


Photo in the News: Rare Rhinoceros Spotted in Borneo Jungle



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September 12, 2006—The first ever photo of a male Sumatran rhinoceros in the wild offers concrete proof that the rare animals are living in the Malaysian section of the Southeast Asian island of Borneo ([Malaysia facts and map](#)), wildlife rangers announced last week.

Conservationists working with the Chicago, Illinois-based nonprofit SOS Rhino snapped this blurred image—which resembles nothing so much as an impressionist painting—as they followed the animal's tracks deep into the rain forest during a routine patrol.

"We have been tracking these animals here in [the Malaysian state of] Sabah for almost ten years now, and although we have seen tracks and signs of the rhino, this is the actual first sighting of a rhino in the wild," M.S. Thayaparan, field program officer for SOS Rhino in Borneo, said in a media release.

The Sumatran rhino's body is covered in a patchy coat of shaggy hair. It is the smallest of the five known rhinoceros species, growing about 3 to 5 feet (1 to 1.5 meters) tall and weighing about 1,600 pounds (725 kilograms).

The Sumatran is often called the rarest rhino species in the world and is listed as critically endangered by the Switzerland-based nonprofit the World Conservation Union (related photos: [selected species from the group's 2006 endangered species list](#).)

Fewer than 400 Sumatran rhinos live in isolated pockets of wild habitat in Malaysia and Indonesia, and only about 50 of the animals are thought to exist in Sabah. While some of the animals are kept in zoos, the Sumatran rhino is difficult to breed in captivity. The 2000 birth of a healthy calf to a

rhino called Emi at the Cincinnati Zoo in Ohio was the first successful captive delivery in 112 years.

—Victoria Gilman