

# AZA RHINO TAG FIVE YEAR PLAN

The American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) Rhino Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) recently proposed its five year plan to provide support for the conservation of all rhino species/subspecies. The plan is composed of six distinct elements:

(1) Develop support for the establishment of sanctuary programs in Indonesia for Sumatran rhino in Way Kambas and Javan rhino in Ujung Kulon. Additionally, the discussions have included the possibility of a second sanctuary for Javan rhino.

(2) Continued support for the existing Northern white rhino sanctuary in Garamba N. P., Zaire and the possible establishment of a second sanctuary using a small number of translocated animals from Garamba and perhaps some of the captive northern whites.

(3) Actively support and encourage health and husbandry research, specifically as it pertains to the black and Sumatran rhinos. Major areas of investigation include nutrition, stress, com-

parative cell metabolism, specific studies on mucocutaneous ulcerative disease, cholestatic hepatopathy, encephalomalacia, basic immunological function, and epidemiology.

(4) Facilitate the development of a comprehensive rhino reproduction research program to include the characterization of estrus cycles in all four species currently held in captivity and develop reliable feces/urine/saliva tests for estrus and pregnancy. Additionally, the TAG will help develop a more concerted and coordinated effort toward development of methodologies, instrumentation, etc. for assisted reproduction and gene banking.

(5) Support the development of Intensive Protection Zones for black rhino in southern Africa and sanctuaries for the protection of Indian /Nepalese rhino.

(6) It is anticipated that more of the TAG's resources and attention will be directed toward *in-situ* projects as the SSP rhino populations stabilize from both genetic and demographic perspectives.

-- Bob Reece

---

## THE INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION

The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) is a non-profit corporation of individuals and institutions, which operate as a service organization for rhinoceros conservation. The mission of the IRF is:

**to contribute to rhino conservation by providing technical, administrative, and financial services and support for programs emphasizing intensive management and scientific research both in situ and ex situ, as equally important components of rhino conservation.**

Members of the IRF are mostly from the zoo conservation community worldwide. Board Members include: John Lukas (President), White Oak Conservation Center; Jim Jackson (Vice President for Field Conservation), Fossil Rim Wildlife Center; Dr. John Kelly (Vice-President) Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales; Lee Bass (Treasurer) El Coyote Ranch; Dr. Don Farst, Gladys Porter Zoo; Mike Fouraker, Fort Worth Zoo; Fred La Rue, Dallas Zoo; Bob Reece, The Wilds; Jerry Borin, Columbus Zoo; John Knowles, Marwell Zoological Trust; Ingrid Schroeder, WISDOM Foundation; Harry Tennison.

Recently there have been two major contributions from IRF Board members to support IRF programs:

(1) \$ 500,000 over three years from the Howard Gilman Foundation mainly for support of *in situ* programs.

(2) \$ 500,000 over three years from Lee Bass for support of rhino research projects.

There has also been a major new contribution from the Columbus Zoo Association of \$ 25,000 for 1995 adding to \$ 25,000 previously contributed.

These contributions add to the continuing significant support that the IRF receives from Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, the Fort Worth Zoo, the Dallas Zoo, the Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales and the Chicago Zoological Society, and the St Louis Zoo. A number of other institutions have entered into partnerships with the IRF on specific projects, e.g. the program for northern white rhino in Garamba National Park, Zaire. Additionally, the Wilds provides space and support for the IRF Program Office.

Indeed, an important part of IRF program strategy is to develop partnerships with other institutions through the use of matching or challenge grants from IRF core funds. Other institutions that have participated in partnerships with the IRF include: Australia: Werribee Zoological Park; New Zealand: Auckland Zoo; Netherlands: Safari Park Beekse Bergen, Burger's Zoo and Safari in Arnhem, Noorder Dierenpark in Emmen; United Kingdom: Marwell Zoological Trust; Canada: Calgary Zoo, Toronto Zoo, United States: Wildlife Conservation Society, St Louis Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, Virginia Zoological Society, Los Angeles Zoo, and Zoo Atlanta.

The article in this newsletter about the Rhino GCAP/GASP provides more information about IRF contributions and challenges to other zoological institutions/organizations for support of rhino conservation.

### IRF In Situ Activities

IRF *in situ* (i.e. in the natural range state) programs concentrate on intensive protection and management programs that are significant and feasible. Hence, the projects will emphasize range states where logistics and politics indicate the highest probability of suc-

cess.

IRF programs will concentrate on the species/subspecies of rhino that are currently under the greatest threat *in situ*: Black Rhino, Northern White Rhino, and Sumatran Rhino. These are also the species for which *ex situ* programs have had the greatest difficulty.

(The Javan Rhino exists in lower numbers but its situation is both more secure and stable at the moment than the rhino for IRF projects because there are also other initiatives in progress, e.g. Minnesota Zoo in Ujung Kulon, WWF in Vietnam.)

In anticipation of impending deterioration of the situation for the Indian Rhino (in India and Nepal) and for both Southern White Rhino and Black Rhino in South Africa (where the largest populations exist, i.e. 90% of the world's white rhinos, 60% of the world's blacks), modest projects are also recommended for these rhino.

The major *in situ* programs for IRF in 1995 will be:

(1) Continuing support for the intensive protection zone program (IPZs) for black and white rhino in Zimbabwe where IRF specifically provides the helicopter used for rhino conservation activities and the Zimbabwe Rhino Conservation Coordinator.

(2) Development of an intensive management and managed breeding center for Sumatran rhino in natural habitat in Way Kambas National Park, Indonesia.

(3) Facilitation of a G.E.F. (Global Environment Facility) Project for intensive protection of Sumatran rhino *in situ* in Indonesia and Malaysia.

(4) Expanded support for the northern white rhino conservation program.

(5) Other efforts assist:

- (a) Indian rhinos in India and Nepal and
- (b) Black and southern white rhino in South Africa.

### IRF Ex Situ Activities

-The IRF and its Program Officer are providing technical and administrative services for a number of *ex situ* conservation programs:

-Coordinator/Facilitator for the IUCN/SSC CBSG Rhino Global Captive Action Plan and Global Animal Survival Plan (GASPS) for Rhino.

-Program Assistant for the AZA Rhino Advisory Group (Rhino TAG) which manages the North American captive population of four rhino species.

-Co-Editor of Around the Horn, the Rhino Conservation News-

letter.

### IRF Research Activities

The International Rhinoceros Foundation is also instituting a major research grant program to continue and expand its support for research that is directly applicable to management, propagation, and conservation of all rhinoceros species in captivity or under intensive protection and management in the wild. A fuller description of IRF research activities appears in the article IRF Research Program (Page 15).

-- Tom Foose



Photo of HOT Helicopter



Northern White Rhino in Garamba National Park.

IRF gratefully acknowledges the support of British Airways