

CONSERVATION COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST

Randy Rockwell has commenced a 6-month trial period as Conservation Biologist in the AAZPA Conservation Coordinator's Office. If successful, the position will become permanent as a first step toward expansion of the technical staff and capabilities of the Office. Randy's responsibilities will largely entail assistance on development of SSP Masterplans. Randy has been very active in SSP programs and Masterplan formulation, in development of SSP and Studbook software, and in organization of the 1986 Species Coordinator/Studbook Keeper Workshop in Omaha. His direct telephone number in the Office is (612) 431-9329.

NORTHERN WHITE RHINO

The Northern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) is one of the rarest and most endangered of the megavertebrates. Approximately 20 survive in a single population in the wild. There are 12 known in captivity; all but 2 males are in Dvur Kralove, Czechoslovakia. In contrast, the Southern White Rhino is relatively much more abundant (approximately 3,500 in the wild and 500 in captivity) and much less endangered at this time. Although the evidence is not yet conclusive that these 2 described "subspecies" really represent evolutionarily significant units (esu's), the conservative approach for conservationists is to treat them as separate entities until or unless information indicates this strategy is not justified.

As a consequence, the Northern White Rhino has been of great concern to conservationists. Heroic efforts have been in progress to protect and expand the last remnant in the wild at Garamba National Park, Zaire. There has also been an attempt to propagate the animals in captivity at Dvur Kralove. A lone male was moved to Dvur from London in 1987. However, the rate of reproduction has been limited. Moreover, there has been much concern about having all the captive animals in one place, i.e. "all the eggs in one basket." A major recommendation of the 1986 Cincinnati African Rhino Workshop was to establish a second breeding group at another captive facility by relocating some of the Dvur animals and recruiting the other lone male in captivity at Khartoum. The IUCN Captive Breeding Specialist Group has pursued this matter. Chairman Ulie Seal and member David Jones (London Zoo) have visited Dvur and conducted extensive discussions with the Czech colleagues. As a result, it has been agreed to move 1.2 rhino from Dvur to the San Diego Wild Animal Park, which has had exceptional success in propagation of the southern subspecies. There has also been an agreement with Khartoum to add their male to this second breeding nucleus. Permit applications and other paperwork are in progress now; and if all proceeds well, the rhinos should move in the near future.

HUMBOLDT PENGUIN PROPAGATION GROUP

The SSP Propagation Group for Humboldt Penguin has now been formed. Members are:

Patricia McGill-Harelstad, Chicago Zoological Park - Species Coordinator

Bruce Bohmke, St. Louis Zoo

Ed Diebold, Milwaukee County Zoo

John Groves, Philadelphia Zoo

Dennis Pate, Washington Park Zoo

Chris Sheppard, New York Zoological Park

Greg Toffic, Woodland Park Zoo

GIBBONS

A Gibbon Interest Group is in the process of formation with one objective being the development of SSP priorities and programs for this family of primates. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to contact Dr. Ronald Tilson, Minnesota Zoological Garden, Apple Valley, MN (612) 431-9267.

(T. Foose)