

marketing experience; insufficient investment capital; and limited ability to measure the effects of wildlife businesses on conservation. The center will initially offer its services in Kenya, eventually expanding to help enterprises in eastern and southern Africa.

Source: *Wildlife News* (African Wildlife Foundation), 33(4).

#### White rhinos survive war

At least 20 northern white rhinoceroses *Ceratotherium simum cottoni*, the most endangered rhinoceros subspecies, have survived the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Four young have been born since the conflict abated in May 1997. Congo's Garamba National Park contains the world's only remaining northern white rhinos. An estimated 27 to 30 rhinos lived there in 1996, up from 15 in 1984. The latest count, made from the air, identified 20 adults, including seven females and the four young.

Source: *Wildlife News* (African Wildlife Foundation), 33(4).

#### Wild dogs make a comeback in Zimbabwe's lowveld

African wild dogs *Lycan pictus* once thrived in south-eastern Zimbabwe's lowveld, but persecution and destruction of habitat after ranchers arrived in the 1930s led to their virtual elimination. Now they are back and thriving. In many parts of Africa, wild dogs are in direct competition with lions and spotted hyenas but in the lowveld the dogs have returned in significant numbers while lion and hyena populations remain small. The lowveld, with its periodic drought, is marginal for livestock and by the late 1980s many ranchers were looking for alternatives, and wildlife seemed the obvious choice. Fences were taken down, surviving cattle were moved out, and properties restocked with the wild herbivores. The wild dog probably recolonized from nearby Gonarezhou National Park. The long-term prospects for the region's wild dogs seem good, given the potential for linking these packs with other wild dog populations in southern Africa. A corridor is already being created between the lowveld and South Africa's Kruger Park, where

there is an estimated wild dog population of 350. With a major effort another corridor could stretch all the way to western Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, a haven for wild dogs that is contiguous with other dog habitats in Botswana and Namibia's Caprivi Strip.

Source: African Wildlife News Service, 1998.

#### South Africa's succulent plants face lean future

Hundreds of succulent plant species face an uncertain future as a result of poor management by wildlife authorities and the demands of plant collectors from around the world, according to a study by the South African office of TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa. *South Africa's Trade in Southern African Succulent Plants* identifies 128 succulent plant species as being threatened by habitat degradation and plant collectors. The species range from the Lesotho endemic, *Aloe polyphylla*, used medicinally but also threatened by construction of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, to *Gibbaea esterhuyseniae*, a South African species considered extinct in the wild until 3 years ago. Improved government conservation management, enhanced law enforcement efforts and the encouragement of artificial propagation of rare species, especially those used for medicinal and horticultural purposes, are essential to ensure the survival of these species.

Source: TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa-South Africa, 19 November 1998.

#### Turtle shell stockpile burnt

On 26 November 1998 the Government of the Seychelles destroyed a 2.5 tonne stockpile of c. 3300 turtle shells that it had collected from artisans when it banned turtle exploitation 4 years ago. The artisans have been compensated. This event, a global first, was evidence of the nation's growing commitment to environmental conservation. Every school has an environmental club and 50 per cent of the land area of the archipelago's 115 islands is under conservation management. A Seychelles Goldcard was launched in 1998, a first in environmental tourism,

which calls for every visitor to the islands to make a one-off payment of \$US100 to become a 'Friend of the Seychelles' for life and help support the country's environmental efforts.

Source: Dr Jeanne A. Mortimer.

#### New project for tortoises

A new project to help protect two tortoise species *Astrochelys radiata* and *Pyxis arachnoides* in southern Madagascar near Tuléar is being started by SOPTOM (a tortoise conservation society based in France) with the help of the Madagascar Forest Department. The Sokake (the local name for *A. radiata*) Project has acquired a 5-ha plot of land in Ifaty, north of Tuléar, to construct a conservation and study centre for tortoises. The project aims to reduce trade in these animals and run public awareness programmes. The Ifaty Tortoise Village will also bring employment and economic benefits to the Tuléar region.

Source: *La Tortue*, No. 44, 2-23.

#### New treefrog

A new treefrog species *Boophis lichenoides* has been described from the rain forests of eastern Madagascar. It differs from the 40 other *Boophis* species by the presence of lateral dermal fringes on the legs and lower lip, and its lichen-like dorsal coloration.

Source: Vallan, D. *et al.* (1998) *Amphibia-Reptilia*, 19(4), 357-368.

### South and South East Asia

#### Olive ridleys continue to die in Orissa

Marine turtles continue to die in Orissa, India, where three of the few remaining mass nesting sites for the olive ridley turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* are situated. A record high of 13,575 olive ridleys were found dead on the beaches of Orissa in the 1997/1998 season. The major cause of death is entanglement in mechanized fishing gear, specifically that used for shrimp, even though mechanized fishing within 5 km of the Orissa coast is illegal.

Source: Pandav, B. & Choudhury, B.C. (1999) *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, No. 83, 10-12.