

bution with the course. Separate booklets have been produced for black rhinos and for white rhinos.

The first instructor's course using the revised course was held at Pilanesberg National Park in South Africa's North-West Province in early July 2003 with funding from USF&W RCTF and SADC RPRC. Course compilers Keryn Adcock and Richard Emslie together with North-West's Rusty Hustler and Gus van Dyk co-presented the course, in which 19 participants were accredited as trainers. Those attending came from Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa (Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife, SANParks, North-West Parks and Tourism Board, and Tswalu, a private rhino reserve), Tanzania (Wildlife Division) and Zambia. Encouragingly a number of those trained on the course have already started training field rangers back on site.

The second training-of-trainers course was held in Nakuru, Kenya, as part of a newly started, UK-funded Darwin Initiative Project, called 'Building capacity for the conservation of a Critically Endangered species', being undertaken in collaboration with the rhino programme of Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Course participants came from each of the KWS rhino reserves, the Masai Mara reserve, a community-run group ranch, and a number of the main private custodianship populations. The course was

presented by Darwin Fellows, AfRSG's Richard Emslie and Keryn Adcock, and the Zoological Society of London's Dr Raj Amin. The Kenyan rhino coordinator, Martin Mulama, also helped organize the course and assisted with the examinations, and 18 of those who attended this course were accredited.

A great number of course sets are being produced compared with previous editions. Once minor changes have been made to the course modules in the light of lessons learned from the two courses given to date, more ID sets will shortly be distributed throughout the continent to those who need course sets. If you wish to receive training as a trainer or if you would like to receive a course set, please write to me, providing details of your reserve and your motivation to take the course. Also, if you have sets but require more ID field recording form booklets, trainees' booklets or pocket card sets, please contact me. If you want trainees' booklets produced in a local language, you will be asked to provide translations of the English text.

Finally the compilers of the revised course would like to thank experienced trainers Rob Blok, Craig Reid, Rusty Hustler and Raj Amin for their very valuable comments and suggestions on improving the course.

## Rhino and Elephant Security Group update

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Since the last report in *Pachyderm* 33, the Southern African Rhino and Elephant Security Group (RESG) has continued being active, holding further meetings at the Garden House Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia (July 2003), and at the Phillip Sanders Resort of the Free State's Department of Tourism, Economic and Environmental Affairs, near Bloemfontein, South Africa (October 2003). As usual the RESG meetings were held back to back with subregional meetings of Interpol's Environmental Crime Task Group.

In both RESG meetings delegates presented country and agency reports. The RESG terms of reference were reviewed at the Lusaka meeting and, subject to a few minor modifications, were adopted. A number of invited presentations were given at the Bloemfontein meeting.

On behalf of programmer Rose Hamilton, Richard Emslie gave a presentation to illustrate the features of the Law/Information Database. This database has recently been completed with additional joint funding from Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife and the Italian-funded SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation (SADC RPRC). The software is currently undergoing final field testing and debugging before being released. With SADC RPRC funding and the kind permission of Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife, the database is to be installed in a number of conservation agencies throughout the region. From January 2004, RESG secretary Samantha Watts will train staff in its use. Agencies who wanted training completed letters of intent at the RESG meeting. Some outstanding questionnaires detailing their hardware and soft

ware were provided by conservation agencies at the meeting.

Simon Milledge of TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa gave an excellent presentation on best practices for managing rhino horn stockpiles in the SADC region, as well as giving an overview of the wildlife stockpile register database, which he had developed with funding from SADC RPRC. He demonstrated how this database is not just a vehicle for storing data but can automatically generate a number of graphs and reports to provide answers to a set of standard queries. The software is currently being tested by Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife. As many agencies attending the RESG meeting expressed a desire to get this database, TRAFFIC has proposed holding a workshop where training in its use will be given. Simon Milledge also gave an informative presentation on CITES developments with respect to rhinos and elephants, and he outlined the basics of ETIS, the Elephant Trade Information System, highlighting the key results to emerge to date from analyses of ETIS data.

Richard Emslie summarized the results to date of the AfRSG horn fingerprinting project before informing members formally of the current phase 6 of the horn fingerprinting project. This penultimate phase of this project has been designed to determine the level of spatial resolution possible and the number of samples required per park. Based on the results of phase 6, a decision will be made as to whether or not to proceed to full implementation.

On behalf of the Scene of the Crime course developer and coordinator, Rod Potter, the meeting was informed about the successful Scene of the Crime training courses that have been held to date in Namibia, Zimbabwe (both funded by SADC RPRC) and Kenya (funded by WWF). The response to this course has been very positive in the three countries where it has been held; and RESG chair and Zimbabwe's chief warden, Mr Lovemore Mungwashu, strongly recommended the course to members. With SADC RPRC funding, further Scene of the Crime courses are scheduled for Swaziland and Botswana over the next six months. More courses are likely to be held in future in South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

On behalf of Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife's Rod Potter, the meeting was also informed that four different versions of the Microtrak rhino horn microchip (transponder) database have been largely completed with



Scene of the Crime trainer Rod Potter demonstrates how to use plaster of paris to lift a shoeprint from a mock crime scene during the Kenyan training course.

additional funding from US Fish and Wildlife Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund. A number of conservation agencies from three countries requested copies of the software. The possibility of incorporating the Permits version of Microtrak into TRAFFIC's horn stockpile management database will be considered. The RESG meeting also discussed how best to set up a continental transponder number database to facilitate finding out the source agency should any recovered horns be found with transponders.

RESG is grateful to SADC RPRC for the limited funding it has received, which enables the RESG administrator and secretary to assist the chair organize meetings and to produce and distribute minutes of the meetings. This will help RESG install the Law Database throughout the region and train staff in its use.

Botswana will host the next RESG meeting in April 2004.