

I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Will the postcard ever reappear as a mainstream item to be purchased, en masse, at the zoos of the world? Probably not. But on a recent visit to La Palmyre Zoo, in south-western France, I saw a rather splendid installation which might help reverse the decline: a vending machine from which cards were available in exchange for a coin. The novelty of get-

ting cards from such a machine was one which clearly attracted the crowds, and the cards were being bought at a rate that I have not seen elsewhere. Maybe there is life in the old format yet. In the meantime, Alan Ashby's book provides a superb glimpse back at an era when mass communication was so very different.

John Tuson

International Zoo News Vol. 56, No. 7 (2009), pp. 420–423

CONSERVATION

Study planned for Javan rhinos in Vietnam

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) is launching a comprehensive survey to gather genetic data about the last Javan rhino population in Vietnam, with the aim of developing a local conservation management strategy for these critically endangered mammals. It is estimated that there are no more than five individuals of this rare subspecies (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*) still surviving in Vietnam's Cat Tien National Park.

Data about these shy and elusive creatures will be compiled using dung analysis. Because Javan rhino dung is almost as difficult to locate as a Javan rhino, specially trained tracking dogs from the U.S. will be deployed for the project. Dung samples will be sent to Queen's University in Canada and the Zoological Society of London for analysis to reveal a hormone profile.

Joining the WWF on the survey are the Forest Protection Department, Cat Tien National Park, and international rhino experts. The team is reportedly looking to the government of Vietnam for support, but are likely to face a tough obstacle – plans to build a power plant at the edge of Javan rhino habitat have unfor-

tunately been approved by the Lam Dong administration.

Rhishja Larson in <http://ecoworldly.com>, 14 October 2009

Iberian lynx breeding programme update

At the moment there are 77 Iberian lynx in three centres in Spain, Acebuche, Olivilla and Jerez Zoo. Sixty (30.30) animals are adults and 17 are cubs born this year in captivity. The different litters are currently going through the second critical stage in their development, the period of aggressiveness when fights between siblings can take place. All litters born this year have experienced periods of fights during their second month of life.

This is the first year that a subadult female, Dama, is raising cubs successfully. Both parents, Dama and Domo, were born in 2007 at the Acebuche centre, and this reproduction represents a new landmark for the programme.

For the first time this year the reproductive female Saliega was allowed to share an enclosure with her daughter from the previous year, Enea, during the whole period of gestation and lactation. The results of this experiment are very