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Sumatran Rhinoceros International Conservation Programm -
Intensive Programme.

PROGRESS REPORT No 3

Second and third Mamas expedition

September - December 1975

N.J. van Strien
Nature Conservation Department
Agricultural University,
Wageningen, the Netherlands.

d/a Dinas PPA
Kutacane
Aceh Tenggara
Sumatera
Indonesia.

[1976?]

Second Mamas expedition

October 19 - November 4, 1975

On October 19th we were flown by helicopter, lent from Mobil Oil Indonesia, to the landing-site near the central camp. The food supplies, flown in the previous expedition, were in excellent condition and also the camp was largely undamaged.

From the central camp the rhino-paths discovered the first expedition were patroled again and a few new routes were surveyed. A very promising area was discovered northwest of the Sungai Badak, tracks and trails are here more numerous than elsewhere.

On October 26th a new camp, called camp Aceh, was made a few kilometers downstream. From here the Mamas-valley was surveyed further to the north. Here the valley narrows and the game-paths leave the river and go up the mountains. A few kilometers further they descend again to the river, here the valley is again wide and flat-bottomed.

North of the confluence of the Mamas and the Sungai Markus (the side-river draining the continuation of the Central Leuser Valley) an extensive complex of warm mineral and sulphur springs was discovered. Elephant tracks were abundant here, but also rhino's frequent this area.

November 2 we moved to camp Pawang and November 4th we walked from here to Kutacane in one day, following the trail made by the rhinopachers.

Third Mamas expedition

December 6, 1975 - January 1, 1976

On December 6th we were once more flown to the central landingsite, this time with a smaller helicopter chartered from Indonesia Air Transport. Also a supply of food was flown to a natural landingsite, close to the mineral springs, discovered the second expedition.

This expedition I intended to extend the surveyed area further to the north, till the steep part of the Mamas-valley, and to the south, till about the study-area of Mr. Markus Borner.

Due to the extremely heavy rainfall in this period the Mamas had continuous high water and it was impossible to go downstream to camp Aceh. I had planned to build a fifth camp near the mineral springs, but this could not be done. Also the food brought to the northern landing-site is most likely lost.

After patrolling the rhino-paths near the central camp we moved to camp Pawang on December 12 and built a new camp here. From here I surveyed several new routes, among others the rhino-path along the Sungai Pinus to some saltlicks, already discovered and studied by Mr. Borner.

December 19th we built a new camp at the upper Silukluk. This area, together with adjoining upper reaches of the Sungai Tenang, proved to be a very important rhino-area. Nowhere else I found so many tracks and trails. The area is very flat, with a few minor ridges fields of secondary vegetation (Musa and large Zingiberaceae). This is a major feeding-area for the elephants. Along the upper Tenang extensive treeless marshes (blang) are found.

December 25th we went back to the central camp, but it was still impossible to go further downstream and December 30th we moved again to camp Pawang for the return-journey.

Due to the following of a wrong trail, we couldn't reach Kutacane in one day, but had to walk two full days. We left the reserve along the Sungai Konkair.

Rhino-survey

These two expeditions most attention was paid to the survey of new areas and the mapping of the game-paths. This has resulted in a detailed sketch-map, scale 1 : 10.000, showing the major game-paths, rivers and streams, wallows, saltlicks and other characteristic points. Throughout the area a large number of marks is made for easy orientation.

Most of my primary study-area is surveyed now, except the most northern part. Finally it will cover the whole of the upper Mamas-valley, with the surrounding slopes, and the plateau of Sungai Tenang and upper Silukluk, roughly 100 square kilometers.

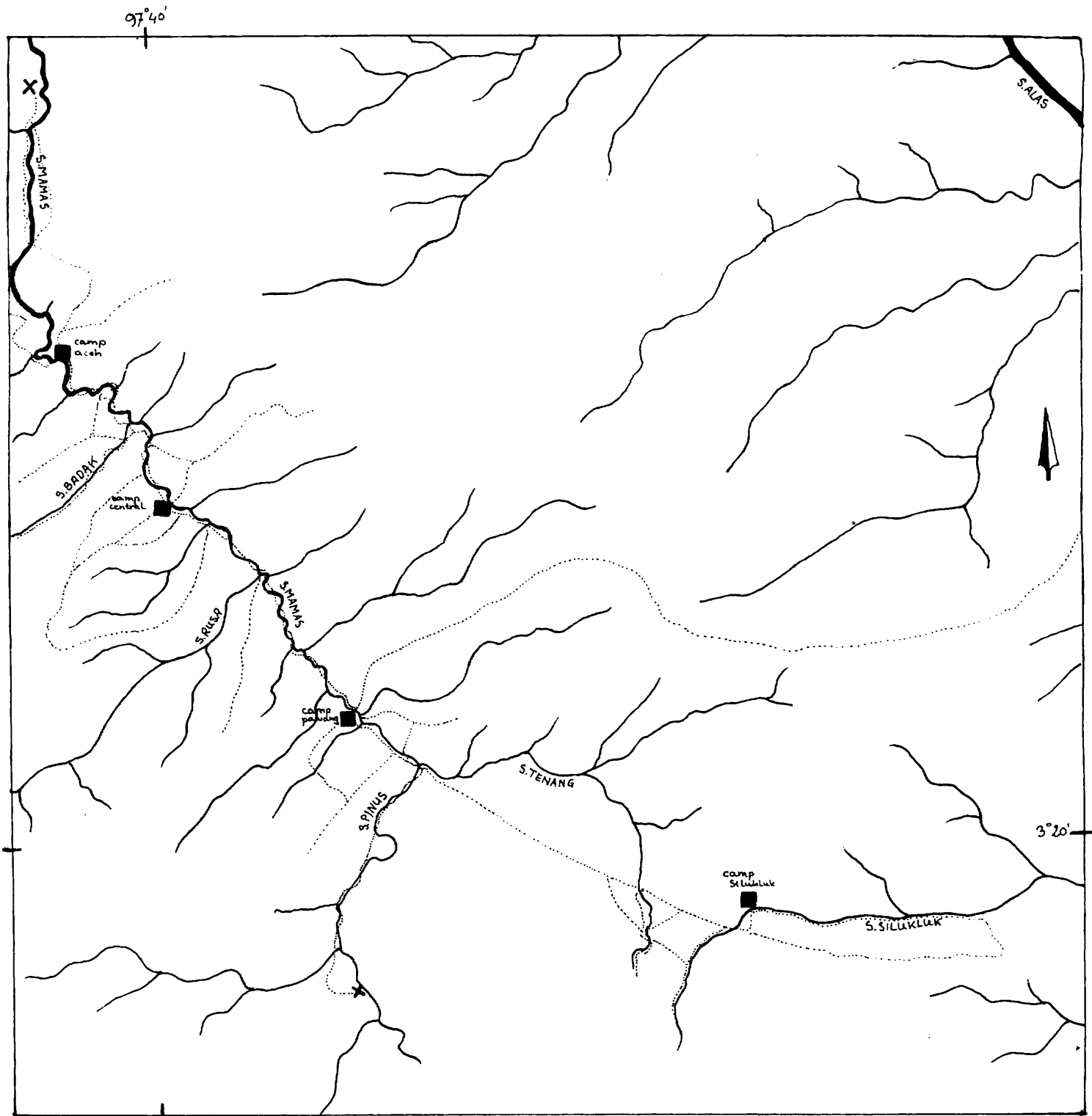
To the south my study-area joins the area already studied by Mr. Borner and I will not extend it further in this direction. The mountains on the east, separating the Mamas from the Alas-valley, are only rarely visited by rhino's in the higher regions. Here I will restrict my survey to the lower regions and only now and then go higher up. The mountains on the west are more regularly visited by rhino's and I will survey some of the most interesting ridges till the highest point.

The next expedition I hope to be able to complete the survey of the northern area, till the steep part of the Mamas-valley. This gorge, through which the Mamas leaves the Central Leuser Valley, forms the boundary of the rhino-habitat in this direction.

If time permits I plan to make a few trips to the areas north and west of the primary study-area, to establish the presence of rhino's there.

Apart from the mapping-activities, much attention is paid to the study of footprints, in order to find a system for the identification of individual rhino's. This is done by measuring the prints by a standard method and by making of plastercasts. During these two expeditions seven times a good, fresh track was encountered and more than 30 reasonable or good plastercasts could be made.

Further most of the wallows were measured and sketched, a collection of faeces was made and the position of every dungheap along the paths was noted down. A systematic collection of foodplants will be started next expedition.



ROUTE MAP MAMAS. EXPEDITION 2/3

1:100,000

- RIVER
- ROUTE
- CAMP
- X SALT LICK