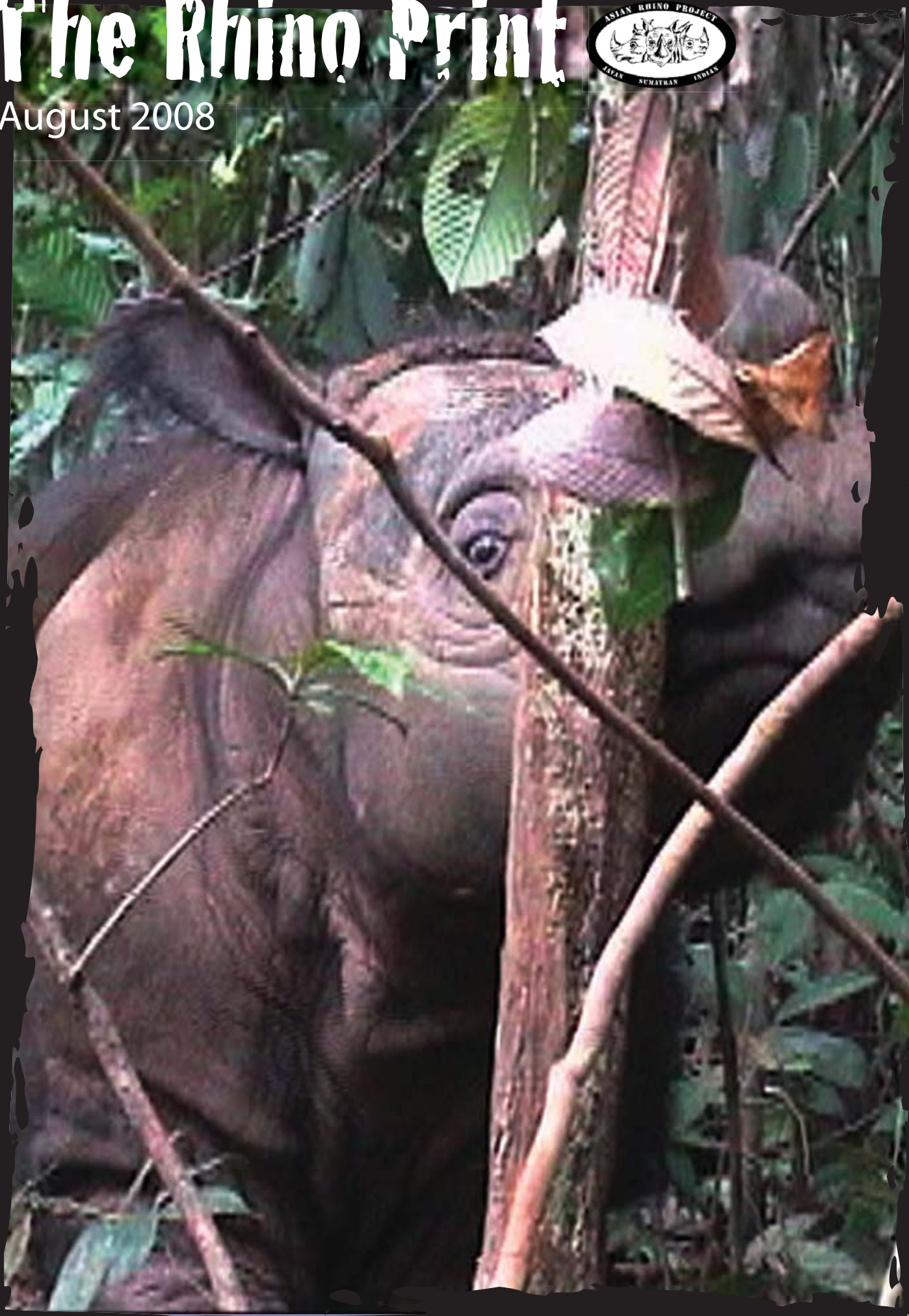
The Rhino Print

August 2008



The Rhino Print

August 2008

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Asian Rhino Project

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Welcome to the August 2008 Newsletter

In this edition you will find stories on two exciting new projects which the Asian Rhino Project is pleased to be assisting. These include funding for camera traps in Java and DNA studies on wild populations of Indian rhino. ARP has recently committed to RPU assistance for SOS Rhino Borneo in Sabah Malaysia as well. This story will be featured in our November newsletter.

You will also find a heartbreaking story on page 6 about a well-filling project ARP has been supporting in Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra. ARP is collecting funds for this urgent project - all donations over $2 are tax deductible.

Our AGM is fast approaching and will be held on 16th October 2008 at the Perth Zoo Theatre. I do hope that Perth members will come in flocks! We will be providing slide show presentations on projects and updates on the current rhino situations. I am excited to be coming down and catching up with as many of you as I can. You will also have the chance to meet with Kristy Garard, our NSW Branch manager as well as most of our WA Committee and Board. Please feel free to bring along friends who may be interested – we would really love to see you there.

Kerry Crosbie
Project Director

Cover image: Andalas at the SRS.
By Dr Robin Radcliffe.

ARP Veterinary Support Team Update

In May this year, veterinarian Dr Tim Portas of Australia Zoo visited the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) as part of the ARP Veterinary Support Team. This is his report.

During my time at the SRS I was able to observe the routine reproductive tract ultrasonography carried out in the three female Sumatran rhinos and socialization periods between Andalas and Rosa. I gained familiarity with the equipment and drugs on hand at the SRS. Capture and anaesthesia protocols were reviewed with Dr Radcliffe, Dr Dedi and Dr Andre. The medical history for each rhino was reviewed such that I now have a good understanding of each animal's medical management to date.

The opportunity was taken to perform ultrasound examinations of the testes and accessory sex glands of Torgamba and Andalas. Some testicular fibrosis, an age related change in older male rhinoceroses, was noted in Torgamba. In other rhinoceros species age related testicular fibrosis does not appear to have an adverse effect on fertility. More of a concern was the presence of fluid surrounding both testes. This finding has also been noted in a male black rhinoceros at Western Plains Zoo with poor fertility. Torgamba's accessory sex glands were also quite small compared with Andalas'. Accessory sex gland size and volume has been positively correlated with fertility in other rhinoceros species. These findings are consistent with Torgamba's apparent poor fertility to date.

A further interesting finding in Torgamba was an apparent thickening or scarring of the pelvic urethra. Andalas appeared to have relatively well developed accessory sex glands and a homogenous testicular parenchyma on ultrasound exam consistent with a young male approaching puberty. To further characterise fertility in both these males, ongoing monitoring of testosterone may be of value with semen collection and analysis completing the picture.

I was able to spend one afternoon traveling on the Way Kanan River with the RPU. This was a great opportunity to observe the work of these units and gain a better understanding of the topography of the park. We travelled to a small fishing village inside the park at the mouth of the river which brought the living conditions of some communities surrounding the park into sharp focus. Additionally I visited the nearby elephant sanctuary for a brief tour of the facilities there.

The entire trip was very productive and I was impressed with the management of the SRS and the transfer of expertise to the local staff. In the event of some future emergency, I feel confident staff at the SRS would be comfortable with me attending to provide assistance.

I'm really excited by what is happening at the SRS and more broadly in terms of some concrete action towards rhino conservation in south-east Asia. Given the events of the last two decades for both captive Sumatran and free-ranging Sumatran and Javan rhinos, it's good to see some momentum building. It's easy to be very disheartened by the predicament of both species, however, the conservation success achieved with White and Greater one-horned rhinos over the last century gives me hope (even though these two species are very different in terms of habitat and behaviour). Hopefully, the vision for increasing the numbers of both species and securing their long term futures can be achieved.

I've seen Sumatran rhinos before in Zoo Malacca, Sungai Dusun and Cincinnati Zoo but, seeing them again this past week, it's impossible for me not to be totally humbled and in awe of having the opportunity to see these amazing animals, especially knowing that very few people will ever see them, let alone work closely with them (albeit for a short time).

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The ARP would like to thank Tim for his dedication to this program. Not only is he providing us and rhino conservation with his extensive experience in rhinoceros medicine, but he also generously used his own frequent flyer points for his flights, considerably reducing ARP travel costs.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Australia Zoo for allowing Tim to take a week's professional leave to visit the SRS. This generous support is invaluable to the success of these programs.

Our program is privileged to have the support of what we regard as two world experts in rhinoceros medicine – Dr Benn Bryant with the support of Taronga Western Plains Zoo, and Dr Tim Portas supported by Australia Zoo. Thank you all so very much!

Non-invasive population genetic monitoring of Indian Rhino in Assam

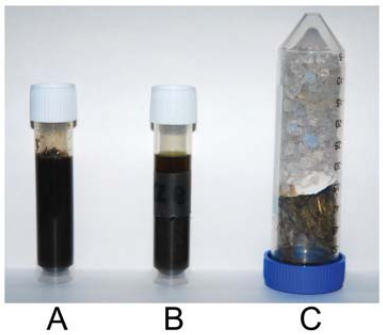
A pilot study to standardize protocols for dung DNA analysis. Update Report July 2008

The Greater one-horned rhinoceros *(Rhinoceros unicornis)* is a schedule I species according to the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, Govt. of India, as well as listed by IUCN as an endangered species. Greater one-horned rhinoceros were once distributed throughout the range of northern floodplains and nearby foothills of the Indian subcontinent between the Indo-Myanmar border in the east and the Sindhu river basin, Pakistan in the west. Habitat destruction and rampant poaching for mythical medicinal values of its horn has led this species to confine themselves into a few isolated pockets of protected areas of India and Nepal.

Although the Greater one-horned rhinoceros is the most abundant of the three Asian rhino species that exist today, including the Javan Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) and the Sumatran Rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) species, still its future is far from secure. Even with the mega success story of conservation in the Kaziranga National Park, Assam, doubt still persists with the genetic consequences of presently large population of 1855 individuals in an area of 859.33 sq km which comes from only a few individuals in the early twentieth century. Present rhino populations of Orang National Park with 68 individuals in an area of 78.80 sq km and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary with 81 individuals in an area of 38.81 sq km also descends from only a few individuals from the source population of Kaziranga National Park (Dept. of Environment and Forests, Govt. of Assam census 2006).

In the past few years, conservation genetics has gained tremendous momentum due to the successful use of noninvasive materials such as faecal samples, urine, shed hair, sloughed skin, discarded food etc as a source of DNA. The technique involves the extraction of DNA from these materials. The methodology has been increasingly applied to a wide variety of species and has proved to be useful in several types of research, as well as in wildlife forensics, management and conservation.

DNA from faecal samples has been used for population genetic monitoring of species like elephant, tiger etc. However, no attempt has so far been made towards using dung as a source of DNA for population monitoring



Above: Rhino dung samples preserved in: A – DETs buffer; B – 90-95% ethanol; C – Silica gel

of Greater one-horned rhinoceros in India. In India, work has only been done from the blood samples of wild caught or captive rhinos from various zoos. However, physical capturing of animals for genetic samples is not practically possible for a large scale population study. Therefore, under this project, we have aimed at studying the potential use of dung as a noninvasive source of population monitoring of Greater one-horned rhinoceros in India. The study will be carried out in presently existing rhino habitats in Assam, India.

Objectives

The major objectives of the study are:

1. Quantitative evaluation of various preservation and DNA extraction methodologies for rhino dung collected from natural habitats of Assam as a source of DNA.
2. Selection of marker for species identification of Greater one-horned rhinoceros from morphologically indistinguishable biological materials.
3. Selection of markers for gender differentiation of rhinos from dung DNA samples.
4. Selection of the minimum number of polymorphic microsatellite markers for rhino individual identification from dung samples.
5. Assessment of genotyping error from dung DNA samples.

Collection of rhino dung samples

Dung samples have been collected from Kaziranga National Park and Orang National Park, Assam. Only fresh dung samples (from the defecation areas of known individual rhinos) were collected from the field.

For each dung sample, a Global Positioning System (GPS) reading was taken and the reading was transferred into a Geographic Information System (GIS) to establish their locations in the study area. Efforts were put towards collecting samples from geographically distant locations as possible in order to further assure saples from different individuals, thereby accounting for individual to individual variation in DNA quality.

DNA has been successfully isolated from the collected dung samples and we have found encouraging results in DNA extraction from dung preserved in Silica rather than ethanol. Further study is ongoing.

Article: Principal Investigator Udayan Borthakur, M.Sc. Research Scholar Jyotibon Dutta, M.Sc. Technical Adviser Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Ph.D. Implementing Agencies Aaranyak.
Images: Aaranyak

Adopt-a-Rhino Fundraiser – You can now adopt Andalas!

Andalas was the first Sumatran rhino born in captivity in more than 112 years. He is the living, breathing result of a groundbreaking research and breeding effort undertaken by American zoos, the Indonesian government, and the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS).

Born at the Cincinnati Zoo, Ohio, Andalas moved to the SRS in February 2007 from his second home at Los Angeles Zoo. Now that he is sexually mature his keepers at the SRS have high hopes that he will soon breed with one of the three female rhinos at the sanctuary, helping to ensure the future success of the SRS rhino population. Andalas has adjusted well to life in Sumatra. Adapting to the heat and humidity of the Indonesian rainforest, he shed some of the red-brown hair he had grown in the US.

Help us save the Sumatran rhino by adopting one today – and it's tax deductible!

All funds raised through the Asian Rhino Project's adopt-a-rhino program will be used to support the SRS in Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra.

With each adoption you will receive an attractive adoption certificate including information on your rhino and the program. You can also choose to receive quarterly updates on your rhino as well as an A4 sized photograph (extra costs apply for photos and updates).

More information on the rhinos and the program is on our website www.asianrhinos.org.au.

Sumatra's pits deadly to endangered animals

Sakura was in big trouble. The three-year-old elephant had fallen backwards into a well three meters deep, and was trapped. She had been there for nearly two weeks without food or water. Her mother and the herd had finally given up and moved on.

Sakura's desperate calls were weakening and she was facing a lonely, lingering death. Sakura is not the first baby elephant to be trapped in one of the thousands of abandoned wells in the forests of Sumatra, nor will she be the last.

Her story really starts 24 years ago, when the Indonesian Government gazetted the 130,000-hectare Way Kambas National Park in south-eastern Sumatra. Eight villages and about 4500 households were relocated. Each family left behind a well and a cesspit, which forest regrowth quickly covered. Those hidden wells are a deadly legacy threatening the very animals the park is designed to protect. The lowland and swamp forest park is home to the rare Sumatran tiger (400 remain in the wild) and the equally threatened Sumatran rhinoceros (275 remaining). It also shelters the smallest sub-species of Asian elephant.

It is only recently that anyone has paid attention to the problem of abandoned wells. In the past year, four baby elephants have been found trapped in the wells. Rescuers have also found the bones of tigers, rhinoceroses and other species at the bottom of these pits.

A coordinated effort is under way to find and fill these deathtraps. But a cash-strapped Indonesian national parks service needs foreign donations for the $60,000 project.

When Sakura was found, she was in a bad way. She had been immobile in the mud for several days and her wounds were infected by the toxic ooze from animals trapped before her. A rescue party set out by truck and elephant to reach the remote location near the deep Braja Swamp. Rescuers mounted on elephants had to swim across the swamp to reach Sakura.

The rescue method is to collapse the side of the well to give the animal some purchase to clamber out. Before that, rescuers climbed down to the terrified Sakura and fed her mash and milk. But collapsing the walls did not help because Sakura could not move her limbs. So they had to dig, and haul out all 500 kilograms of her.

The rescuers set up a shelter next to the well and over the next two days stabilised Sakura with a drip and treated her many wounds and sores. Then came the hazardous job of getting her out of the swamp. A raft stretcher was fashioned and attached to an elephant. Then, ignoring the possibility of crocodiles, the rescue team swam Sakura on her raft across 50 meters of deep swamp. She was then hoisted on to the back of a truck and taken to the elephant clinic.

At the time of the drama, in mid-April, a veterinarian from Byron Bay, Claire Oelrichs, received an email from the clinic requesting medical advice on how to get Sakura on to her feet. Oelrichs is no stranger to the park and its conservation needs. A vigorous conservationist and regular visitor to the park, she has collected funds and medical supplies for local conservation. She works closely with national parks staff and on behalf of Eco Lodges Indonesia had been planning a trip to conduct a training program for mahouts, or keepers, and rangers. Oelrichs knew that pneumonia was the biggest threat to Sakura and it was vital she was raised to her feet.

Oelrichs scrounged straps and shackles from four-wheel-drive shops in Byron Bay and mobilised students from Newrybar Public School and Byron Bay High School, who raised funds to buy pulleys. Laden with equipment, Oelrichs and a party of fellow conservationists flew out to Sumatra, talking her way past suspicious airport security officials. They arrived to

find a fearful and depressed baby elephant. Men from the rescue team had sewn a sling and, with Oelrichs's pulleys in place, they hoisted Sakura to her feet.

"I have never heard such a heart-wrenching scream of terror as we lifted her," Oelrichs says. Sakura's wounds were starting to heal and she was eating but Oelrichs had her doubts: "Your emotions are one thing but, professionally, I didn't think she was going to make it."

Sakura could only handle a few minutes at a time in the sling before she became exhausted. Over the next several days, Claire and her 12-year-old son, Dexter, visited Sakura regularly. "She came to recognise us and learnt to undo the Velcro straps on our sandals," Oelrichs says. "As soon as we arrived, her little trunk would reach out and undo the straps. She'd grab our hats and our hands. We'd tickle her and she'd wriggle and make this little sound like she was laughing.

"When she was tired and lying down, she'd reach out for one of our hands, coil it under her chin and doze off. And each time we left, she'd call out and try to get up."

On the evening of the final day of their stay, Oelrichs and Dexter said a heartfelt goodbye to the little elephant and returned to the nearby Satwa Sumatra Elephant Eco Lodge to prepare for the journey home. "She had been wheezing a bit and I was worried that pneumonia might have set in," Oelrichs says.

Late that night they got a call to come to the clinic. "There were about 50 people there. The mahouts were devastated and many were crying." Sulis, the mahout who had looked after Sakura, squatted next to the dead baby elephant, arranging her trunk into a more comfortable-looking position. "There was such a strong feeling that we wanted to stop this happening," Oelrichs says. "I know I never want to see an animal suffer like that again." She is coordinating fund-raising to have the wells filled.

Sakura was buried under a simple marker in the leafy grounds of the veterinary clinic. It is hoped one day to erect a permanent memorial to her and the other elephants who have died in the wells.

Way Kambas is home to an estimated 20 Sumatran rhino. With this in mind the Asian Rhino Project has assisted Claire and her fundraising efforts for this project. So far $35,000 has been forwarded all raised by Claire. These funds are administered by the Indonesia International Rural and Agriculture Development Foundation, which is registered with the Indonesian Government. Donated money is paid directly to the local work teams through the management of the Satwa Sumatra Elephant Eco Lodge.

In total Claire and her team have raised $45,000 of the $63,000 required to complete the well filling. 1059 of 4,500 wells have been closed. Recently another elephant calf was found trapped in a well and thanks to the efforts of all involved was successfully returned to its herd. If you think you can help us raise the remaining funds for this project, please forward your donations to the Asian Rhino Conservation Fund – all donations over $2 are tax deductible. Contact info@asianrhinos.org.au should you require more information.

Article: Russel Eldridge
Image: Dr Andriansyah Suhaery

Donations

Just $5/week goes a long way and donations over $2 are tax deductible!
If you would like to set up regular small donations to the ARP,
please don't hesitate to contact us for easy, hassle-free options.

info@asianrhinos.org.au or phone 08 89760952.

WWF Camera Trapping Program

The Javan rhinoceros *(Rhinoceros sondaicus)* is the rarest of the five rhino species. With the very low population size (fewer than 60 individuals) in Ujung Kulon, these animals are not readily visible. Over the past few years, researchers and experts have relied more on signs such as footprints, excrement and feeding signs rather than direct sightings to study this fascinating species. In 1993 Mike Griffith made a significant breakthrough by using automatic camera to photograph Javan rhinos and identify the individual rhinos using parameters such as horn size, eye folds, and other distinctive markings. From this point, visual study of the Javan rhino was possible.

Starting in the early 2000s, WWF Indonesia continued this method using infrared triggered camera (an improvement from the pad sensors used by Griffith and team) which proved to be easier to install, more sensitive to objects, and survived longer in the field. During five years of survey, the following results were obtained:

1. Development of skilled field team for selecting trap sites and installing the equipment
2. Identification of 35 individual rhinos based on photos and footprints, thus developing the database/base-line data of rhino population in Ujung Kulon
3. Estimation of population size
4. Production of rhino photos for fundraising and/or lobbying purposes
5. Monitoring reproduction and birth of rhinos (rhino calves detected with camera traps)

WWF has requested funds from the Asian Rhino Project and the International Rhino Foundation to purchase 35 digital camera traps which has been approved by both organisations. These traps will allow park managers to estimate population size relying on identification and comparison of photographed rhinos for two different survey periods.

Theses surveys and the placement of camera traps in the home range of female rhinos will also allow the team to access rhino birth rates and reproduction. It will also give the team information for selecting individual rhino for further study using video trap units. Video trap units will monitor and study the behavior of several different rhinos; thus complementing the rhino monitoring activities.

The advantages of the digital system include reduced cost for film, developing, and printing photos, more shots capacity, and format is already digital format for analysis, communication, and so on.

Cameras will be placed systematically in the observation blocks where rhinos are present. Camera placements will be rotated regularly to ensure total coverage of all of the rhino home range in the peninsula.

Extensive networks among Rhino Protection Unit (RPU) and local people have helped rhino monitoring with information exchange.

A villager recently tipped the patrol units with information that a Javan rhino may be shifting its home-range slightly to the east. The same trend was also observed back in 2002 where a male Javan rhino was found entering the village of Rancapinang. This trend of rhino movement necessitates the population manager to prepare a wider coverage of rhino monitoring area. For this reason, WWF Indonesia and YABI plan a joint camera trap operation to expand survey coverage. Two camera units are assigned to the RPUs in Ujung Kulon National Park along with training in camera trap operation and placement techniques.

So far no rhino have been captured with these camera traps, but more camera units will increase the chance of gathering valuable information of Javan rhino movements and behavior.

In addition to this, an observation was made around Cigenter river estuary to study the behavior of rhino in seawater. Soaking in saltwater has been recorded as a mechanism for rhinos to maintain body temperature, fulfill mineral needs, and possibly for disinfecting wounds. A male rhino with lesions in its posterior was found soaking in seawater around the observation area.

Article: Adhi Rachmat Hariyadi, Project Leader for WWF-Indonesia, Ujung Kulon National Park
Photos by: WWF-Indonesia, UKNP, A Hariyadi

Top to bottom: Javan rhino soaking in seawater around Cigenter; Javan rhino with wounds (lesions) in upper posterior; Javan rhino moving in seawater heading towards the shore; Rhino tracks along beach.

National Committee Update

The next few months are going to be busy for the ARP committee. We are almost finished with the end of year bookwork – ARP Treasurer Lorraine Dunn and ARP Merchandise Officer Petra Hancock have done a fantastic job working with pro bono accountant Evelyn Wong of Meranti Consulting and auditor Kevin Judge of Judge Constable Chartered Accountants. Our sincere thanks goes to them all.

The ARP AGM will be held on 16 October 2008. Please come along if you can, there will be some fantastic slide shows on our projects and you will have a chance to meet with some great people all working together to save these amazing animals.

The International Rhino Foundation AGM will be held in November which ARP Patron Peter Hall and ARP Project Director Kerry Crosbie will attend. This 3-day meeting will be held at the White Oak Conservation Center in Florida, USA. It is a great opportunity to meet with experts in the field and to build on important relationships with ARP partners.

During the last quarter WA Branch Manager Emma Gatehouse and Operational Manager Marc Bowden have sadly both resigned from committee. They have both provided great assistance to the ARP during their time and we are grateful for their contributions to date. Emma has been filling two roles for the ARP – the second is the coordinator for the rhino adoption fundraising project. Emma has kindly offered to continue the adoptions role, however, we will be seeking a new Branch Manager for WA.

Sadly we may also be seeking a new secretary as well – ARP Secretary Daniel Scarparolo carries out two roles for the ARP as well – the second is to maintain the website and format the newsletters. Aside from his full-time position at Perth Zoo and his commitments to the ARP, Daniel also sits on committee for Project Numbat and volunteers time for Painted Dog Project. Understandable that he needs to take a step back. Any interest in this position also would be greatly received.

Kerry Crosbie, Director, Asian Rhino Project.

Asian Rhino Project 2008 Annual General Meeting and Sausage Sizzle

6pm, Thursday 16 October 2008
Perth Zoo Lecture Theatre
20 Labouchere Road, South Perth

Current Agenda

1. 6pm sausage sizzle.
   Tea, coffee and biscuits also provided throughout the night
2. 7pm AGM start
3. Director's Report
   Includes presentations from committee members on operations and project updates
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of National Committee Members
   Nominations for two vacant positions: Secretary and WA Branch Manager
6. Constitution Change 1 by special resolution membership approval by Committee.
7. Constitution Change 2 Meeting Quorum - a minimum number rather than percentage
8. Memberships restructure
9. Any other business

For more information on committee positions, agenda items or to add an item, please contact Kerry at info@asianrhinos.or.au or phone 08 8976 0952.

Friends and family are more than welcome.

In The News – Asian Rhino News Stories

Rare rhino numbers in Nepal fall due to poachers 1 June 2008
Poaching in the Himalayas is taking a heavy toll on the population of the endangered Greater one-horned rhinoceros in Nepal, a wildlife official said. There were 31 rhinoceros in the jungles of Bardiya National Park located in Nepal's southwestern plains last year of which nine have gone missing, park official Phanindra Kharel said.
More: http://in.reuters.com/article/topNews/idINIndia-33851320080601

Assam wants life terms for rhino poachers 3 June 2008
The Assam government has proposed tough anti-poaching laws ranging from heavy fines to life imprisonment to combat a rise in the slaughter of rhinos by organised crime syndicates. "We are contemplating certain amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 for an increase in the prison term for poachers from three to 10 years and doubling the quantum of fine to Rs.50,000," Assam Forest and Wildlife Minister Rockybul Hussain said on Tuesday. "If a poacher repeats the crime we want life imprisonment so as to deter people from carrying out rhino poaching," the minister said.
More: http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1168384

Rhino poachers strike in Kaziranga 6 June 2008
Poachers in Assam's Kaziranga National Park Friday slaughtered a Greater one-horned rhino for its horn in the latest rhino poaching incidents in the north-eastern state. A park warden said they recovered the rhino carcass near the Agoratoli range of the 430 sq km park in eastern Assam. "The poachers were able to take away the horn of the adult rhino," a park ranger said. "The poachers used automatic weapons to gun down the rhino probably in the early hours of Friday." With this incident, the total number of rhinos killed so far this year by organized poacher gangs has gone up to 11.
More: http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/enviornment/
rhino-poachers-strike-in-kaziranga_10057404.html

IVF gives black rhinos chance to avoid extinction 7 June 2008
Vets at the Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo in central western New South Wales have succeeded in carrying out the world's first artificial fertilisation of a rhinoceros egg. Reproductive experts first collected eggs from a black rhino called Rocket last year, after intensive hormone therapy. There were several failed attempts at fertilisation, but today, the team of researchers who have been working on the project for the past four years are celebrating their success.
More: http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/07/2267998.htm?section=australia

Nine rhino poachers nabbed 9 June 2008
A total of nine poachers, including a Nepal Army personnel who were involved in rhino poaching in Bardiaya National Park, have landed at the District Prison Office, Bardiya. The officials at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) said that all the alleged poachers were detained when their involvement was proved in poaching activities. Annapurna Das, Director General of DNPWC said the security forces were looking for the rest of the alleged persons.
More: http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np/detail.php?article_id=1610&cat_id=4

Vietnam police arrest two for smuggling rhino horns 13 June 2008
Police in Vietnam have arrested two people for smuggling rhino horns and tiger parts, marking the country's second rhino horn smuggling arrest this week, a police officer said Friday. Dau Duc Dung, 31, and Nguyen Thi Loan, 42, were arrested Wednesday at a house in Hanoi with six pieces cut from rhino horns, weighing a total of 1.2 kilograms, according to Nguyen Xuan Dung, a senior police officer in the district.
More: http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/212052,vietnam-police-arrest-two-for-smuggling-rhino-horns.html

The world most rarest rhino caught in WWF camera
Recently a special designed WWF camera with infra-red, installed to capture wildlife footage in the jungles of South East Asia, has twice recorded remarkable images of a mother and child pair of the world's rarest rhino in Ujung Kulon national park, West Java, Indonesia. "With fewer than 60 Javan rhinos left in the wild, we believe this footage was well worth the risk to our equipment," said Adhi Rachmat Hariyadi, who leads WWF-Indonesia's project in Ujung Kulon National Park.
More: http://www.shearyadi.com/myworld/the-world-most-rarest-rhino-caught-in-wwf-camera/

Rhino horn smuggler does it again inspite of warning 13 July 2008
Customs officials at the Katunayake airport fined and arrested a man attempting to smuggle a rhino horn valued at around Rs. 10 million to Bangkok last morning. The suspect, a 50-year-old antique dealer in Fort, had arrived at the airport to board flight TG 308 to Bangkok. The rhino horn weighing around 1.2 kg was found hidden among the suspect's garments in his luggage, Customs officials said.
More: http://www.sundaytimes.lk/080713/News/timesnews0016.html

27 one-horned rhinos in Dudhwa 23 July 2008
The population of one-horned rhinoceros in the Dudhwa National Park in Lakhimpur-Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh has increased five-fold in the last 25 years. Five rhinos, including three females, were relocated from the Kaziranga National Park in Assam in 1984 under the Rhino Rehabilitation Project. Two of them later died. The rhino population in the reserved area of the park, about 28 sq.km. encircled by electric fencing, has gone up to 27.
More: http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/23/stories/2008072357601400.htm

Archaeologists find 9000-year-old rhino remains in Urals 28 July 2008
Archaeologists in the Sverdlovsk Region in Russia's Urals have discovered the 9,000-year-old bones of a rhinoceros, a local museum worker said on Monday. The excavations during which the bones were discovered were carried out at a site on the bank of the Lobva River, said Nikolai Yerokhin from the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Plant And Animal Ecology department.
More: http://en.rian.ru/culture/20080728/115066936.html

Prized Orang poacher arrested 30 July 2008
Three years after he dodged police bullets and disappeared behind the trees, Gopal Boro, the most dreaded rhino poacher in Orang National Park, was arrested from a rented house in Morigaon yesterday. The divisional forest officer of Mangaldoi, S. Momin, today said Boro, 35, was picked up during a joint operation with the army, led by Lt Col Kapil Bakshi.
More: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080731/jsp/frontpage/story_9625683.jsp

Floods hit Pobitora wildlife sanctuary 23 August 2008
Floods have affected the Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, forcing many animals, especially rhinos, to leave the sanctuary and seek shelter in adjoining areas. "Following the floods, some rhinos have strayed into Kamarpara and Bhurbandha areas. We have intensified patrolling in these areas as well, and a number of forest staff along with department elephants have been stationed there to keep strict vigil on the movement of the rhinos," Mukul Tamuly, Ranger of the sanctuary, told The Assam Tribune.
More: http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=aug2408/at06

Endangered rhino rescued in Borneo 23 August 2008
By Muguntan Vanar

Wildlife officials have rescued a critically-endangered Borneo Sumatran Rhinoceros and transferred it to a reserve after a two-week operation in the east coast of Sabah.

The male rhino was found wandering at an oil palm plantation near a forest on Aug 5 when the Sabah Wildlife Department launched the rescue.

"It was obvious that the rhino was injured to some degree as it had left its forest for the flat terrain of an oil palm plantation," Dr Senthilvel Nathan, the department's chief field veterinarian, said on Saturday.

Dr Senthilvel headed the rescue operation that succeeded in transplanting the animal to the rhino paddock at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve located east of Lahad Datu.

The team didn't want to use sedatives because there are only an estimated 30 specimens of the Borneo variant of the Sumatran Rhinoceros in Sabah.

"It was a delicate operation as we had to make sure that the rhino was not stressed by having humans too close to it," he said.

Over 10 days, a team of rangers and veterinarians -- supported by experts from SOS Rhino Borneo and NGO WWF-Malaysia -- stayed close to rhino at the plantation to give the animal time to get used to them, making sure it got enough food and water in the meantime.

The rhino was finally coaxed into a crate containing fruits and leaves.

"We had sedatives on standby the entire time, but as the rhino remained remarkably calm we did not use them at all -- which was good for the rhino," said Dr Senthivel.

Sabah Wildlife Department director Lautentius Ambu said the rhino was moved to the Tabin Wildlife Reserve as it has been designated the new Bornean Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary.

"The rescue of this adult male rhino in its prime is timely as the department has been addressing the rhino population issue by launching a rhino breeding programme based in Tabin," he said.

The decision to breed rhinos in semi-captivity was made by the State Rhino Task Force (SRTF), formed following the Fourth Sumatran Rhino Conservation Workshop held in July last year.

WWF believes that the rescued rhino was the same one it had captured on its camera and video trap in February last year, the first photograph taken of the rare animal in Sabah.

Source: The Star online
http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/8/23/nation/20080823144651&sec=nation

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