

Asian Rhino Project



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May 2007

Welcome to the May Newsletter

What better way to start off a newsletter than with the announcement of another birth of a Sumatran rhino calf at Cincinnati Zoo in the USA. The male calf arrived at 11pm on 30 April and has been named "Harapan" (Harry for short). The name is Indonesian for 'hope' which is so very appropriate for the hairy rhino.

He weighed in at 86 pounds at birth and appears to be doing very well. Mother "Emi" is said to be outstanding with her newborn calf which is no surprise

going from her last two efforts at motherhood with Suci (born 2004) and her brother Andalas (born 2001).

This brings the captive population up to 10 individuals; four of which reside at Cincinnati Zoo. Andalas, the first born calf, now resides at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra. It is hoped he will sire calves with the three females they have there.

Photos: Emi and Harapan. Courtesy of David Jenike and Cincinnati Zoo, USA.



A Warm Welcome to New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members: Adam Felts, Emma Gatehouse, Kristy Garard, Michael Dee, Michael Prince, Paige Mc Nickle, Parmasiuam Ramasamy, Ray Hren, Renae Zammil, Sophie Lourandos, Susanne Wyatt and Vickie A Steele.

And a special thanks to Anna Mertz for her very generous donation.

Fundraising Dinner for Asian Rhinos

They need our help



Saturday 16 June 2007
6pm to late
18 Ida Avenue, Mosman
\$75 a head

Proceeds go to Asian Rhino Project.

Raffle tickets will be available.
Donations much appreciated.

RSVP Joan Pearson 9960 2229 / 0411 044 739
Cheques made payable to Asian Rhino Project, Inc.

Food • Wine • Entertainment • Auction • Fun!

Photo courtesy of Cincinnati Zoo



Indian Rhino Relocation to Manas National Park a Success! International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and WTI (Wildlife Trust of India) Update

IFAW is grateful to the Asian Rhino Project for funds to construct a new rhino enclosure in Manas National Park into which two greater one-horned rhinos were successfully introduced in January.

Manas National Park is a world heritage site in Assam, India, bordering the kingdom of Bhutan in the North. Although poachers had emptied Manas of its historical rhino population, recent improvements in political stability and anti-poaching enforcement has made the park safe for wildlife again.

Last year, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and its partner, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), relocated a single female rhino, named Mainoi, to an enclosure in Manas to acclimatize her to the habitat, a critical step in her journey back to the wild.

In January of this year, an additional two females that had been rescued and cared for at IFAW & WTI's Center

for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation in Assam were ready to join Mainoi in Manas.

The existing boma was enlarged to make more room for the new arrivals. A replica of the existing facility (section "B" in the illustration) was created on the opposite side. Since rhinos need water bodies to wallow during the hot hours of the day, the new boma also encompassed part of a perennial stream. Hume pipes were placed below the fence to facilitate the free flow of stream water through the boma. The nine strand power fence had a twin role to play: keep the rhinos confined in a large area for at least two years and at the same time keep wild elephants and large carnivores like tigers away.

IFAW & WTI are now making preparations for the annual floods Kaziranga, which sees endangered rhinos and other wildlife requiring rescue, rehabilitation, and returned to the wild.



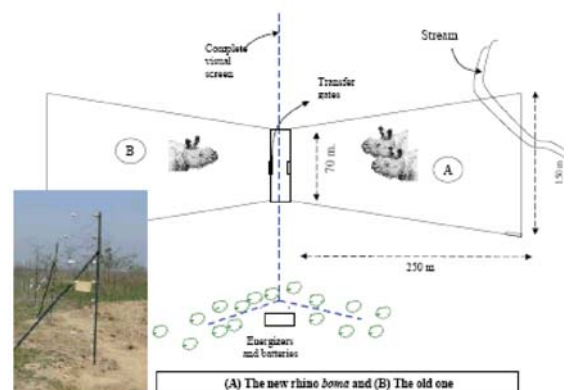
Loading: Last time the loading took nearly three hours as we employed a recovery ute to drag the crate on to the truck. This time the crates were lifted and loaded onto the respective trucks using a crane. The entire operation was over 45 minutes. Loading began at about 2.30pm and was over by 3.15. Both the crates were loaded with the wrong side of the crane towards the rear of the truck i.e. the rhino facing the rear so we could have an easy release into the boma.

Transport: The trucks left CWRC at 6pm on the 29th with the keepers who looked after them accompanying them during the journey. A convoy of eight vehicles. The vehicles stopped every two hours for expecting the condition of the rhinos.

Release: Two days before the arrival of the rhinos, the older rhino had been confined to section-B of the rhino boma (see illustration). Slight modifications had also been made to the boma. The plan was to release the new arrivals into section-A. One by one the trucks were reversed. Unlike the rhinos last year, these two rhinos were up on their feet even before the door was opened.



Post-release: Soon after release, both the rhinos were seen nibbling blades of grass. The day after release, both were seen together, moving around and exploring every part of their new home. One animal keeper from CWRC is being stationed at the Rehab Station to train the incumbent keeper on the husbandry practices to be followed for a month. The animals will receive the concentrate mix every day for a period of 30 days. Thereafter the rhinos will be on their own for the next two years in the boma.



Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) Rhino Update

Submitted by Dedi Candra, Andriansyah, Marcellus Adi, and Robin Radcliffe

Andalas

Andalas arrived at the SRS on 21 February, 2007 from his home in LA Zoo, USA. After a long journey he has adapted well to his new home. On his first day at the SRS, Andalas was placed in a holding pen with access to a clear undergrowth boma (20 x 30 m) completely enclosed with mesh-netting. The netting was setup to control parasites, specifically flies and biting insects. In this boma, Andalas wandered around, learned to eat by pulling down small trees and saplings, and also wallowing. He has adjusted well to the situation with the caring conducted by the keepers. In the beginning, he mostly consumed the same browses he ate in LA Zoo, which are primarily Ficus leaves. But slowly, the keepers in the SRS gave Andalas a variety of local leaves and he enjoyed them too.

In early April 2007, Andalas left quarantine for a second boma without mesh-netting and with full undergrowth so he could begin to

adjust to life in the rainforest. The first day of release into the new boma, he was very careful and alert as he walked in the dense vegetation. He sometimes even looked confused when walking and even got stuck between roots and a weave of liana vines. However, he enjoyed wallowing in his new wallow as long as his keeper was near. In the 2nd boma, Andalas also learned about the electric fence.

On May 30th, we opened the big enclosure (10 ha) for Andalas. He again adjusted to the new situation with the electric fence and the dense forest. He walked through the forest together with his keeper. Andalas is adjusting to the new browses and will now be able to exercise in the forest.

Torgamba

Torgamba is in the best physical condition we have seen him in some time. Compared to the situation in early 2006, when he suffered from a tooth problem, then continuing

with foot problems in August, he now looks healthy and even a bit fat! Some of the blood parameters remain elevated and suggests that Torgamba still suffers from chronic kidney disease and anemia.

However, there are no clinical signs of illness. His behavior and activities in the forest are normal. He has also mated regularly with Ratu almost every month this year. This shows that Torgamba is still very much a strong male. Sperm analysis from the last mating with Ratu (May 16th) found only a few sperm, mostly of abnormal form.

Bina, Rosa and Ratu

The three females are in excellent condition. They also have normal behavior. Recent blood analysis indicates normal results and good health for all. For reproduction, Bina and Rosa have shown irregular cycles, but then become normal again. Ratu has now mated with Torgamba on many occasions but still no pregnancy has occurred.



Andalas. Photo courtesy of Dr Robin Radcliffe

Field Survey Update Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP)

Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), Fauna and Flora International-Indonesia Program and Kerinci Seblat National Park Management.

Background

At 13,300 km² Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP) spans four provinces (South Sumatra, Jambi, Bengkulu, Jambi and West Sumatra) and is the largest protected area on the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

The vast tracts of primary rainforest inside KSNP that continue outside of the national park borders contain high levels of biodiversity, which has led to KSNP being designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the 1980s, KSNP was considered as one of the most important protected area for conservation of the Sumatran rhinos, with some sources suggesting a possible population of up to 300 animals on the basis of habitat. The national park consists of two large blocks of forest: the Western Block comprising areas of Jambi, Bengkulu, West Sumatra and South Sumatra provinces and the Eastern Block, which falls within Jambi province.

After over a decade of law enforcement conducted in the Western Block of KSNP, the Rhino Protection Units (RPU) activities ceased, with the conclusion that a maximum of three individual rhinos remained. However, in the Eastern (Jambi) Block of KSNP, no formal rhino surveys had been conducted for more than a decade, even though in February 2000 a one-off field survey by FFI-Indonesia Program, accompanied by RPU rangers found evidence of rhino presence (footprints, feeding) here.

Thus, this proposal aimed to conduct a series of rapid field surveys over two months, the majority for 10 days or more, in an almost entirely data-deficient core area of the Eastern (Jambi) Block. It is this forest block where it is believed a small but potentially significant population of Sumatran rhino may survive. Thus, any subsequent conservation actions taken by KSNP will be wholly dependent upon the field results of this rapid assessment.

Results

A total of 227 km of transects were surveyed by two teams in the Eastern (Jambi) Block between 15 September 2006 and 28 April 2007. No signs of rhino were recorded, but new records for endangered or data deficient species, such as elephant, tiger, serow, tapir, small-medium sized unidentified felids and sun bears (Table and Figures 2a-g).

Photo top: The Rhino Survey Team
Right and next page: Figures 2a-g. Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP), eastern rhino study block and locations of endangered or data deficient focal species recorded between September 2006 and April 2007.



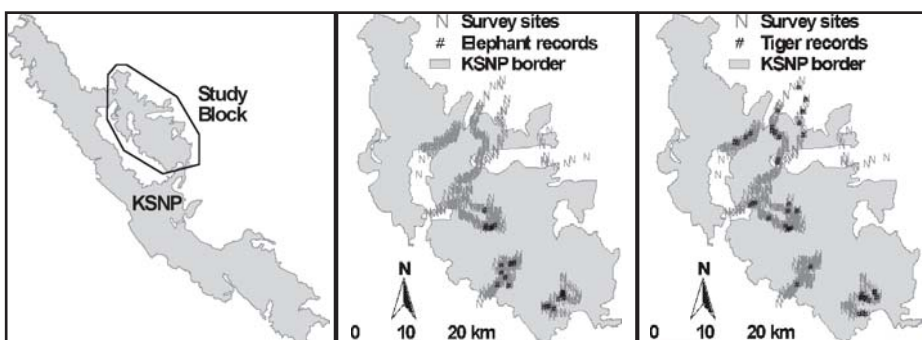
Conclusion and recommendations

While no records of rhino were recorded from the 2006-2007 field surveys, this Asian Rhino Project funded work has provided urgently needed information on the Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger and the Data Deficient sun bear.

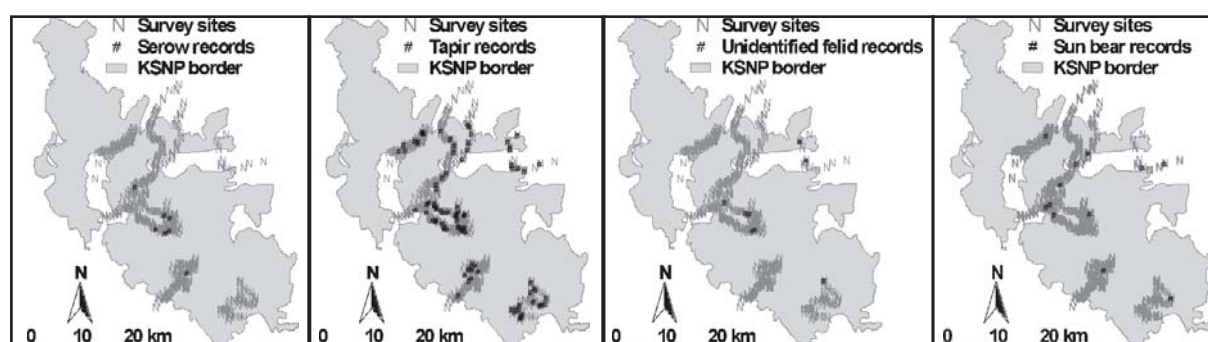
Furthermore, this work has identified the location of a population of elephants, whose precise location was poorly known. This new information is now being used by the DICE/FFI/KSNP Elephant Conservation Project to focus some of their resources to this area, especially in the forest patches that are close to farmland and where future crop raiding or other conflict incidents may occur.

Although it is disappointing that no rhino signs were found to support previous records, we do not conclude that rhinos are absent from this area, but that there are notoriously difficult to detect, especially if living at very low densities. A key recommendation would be to conduct additional surveys in adjacent forest patches. Still, the data obtained from this project have shown the importance of the Eastern (Jambi) block for flagship species, such as tigers and elephants.

This information will be integral in supporting the work of KSNP management and the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry in vetoing proposals to construct roads through this area of KSNP. The Sumatran rhino therefore remains an important flagship, albeit elusive, species for KSNP that continues to protect some of the richest rainforest habitat on earth.



Survey Area	Previous rhino survey results	Km surveyed	KSNP survey results
Tebo river headwaters at foot of Mt Tujuh massif as far as Mt Angin	Rhino seen emerging from a wallow in Asam river headwaters near Mt Angin. Rhino feeding trace seen (survey 2000)	8	Survey conduct by one team Results : Sambar deer, Muntjak, Tapir, Tiger, Sun bear Rhino sign : none detected
Tebo mid river area and area to confluence with Tebo Pandan river Batang Ullas Kiri river area	Continuation of sweep search Survey 1 Rhino footmarks seen in 2000 and feeding trace	54	Surveys conducted by two teams Team 1: Total transect length 13 km Team 2 : Total transect length 41 km Results: Tiger, Wild pig, Tapir, Sun bear, Serow, Muntjac, Sambar deer Rhino Sign: Old rhino trap
Batang Ullas Kanan river to headwaters of Batang Pelepat Pelepat-Ulu Bungo headwaters	Enter from PT SMA or from Sungai Talang village	31	Survey conducted by one team Results : Tiger, Sambar deer, Tapir, Wild pig, Sun bear, Wild cat (possibly Marbled cat) Rhino Sign: None detected
Northern foothills of Mt Mandiurai (historic rhino reports 1996-9) bordering Tabir mid waters	Enter from Tarutung or Bukit Perentak	54	Surveys conducted by two teams Team 1: Total transect length 42 km Team 2 : Total transect length 31 km Results: Tiger, Wild pig, Tapir, Sun bear, Serow, Muntjac, Sambar deer, Elephant Rhino Sign: None detected
Air Hitam river – headwaters of Tabir river Air Hitam –Sungai Tengah	Enter from Renah Pematik Kerinci (many old rhino pit traps on entry route hill ridges). Tiger rangers may accompany to maximize search results Enter from Renah Pemetik: tiger rangers may accompany to maximize search results	60	Surveys conducted by two teams Team 1: Total transect length 18 km Team 2 : Total transect length 42 km Results: Tiger, Wild pig, Tapir, Sun bear, Serow, Muntjac, Sambar deer, Wild cats, Elephants. Rhino Sign: Old rhino trap
Air Simpang Kiri area of Gunung Seblat, Bengkulu-South Sumatra borders (Kulus kiri, kulus kecil river and senawar river of Gunung Hijau)	Check a rhino report from July 2006 – only to be executed if funds permit	20	Survey conduct by one team with total transect are 20 km, Result : Bearded pig or wild pig, Sambar deer, Fishing cat, Tapir Rhino signs : old pit trap (3m x 3m x 3m), old pit snare (1.5m x 1m x 1m), old wallow (7m x 6m x 1m) used by wild pig now.



Madagascar

September 2007



Photo by Michelle Wild

Come on a fantastic four-week journey to Madagascar in search of endangered lemurs, sifaka and fossa. With a unique country and culture, Madagascar has so much to offer the nature-loving traveller.

Group size is limited to 12—all the better for comfortable travel and greater opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography.

Register your interest now!

Join us on this fabulous chance to see a unique country with a range of spectacularly different wildlife.

Contact Kerry on 08 8976 0952 or info@asianrhinos.org.au for further information.

Trip Arrangements

- Late September 2007 departure ex Perth (to be confirmed)
- 4 weeks duration, escorted from Perth
- Costs include all transport, accommodation and most meals

This is a conservation-based tour with part proceeds going to Asian Rhino Project.



www.asianrhinos.org.au

SOS Rhino Update

SOS Rhino Borneo organizes Soccer Tournament during Malaysia's Labor Day Celebrations as part of Community Outreach Program

SOS Rhino Borneo's (SOSRB) management team organized a soccer tournament at Kampong Parit during Malaysia's Labor Day celebrations. The tournament opened on April 30th with an all-women's game. Despite the torrential downpour, the ladies really "put the boot in"!

A total of 18 teams were formed, made up of villagers from Dagat and Parit, staff of oil palm plantations, and SOS Rhino Borneo's field staff. The 2-day celebration ended with closing remarks by Dr. Nan Schaffer, and distribution of trophies to the top three winning teams.

SOSRB's field team created exhibits for display during the tournament at Parit Village School where school children and palm oil plantation staff had access to information on the plight of the Sumatran rhino in Sabah, and SOS Rhino Borneo's efforts to save them.



By hosting and organizing such events, SOS Rhino Borneo continues to build stronger relationships with the stakeholders who live and work in areas surrounding Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

Committee Updates

National Committee - by Kerry Crosbie

Last month I presented a paper on the ARP at the International Rhino Keepers Workshop which saw some very positive feedback. We hope to have inspired keepers from around the world to assist in our fundraising and awareness programs. We have already been contacted by several of the keepers who are in the process of applying for a regular donation to the project from their conservation funds. Good luck to those individuals and thank you so much for your support; we will keep you updated on how it all goes.

We were also extremely fortunate to receive a nice donation from my long time rhino hero Anna Mertz. It was such a privilege to finally meet her and so very humbling to have her full support and admiration for what we have done! Meeting her was another life dream fulfilled for me – I still smile at the thought of her – an awe-inspiring woman! I feel so very lucky to have had the honor of meeting her!

Next on the agenda is the ARP dinner for which we are full swing into sourcing auction items for – please if you can help, call me (08 89760952). The attendance list is slowly coming together and it promises to be a great night!

WA Branch – by Emma Gatehouse

Since February the WA Branch the team has been busy preparing for the 5th Rhino Keeper Workshop 2007. We had new merchandise made up (Wine coolers, Thermal mugs, drink bottles, stubby holders and pens), which all look fantastic. ARP gained a lot of interest and support throughout the Workshop, receiving 11 new memberships, 2 adoptions, a 1000 pound donation, and selling \$630 worth of merchandise. Thanks to all the crew in WA for their hard work in getting everything organized for the Workshop especially to Daniel for creating fantastic posters and flyers, and to Holly for organising the great new merchandise. Nice one guys, did well!!!!



Rhino May Day

From 26 to 30 May 2007, Perth Zoo helped ARP to celebrate Rhino May Day and raise awareness about rhinoceros conservation. The celebrations coincided with the second birthday of the Zoo's male Southern White Rhinoceros calf, Bakari. ARP set up an information stall at the Zoo near the rhinoceros exhibit to raise awareness about the fight to save the Asian Rhino species and ARP.

On Wednesday 30 May at the Meeting Rooms of the Zoological Society of London a conference was held to discuss the latest developments in rhino conservation. This has been an annual event for several years to inform the general public about projects undertaken in rhinoceros conservation. In the past few years, the event has been attended by 100-200 people from all



Committee Updates continued...

VIC Branch

A huge thanks to Brooke, Kylie and the Rhino Keepers Workshop team for promoting the ARP as much as they could and for organising a fantastic event!!!! Hats off to you guys – brilliant workshop!

ARP Member Rebecca Norris - ARP Presentation

Below is a note from one of our members Rebecca Norris who took the opportunity to educate her peers and associates about the Asian Rhinos and the work the ARP is doing to help them. Thanks to Rebecca for her initiative and support! If anyone else is interested in doing something similar, we are more than happy to help put together a presentation to suit.

"I am participating in the Green Steps Program at Flinders University, which involves developing the skills required to become a change agent in businesses to lower their impact on climate change. As part of the program I had to give a seven minute presentation on a topic of my choice to receive feedback on my communication skills. I chose the Asian Rhino Project because I was aware that none of the 14 people I was presenting to knew about the three Asian Rhino species and it was a great opportunity to educate them and perhaps get their support!

I spent most of the presentation describing the three species and why they are in so much trouble - as my main aim was to give the audience knowledge. I then used the rest of my time to describe the ARP and a few of the fantastic things they have done.

The last slide of the PowerPoint presentation included the ARP web address and outlined some easy options for the audience to help, such as membership, donation and Adopt a Rhino.

I got tons of inspired, positive feedback from the group and some people were interested in membership. It was a fantastic experience and was made easy by the notes and template given to me by Kerry Crosbie. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to help. It is such a simple action but makes a great difference."

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.

In The News – Asian Rhino Stories

US ambassador urges action to protect rhinos

14 February 2007

US Ambassador James F. Moriarty Wednesday called for Nepal and the international community to join together to protect the country's endangered rhinoceros population.

<http://www.kantipuronline.com/kolnews.php?nid=100666>

LA Zoo Sumatran Rhino Makes Historic Journey to Indonesia

Andalas, the first Sumatran rhinoceros born in captivity in over 100 years will leave his Los Angeles Zoo home of three years later this week to go to Indonesia. Andalas will become the first Sumatran rhino ever to be transported from the United States to Indonesia as part of an international breeding program. He will join two female rhinos, at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in the Way Kambas National Park on the Island of Sumatra.

“Andalas’ journey to Indonesia is vital to the future of Sumatran rhinos” states Zoo Director John Lewis, “This breeding program is just one example of the extent zoos will go to in order to save a species from extinction.”

Andalas (the original name of the Island of Sumatra) received great fanfare when he was born on September 13, 2001, to rhinos Emi and Ipuh at the Cincinnati Zoo. His birth marked the first time that a calf was born at a zoo since 1889 when a live birth was recorded at the Calcutta Zoo in India. His mother Emi, who had several unsuccessful pregnancies prior to having Andalas, has been on loan to the Cincinnati Zoo from the LA Zoo since 1995.

<http://www.asianjournal.com/?c=45&a=18145>

Kaziranga's straying rhinos causing concern

2 March 2007

Rhinos straying out of the Kaziranga National Park (KNP), the abode of the great Indian one-horned rhinoceros, has emerged as a major concern for the Forest Department and conservationists. While the phenomenon of rhinos wandering off the Park is not exactly uncommon, of late there has been a perceptible increase in the number of straying rhinos. The development bodes ill for the celebrated Park, as it could lead to a serious man-rhino conflict besides exposing the rhino to poaching. The ominous signs of such a conflict are already palpable with a person having been killed and another injured by a rhino recently. A rhino had also died of firearm injuries on January 27 after it had strayed to the Assam-Arunachal border near Lakhimpur.

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=mar0307/at07>

Meet on rhino conservation

5 March 2007

One of the biggest conclaves of rhino conservationists from South Asia got under way in Kaziranga this evening to discuss the future of the Asian rhino.

The three-day meeting is being held under the aegis of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

The meeting will highlight the success of the rhino conservation program in Kaziranga National Park and discuss effective strategies for trans-boundary rhino conservation in India and Nepal. A majority of the participants of the conclave are from India and Nepal. How to curb poaching is also on the agenda as there has been no let up in such crimes in recent times — more so in Nepal and to a slightly lesser extent in India.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070306/asp/northeast/story_7474072.asp

Conservationists keep rhinos from becoming jambiyas

No rhinoceros roams the wilds of Yemen, yet this country and that animal are intimately entwined, in a relationship that has put the rhino at great risk of extinction. The connection between Yemen and the dwindling herds of rhinoceros can be found hanging from the belts of Yemeni men.

Traditionally, the rhino's horn has been used in Yemen as the preferred material for the handle of the jambiya, the ceremonial dagger worn by Yemeni men. Yemen has been importing rhino horn from eastern Africa since the second century, according to the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, a Greek monograph describing navigation and trade in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf. The use of rhino horn in the crafting of jambiya handles has decimated their herds, triggering decades of work by conservationists to save them.

<http://www.yobserver.com/article-11855.php>

In The News – Asian Rhino Stories

New strategy to check rhino poaching in Chitwan

The National Park is set to implement a new strategy to check poaching of one-horned rhinos after killings of one-horned rhinos continued unabated in the Chitwan National Park.

Over a dozen of one-horned rhinos have been killed in the national park since the beginning of the current fiscal year. According to Chief Conservation Officer of the Park, Kamaljung Kunwar, new posts are being created in the national park as per new strategy while armed police posts have been set up in the central region.

Under the strategy, the number of posts will be increased from 14 to 34.

Similarly, armed security posts with staffers of national park and armed forest in the partnership of the district forest office will be set up in the central region.

The park is also poised to set up three mobile teams for controlling rhinos.

According to Chief Conservation Officer, Kunwar, a group of 7-8 mobile team is likely to be mobilized in the national park, in central region and the rest of outer region.

Earlier, a well co-ordinated network was set up to arrest one-horned rhino poachers, Chief Conservation Officer Kunwar informed. Necessary homeworks are underway for the re-establishment of post.

<http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np/content.php?nid=15576>

Four Indian rhinos killed in two weeks

Kaziranga National Park: Poachers have killed four great one-horned rhinoceros in a reserve in the northeast over the past two weeks, conservationists said yesterday, warning of a renewed threat to the endangered animals.

The rhinos were killed at the Kaziranga National Park, which has the world's largest concentration of one-horned rhinos with more than 1,800 of the protected animals living amid swamps, forests and tall thickets of elephant grass.

"The future of rhinos is not safe in Kaziranga," said Bibhab Talukdar, a conservationist working in the park, located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River in Assam state.

Scientifically known as *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the animals are only found in their natural habitat in eastern India and Nepal.

<http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/03/22/10112774.html>

India's rare rhinos face renewed risk from poachers

Poachers have killed four great one-horned rhinoceros in a reserve in northeast India over the past two weeks, conservationists said on Wednesday, warning of a renewed threat to the endangered animals.

The rhinos were killed at the Kaziranga National Park, which has the world's largest concentration of one-horned rhinos with more than 1,800 of the protected animals living amid swamps, forests and tall thickets of elephant grass.

"The future of rhinos is not safe in Kaziranga," said Bibhab Talukdar, a conservationist working in the park, located on the banks of the Brahmaputra river in Assam state.

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?alias=indias-rare-rhinos-face-r>

Contraband rhino horn seized at Aden airport

Yemen Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control Organization (YSMO) seized and impounded a large quantity of rhinoceros horn at the Aden Airport, according to a statement last Monday by Ahmed Ben Ahmed al-Bshah, the Deputy Director-General of YSMO. The unspecified amount of horn was impounded at the airport pending the completion of necessary legal procedures to prevent its entry into the Yemeni market, where it has traditionally been used to make handles for jambiyas, the traditional Yemeni dagger.

The prohibition of the trade in the very expensive rhino horns comes as part of an international effort to protect the rhino from extinction, said al-Bshah. In the past, Yemen was the world's number one consumer of rhino horn, and as a result of this trade, wild rhino numbers have been decimated. Yemen has officially banned the importation of rhino horn since 1982, but has recently become more vigilant about preventing the contraband item from entering the country.

In The News – Asian Rhino Stories

The prohibited horn was arrived in small quantities on flight separate flights, and were seized upon arrival from an undisclosed country of origin last week, he said. Large quantities of various imported goods estimated in the tens of tons were seized and impounded at a number of ports last week. The goods are being held pending the completion of laboratory testing of samples to ascertain their conformity with the Yemeni import standards.

Initial tests indicated that the goods do not meet the necessary standards and that some are expired, he said. YSMO seized 40 loads of expired canned foodstuffs during the last year, either from the markets or in other outlets under customs supervision, al-Bshah said. The seized foodstuffs were valued at many millions of rials, he said. He said that there is coordination between the YSMO and the association of consumer affairs to follow up on violations that are announced by the association in order to control them.

<http://www.yobserver.com/cgi-bin/2007/exec/view.cgi/23/11979>

Rhino poaching puts park on high alert

16 April 2007

Wardens at a national park in north-east India have raised the alarm following a sharp rise in the poaching of endangered one-horned rhinos, officials said on Monday.

"Six rhinos poached in about 100 days, including two of the beasts killed in the past week, is a matter of grave concern. A security alert has been sounded," Utpal Bora, a warden at Kaziranga national park, told AFP.

The park, situated in the north-east state of Assam, is home to about 1 855 of the world's estimated 2 700 one-horned rhinoceros.

"We are certain that the recent cases of hunting the rhinos for their horns were done at the behest of a very organised international poaching syndicate which has pumped in lot of funds to attract shooters to kill the animals," Bora said.

Profits in illegal rhino horn trade are staggering - rhino horn sells for up to \$35 000 per kilogram (about R250 000).

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=14&click_id=143&art_id=nw20070416103314113C964352

Crackdown on India Rhino Poaching

23 April 2007

Authorities in India's remote northeastern Assam state launched a crackdown on rhinoceros poachers on Monday, rushing in armed paramilitary soldiers to a sprawling game reserve, officials said.

The government action follows the killing of six rare one-horned rhinoceros at the Kaziranga National Park, 145 miles east of the state capital Gauhati, since January.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/23/AR2007042300389.html>

Two poachers killed following strict vigil in Kaziranga

25 April 2007

Two poachers were shot dead by park rangers yesterday, following tight security in Kaziranga National Park where poachers killed six rhinoceros in a span of two months, prompting officials to ask for more security.

Two other accomplices managed to escaped, following an intensive gun battle with park rangers in the Agoratoli range of the park in the eastern Indian state of Assam.

"Following a tip-off given by a villager on the whereabouts of the poachers, the patrol team had been on their trail since midnight," an official said.

Last week, two rhinoceros carcasses with bullet holes were found from the same area, and officials are trying to find out whether these poachers were involved in the killings.

The search is on for the other two.

<http://www.e-pao.net/GE.asp?heading=5&src=260407>

Zoo Rhino Gives Birth To Third Calf

30 April 2007

It's a boy! The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens' Emi became the first Sumatran rhinoceros ever to give birth to three calves while living in captivity.

Her species is currently listed as critically endangered, with only 300 in existence worldwide.

Emi's 86-pound male calf became only the 10th that lives in captivity, and all four Sumatran rhinos in the U.S. live at Cincinnati Zoo.

Emi and the Cincinnati Zoo's male, Ipuh, are on loan from the Indonesian government and are the only successful

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captive breeding pair in the world.

Andalas, born in 2001 at Cincinnati Zoo, was the first Sumatran rhino successfully reproduced in captivity in 112 years. He now lives in Sumatra as part of a captive-breeding program.

Emi also gave birth in 2004 to Suci, a female calf that remains at Cincinnati Zoo.

<http://www.wlwt.com/news/13223036/detail.html>

Hunters poaching for Osama

13 May 2007

It is so early in the morning that the cooks in the roadside dhabas along India's National Highway 37 are asleep in their kitchens, their tandoors unlit. Across the valley of Assam, in this far north-easterly corner of India, there is not a flicker of light except the feeble yellow beams from the Gypsies, the open-backed vehicles carrying small groups of tourists to the edge of one of the world's most bountiful jungles.

Kaziranga — 429 square kilometres of forest, sandbanks and grassland — was recognised by UNESCO in 1985 as a world heritage site. Tourists come in their thousands to glimpse some of the 480 species of bird, 34 kinds of mammal and 42 varieties of fish, many rare, endangered or near extinct, that inhabit this remote jungle.

In recent times, however, the wildlife has attracted a new kind of visitor. According to India's security services, police, intelligence analysts, local traders and forestry officials, Islamic militants affiliated to al-Qaeda are sponsoring poaching in the reserve for profit. These groups have established bases in the formerly moderate enclave of Bangladesh and have agents operating all along the country's porous 4000-kilometre border with India. They have gone into business with local animal trappers and organised crime syndicates around Kaziranga — as well as in parks and reserves in Nepal, Burma and Thailand — in a quest for horns, ivory, pelts and other animal products with which to raise "under the wire" funds that they can move around the world invisibly.

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/hunters-poaching-for-osama/2007/05/12/1178899164208.html>

Rhinos Arrive in San Diego Zoo from India

17 May 2007

Two members of the San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park animal care staff arrived with three male Indian rhinoceros in tow over the weekend after a 2-day trek from India to San Diego.

The team left San Diego two weeks ago with three female Indian rhinos born at the Wild Animal Park, delivering them to two of India's premier zoological parks as part of a vital breeding program to save this endangered species.

"The San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park has continued to participate in the recovery of the Indian rhinos by successfully reproducing this species and sending offspring to various zoos around the world as part of the Indian rhinoceros Species Survival Plan," said Randy Rieches, Wild Animal Park curator of mammals. "This is the first opportunity to send this species to India as part of an essential exchange of genes that will boost the health of this species in both U.S. and Indian zoos."

The Wild Animal Park is the foremost breeding facility in the world for the Indian rhinoceros with 53 rhinos born at the facility since 1978. The Park is also the first facility in the Western Hemisphere to have a successfully reproducing group of third and fourth generation Indian rhinos.

The three male rhinos will add new blood lines to the Indian rhino breeding program in US zoos. After passing quarantine at the Wild Animal Park, one male will remain at the Park while the other two will be loaned to two other zoos collaborating in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Indian rhino SSP. The Park also gave the Indian zoos three Grant's zebras and three reticulated giraffe.

Once widespread in Southeast Asia, Indian rhinoceroses are now found only in India and Nepal. Although the rhino is a protected species and numbers have slowly climbed to more than 2,500, this species is critically endangered. In 2007, India's national parks have had an increase in poaching. In Asia, the horn is believed to be an aphrodisiac and have medicinal value, however, there is no scientific proof. The horn is made up of the same proteins and keratin found in human hair and fingernails.

"Today, only five species of rhinos remain, usually in small and isolated pockets of threatened species," said Susie Ellis, Ph.D., executive director of the International Rhino Foundation. "Without intensive efforts, some species of rhino could face extinction during the next 10 years. These collaborative programs are a step in correcting this problem."

<http://www.theopenpress.com/index.php?a=press&id=19437>

In The News – Asian Rhino Stories

Nepal begins census of endangered rhinos

20 May 2007

Nepal has begun a census of the endangered Great One-horned Rhinoceros population in a wildlife reserve where sightings of the majestic animal have become rarer, a national parks official said on Sunday.

Rhino experts riding elephants will be combing the Bardiya National Park and Wildlife Reserve, 320 km (200 miles) southwest of Kathmandu, where 83 rhinos from another reserve have been released since 1984.

Officials said dozens of rhinos, which face extinction in the wild, appeared to have gone missing from part of the reserve, the Babai Valley, in recent years amid nationwide violence sparked by a bloody Maoist rebellion.

"We'll look for the animals for two weeks after which we'll come out with how many of them are still alive, how many have been killed or swept away by rivers," national park official Omkar Joshi told Reuters by telephone.

"This will help us know the post-conflict situation."

<http://www.zeenews.com/znnew/articles.asp?aid=372358&ssid=26&sid=ENV>

Rhinos go missing

21 May 2007

Nepal has begun a census of the endangered great one-horned rhinoceros population in a wildlife reserve where sightings of the animal have become rare, a national parks official says. Rhino experts on elephants will comb the Bardiya National Park and Wildlife Reserve where 83 rhinos from another reserve have been released since 1984.

Officials said dozens of rhinos appeared to have gone missing in recent years.

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/2/story.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10440816

Asian Rhino Project Adopt-a-Rhino Fundraiser

You can help us help save the Sumatran rhino by adopting a rhino today – and its tax deductible!

All funds raised through the Asian Rhino Project rhino adoption program will be used to support the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in the Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra.

With each adoption you will receive an attractive adoption certificate including information on your rhino and the program – great for the wall!

You can also choose to receive quarterly updates on your rhino as well as an A4 sized photograph for your wall (extra costs apply for photos and updates).

More information on the rhinos and the program can be found on our website.



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