

bamboo of the Ankarana forests, so there is the exciting possibility that a second population of *H. simus* is living on in a remote pocket of this little-known reserve.

## References

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The 'rediscovery' of *Hapalemur simus* last year has been publicized widely, with even national newspapers taking an interest. It is to be hoped that the lemurs will benefit from the publicity, but it is a shame that unwarranted claims have been made. Certainly, the relocation of *H. simus* is an exciting and important find. Unfortunately, not one of the many news items I have read properly acknowledges or even names the two Frenchmen, Jean-Jacques Petter and André Peyrieras, who rediscovered the lemur in 1972 after it had not been seen for 100 years.

The species is undoubtedly rare; it is also secretive and has a localized distribution, but, had an effort been made to look for it between 1972 and 1986, it is likely that it would have been found. This view is upheld by the fact that the 1986 expedition to look for the species found it where J.-J. Petter and A. Peyrieras discovered it. If every species were declared extinct after such a brief period of not being seen, the list of extant mammals would be greatly reduced.

Petter and Peyrieras, both of whom have vast experience in Madagascar, have been overlooked in the recent publicity. They, amongst others, would not have presumed that this lemur was extinct. A degree of tact when announcing such claims as this would go a long way to promote international co-operation in wildlife conservation.

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## The WWF and Gunung Leuser National Park, Sumatra

Our attention has been drawn to an incorrect statement in an otherwise excellent article by Michael Ghiglieri in *Oryx* (Volume 20, April 1986). On page 109 the author quotes the WWF as having sponsored the expensive failure of the Uning Puni relocation project. In fact, our role in Gunung Leuser has always been orientated towards providing scientific and managerial advice to the Forest Protection and Nature Conservation Service. Since the early 1970s the WWF has supported a succession of scientists and park advisers who have counselled our Indonesian colleagues on management problems, including advice on how to deal with population enclaves within the park. The WWF has never been involved in any operational aspects of the Uning Puni relocation project.

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## A park with a kangaroo problem

David Cheal's discussion of the rehabilitation of Hattah-Kulkyne National Park (*Oryx*, **20**, 95–99) is misleading in its outline of the historical changes to the park's fauna. Cheal claims that kangaroos were 'very rare' or 'scarce' in north-western Victoria prior to European settlement, citing Wakefield's analysis of the progress of the Blandowski expedition. However, Wakefield's analysis clearly shows that the diary of the expedition covered only the period from December 1856, when the expedition left Melbourne, to March 1857, by which time it had reached Lake Boga and was still some 130 km south-west of Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. Up to that stage, the diary referred to kangaroos (almost certainly the eastern grey kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*, not the western grey kangaroo *M. fuliginosus*) as 'scarce'.

The expedition later established a camp near the present site of Mildura, about 45 km north of the park. There, other records of the expedition described the western grey kangaroo as 'very common on both sides of the Murray' and 'much

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more common' than the red kangaroo. Western grey kangaroos are still abundant in the park, as Cheal has shown. Similarly, the red kangaroo was indeed 'very rare' in Victoria, and has remained so in the park. The records of the Blandowski expedition thus do not support Cheal's contention that the abundance of large kangaroos has increased within Hattah-Kulkyne National Park in historic times.

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*David Cheal was invited to reply to Graeme Coulson's letter and a complex debate ensued. In summary, he wishes to make the following points. Firstly, the records from the Blandowski expedition are too anecdotal to establish pre-European population levels of kangaroos so he did not attempt to use them in this way. Secondly, since the earliest reliable population surveys, carried out by the National Parks Service and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, numbers have certainly increased to be among the highest densities ever recorded outside captivity. Thirdly, pre-European populations of the western grey kangaroo *Macropus fuliginosus* were apparently higher in the region containing Hattah-Kulkyne National Park than populations of either of the other kangaroos, the eastern grey *M. giganteus* and the red *M. rufus*. Finally, the crux of his article, and of the park rehabilitation programme, is the fact that the current kangaroo population levels are having a detrimental impact, threatening other species and entire ecosystems. The historical levels are interesting, though indeterminate, but are not open to management.*

## The survival of the black rhino

I have recently returned from Zimbabwe where I visited the remote Chizarira National Park and was able to camp and walk and to observe black

rhino still relatively numerous in the park. The Warden has recently done a stint with the Zimbabwe National Parks' anti-poaching teams operating particularly in the Lower Zambezi area around Mana Pools, and gave me a vivid account of the battle to save the black rhino in its last stronghold in Africa. I also obtained details of this campaign in discussion with the National Parks and Wildlife Chief Warden in Harare.

It appears that poaching of rhino in the Zambezi Valley is being carried out by highly organized gangs operating across the river from Zambia. They have already killed 200 animals out of an estimated population of 750 in the Mana Pools area. The gangs consist of the same people who have reduced the black rhino population of Zambia's Luangwa Valley from 3000 in the mid-1970s to a mere 200 now.

The National Parks Department in Zimbabwe is fighting back (literally). A total of 22 poachers have been killed by National Parks anti-poaching units, which are currently being strengthened with extra teams. In their operations National Parks have the help of the police Support Unit, a helicopter donated by the World Wildlife Fund and dramatically improved communications thanks to sophisticated radios donated by SAVE (the Foundation to Save African Endangered Wild Life) in the United States. Apart from the co-ordinated government actions to defeat the poachers, there is vital substantial support from organizations and the public within Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is doing all that it can, but needs all the help and encouragement it can get from outside. The rest of the world, and especially neighbouring countries, must help to eliminate the underlying problems, namely the demand for rhino horn and the failure to stop the traffic that continues due to some high-level corruption and insufficient awareness and determination on the world's part to end it.

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