

system in a very short time. But the 'grass rush' into the Amazon could be averted without diminishing beef production, if existing pastures were improved by more intensive management systems.<sup>6</sup>

The sheer size of the Amazon forest, some 500 million ha, seems likely to buffer development depredations for several decades. Nevertheless, the offtake of the spotted cats should not exceed current levels, and responsibility for control should rest with importing countries, especially the buyers themselves, to avoid depleting a renewable resource.

### References

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### Javan Rhinos in Laos?

Evidence suggesting that the one-horned Javan rhino *Rhinoceros sondaicus* may survive in southern Laos was discovered by Harvey Neese in the course of a five-month visit to Cambodia and Laos last year to search for kouprey on behalf of the New York Zoological Society. (As reported in the last *Oryx* he found that they did.) Hitherto the Javan rhino was thought to survive only in the Indonesian Ujung Kulon reserve, on Java, and possibly in the Gunung Leuser in Sumatra. However, he was able to report three incidents believed to have involved rhinos, and ten instances of 'rhino evidence' between 1955 and 1974 – animals seen, tracks seen, or horn produced. The most impressive is the account of an elephant round-up in June 1974. Thirteen trained elephants, each carrying two men, were rounding up a group of five wild elephants when they realised that among the five were two adult rhinos. One man yelled 'Het! het!' (rhino) and both rhinos and three of the elephants escaped.

### What a Tapir Needs

In a brief paper in the *Malayan Nature Journal* (28, 2, December 1974) Lord Medway describes the highly selective browsing of a tapir *Tapirus indicus* on either side of a forest track. Figs were the most popular browse; succulent gingers and bananas were abundant but rejected. The author points out the conservation implications: first, a much larger range is needed to support a tapir than any similar-sized but less selective herbivore; second, its preferred food plants inevitably bring it into contact with man – and tapirs are in fact frequently encountered in logged or regenerating areas and poor plantations, which is dangerous for them and gives a misleading impression of abundance; third, the tapir is unable itself to maintain the environment it likes. If a reserve should be needed to protect the tapir, a large area of virgin forest deficient in these particular food plants would be little good. Active management to provide these plants would be necessary.

Hubert Hendrichs's report on the status of the tiger *Panthera tigris* in the Sunderbans, Bay of Bengal, based on his field work in 1971, (see *Oryx* xi, 4) is published in *Säugetierkundliche Mitteilungen* 23, 3.