interrelations between vegetation, wildlife and human activities and to determine measures to sustain their coexistence. Relevant species are the elephant, cob, dama gazelle and lion. During the first two years research will concentrate on the elephant population of Waza and its surroundings, being the largest in West Africa.

Attempts were made to determine their social groups, population dynamics, and migration patterns as well as their impact on natural vegetation and agricultural crops.

3. Human population and land use. Basic data on different ethnic and social groups in the area, their numbers, organization and land use systems formed the basis for a series of case studies at the community level. During the first two seasons three case studies concerning the Arab Choa, Fulani and Mousgoum were carried out. Their system of resource management and exploitation in relation to their social structure, traditional values and capacity to adapt themselves to the changing environment were investigated. Special attention was given to their perception of environmental problems and degradation and their ideas about corrective and sound resource management.

It is planned to continue these three research priorities in 1986. If funds are found research on agricultural practices in relation to the natural and modified hydrological regime will be included in the project. As a result of the present project, Ecole de la Faune and the Centre for Environmental Studies are developing a joint wetland management course to be held in North-Cameroon.

Central African Republic

Project 3636
Aerial Wildlife Survey in Northern Central African Republic
WWF Expenditure 1985 — $20,569

Project Executants: Dr I. Douglas-Hamilton, Jean-Marc Froment.

Participating Organizations: UNDP, FAO, CNPAF (Centre National pour l'Aménagement de la Faune, CAR).

Objectives: To make a wildlife inventory of the northern parks and hunting zones: to define urgent measures to be taken for the protection of the elephants and the black rhinoceros; to assist the government in the preparation and execution of a policy of conservation and management.

The aerial wildlife survey in northern areas of the Central African Republic, supported by WWF, found far more dead elephants than live ones in June 1985. There had been devastating poaching of elephant, rhino and other animals.

Photo: WWF/Ian Douglas-Hamilton

As poaching of elephants and rhino increased in the northern parks of Central African Republic, the government requested WWF/IUCN and UNDP/FAO to make an aerial survey to reveal population trends and make a wildlife inventory. The aerial census was conducted from May 28th to June 23rd, 1985, by a team of Central African and expatriate personnel in an aircraft flown over from Kenya. It covered an area of approximately 64,000 sq km, including the Bamingui-Bangoran and Manova-Gounda St Floris national parks and surrounding reserves and hunting zones. Standard methods of strip sampling were used.

Elephants were estimated at 12,100 of which 4300 were live and 7800 dead. Most of the dead elephants seen on the survey had apparently died within the last four years. Comparisons within subzones indicated elephant declines of the order of 77%, 98% and 100% since the late seventies.

No rhinos were seen from the air, however hunters reported a few tracks during 1985, indicating that some rhinos still exist at very low densities. Prior to the end of 1982 this population, estimated at approximately 3000, was considered the most important concentration of rhinos *(Diceros bicornis longipes)*, in Central and West

Africa. It has now been reduced to the point of extinction.

Census figures suggest that buffalo and giant eland numbers declined approximately 78% and 84% between 1979 and 1985. The epidemic of rinderpest in 1983, introduced by cattle from Chad may have been a significant factor.

Poaching in the northern parks, by spear-wielding horsemen from Sudan and Chad gained momentum with the reopening of the ivory trade in 1981. Many freshly killed and wounded elephants with deep spear wounds in their hind quarters were seen.

The invasion of the northern parks by nomads, with tens of thousands of livestock, escaping from the sahelian drought, has exacerbated both the poaching and the spread of rinderpest.

The survey confirms previous reports of the killing of elephants in Central Africa. Ivory poaching began in South East CAR in the late seventies, together with similar slaughters in the region in Southern Sudan, Northern Zaire, and Chad (see WWF Yearbook, 1982, p. 258, 269).

Despite these conclusions, a magnificent resource still exists, of vast, unspoilt natural scenery, a widespread and varied fauna and the potential for recovery within the national parks.

Following the WWF/FAO report the government has acted on its recommendations. All private trade in ivory has been abolished. The government has declared to CITES a zero quota on the export of ivory, other than that confiscated from poachers or illicit dealers. A coordinated operation has been launched to control poaching using government armed forces. A five year conservation plan has been drafted and adopted by the government, and aid is being sought from bilateral, multilateral and private sources for rehabilitating the national parks. The EEC has committed itself to a major project within this five year plan.

Project 3687
Emergency Assistance for Wildlife Protection
WWF Expenditure 1985 — $11,778

Project Executant: Jean-Marc Froment.

Participating Organizations: Presidential Guard; Ministry of Tourism, Water, Forests, Game and Fish.

Objective: To provide assistance to anti-poaching patrols in the national parks in northern Central African Republic.

As the aerial survey carried out in this region in June 1985 showed, ivory poachers had massacred about three-quarters of the elephant population in the last three years, and had virtually wiped out the black rhinos altogether (see report of Project 3636).