

REPORT ON A SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED BANUMUDA EXTENSION OF KUTAI, EAST KALIMANTAN

Travel schedule

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- March 19 - Bogor-Jakarta-Balikpapan (by air). Balikpapan-Samarinda (by car).
  - March 20 - Departure Samarinda to Sangata (by boat)
  - March 21 - Arrival Sangata
  - March 22 - Sangata - basecamp Porodisa (by boat). Basecamp Porodisa to first survey area (by car)
  - March 23 to March 27 - survey in central part of Banumuda extension
  - March 28 - return to basecamp Porodisa (by car)
  - March 29 - Basecamp Porodisa - second survey area (by car)
  - March 29 to April 2 - Survey in northern part of Banumuda extension
  - April 2 - Return to basecamp Porodisa (by car). Basecamp Porodisa - Sangata (by boat)
  - April 3 - Sangata - km 41 on Siva Duta road (by car)
  - April 4 - Sangata - basecamp Pertamina survey (Kabo) vv (by boat. Helicopter flight over Banumuda area and northern part Kutai.
  - April 5 - Sangata - Balikpapan (by air)
  - April 6 - Balikpapan - Sunday
  - April 7 - Balikpapan-Samarinda vv (by car)
  - April 8 - Balikpapan-Jakarta (by air)

Introduction

The 2-horned rhinoceros (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis) on the island of Borneo is in grave danger of extinction. From Sarawak it already disappeared many years ago and in the Indonesian part of the island (Kalimantan) only a few stray animals are believed to survive. In the state of Sabah the situation seems to be somewhat better and rhinos are still reported from a number of areas.

In the last decade rhinos in Kalimantan have only been reported from an area north of the Kutai Nature Reserve (Banumuda catchment), where signs of rhino were presumably found in 1977 and 1978 by visiting biologists. The only other area where rhinos are believed to survive, although there are no recent reports, is the border area with Sabah. In the rest of Kalimantan the rhino has most likely been exterminated by persistent hunting.

The first report on the occurrence of rhino in the Banumuda catchment was made by van der Zon (TIGER PAPER Vol. IV, No. 2, 1977). In 1978 tracks and other sign of the presence of rhino in the same area were reported by Cockburn and Sumardja (Proposed Management Plan for Kutai Nature Reserve).

Based on these reports a very small population of rhino was presumed to survive in this area, and it was proposed to include this area (specifically the Banumuda catchment and the area between the Banumuda and the Sangata rivers) into the Kutai reserve, where rhinos are not found. This so-called Banumuda extension is part of the logging concession of the P.T. Porodisa and it was proposed that the logging agreement for this specific area should be withdrawn, at least until after the area had been properly surveyed.

The survey reported on here was aimed at surveying the proposed Banumuda extension, to establish the range of the rhino and to make proposals for

the location of the boundaries. Therefore a team, consisting of three students from the Ciawi Training School for Environmental Conservation → (J. Subiyanto, M. Waladi Isnani, Goenawan Whidoyoko) and one lecturer (Nico J. van Strien) were sent to Kalimantan for a three week period, sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund Indonesia Programme. Van Strien has previously studied Asian 2-horned rhinoceros for 5 years in Gunung Leuser.

#### The occurrence of rhino

During the survey a search was made for tracks and other signs of the presence of rhino in two parts of the Banumuda area. The first survey was made in the central part of the area, where P.T. Porodisa plans to start logging in April 1980. The second survey was made in the north-western corner of the area, close to the boundary between the concessions of Porodisa and Georgia Pacific.

In both cases a basecamp was made at about one day's walk from the end of the Porodisa roads. From these camps we searched for signs of rhino, going several kilometers in different directions.

During our survey no signs (tracks, trails, faeces, wallows, etc.) were found to indicate that rhinos are or were present in the area. Several large wallows were found, but these were only frequented by wild pig and other small animals. Also at a saltlick close to the Banumuda river, that was intensively visited by ungulates, no signs of rhino were found. Especially in the northeastern part many well-used game trails were found, but they were all of the narrow type, made by deer and wild pig and not of the 40 cm or wider type that is made by rhino.

Several persons who have been working in the forest for many years, surveyors from the timber companies and Pertamina, were questioned about the occurrence of rhino in the area. They were all aware of the existence of the animal, but none of them had ever encountered the animal or its tracks, and all positive reports referred to the report to Cockburn and Sumardja.

Based on the results of the field survey and the information from others, it must be concluded that there are now no rhinos, at least not a viable population, in the Banumuda area. It is also doubtful that there has been such a population there in recent years. The tracks reported in 1977 and 1978 were probably made by stray animals driven out of their original range by disturbance. It is not impossible that a rhino might again wander to the area, but it is certain that there is no viable population that could warrant any hope for the survival of the species in Kalimantan.

Another factor of importance is the disturbance in the area by the activities of Porodisa and Pertamina. Both companies have large groups of people working all over the area and are using heavy and noisy machinery. Any surviving rhino would have been driven out of the area by such a level of disturbance.

#### Logging in the Banumuda extension

The proposed extension is part of the logging concession of P.T. Porodisa, a company owned by Presidential family. Almost all of their area north of the Banumuda river has been logged to date and the company plans to

start operations in the area south of the Banumuda in April 1980.

Most of the area that is planned to be logged in 1980-1981, and part of the block for 1981-1982, has been surveyed and cruised. A 500-meters grid has been cut in the forest and all valuable trees are measured and numbered. A bridge has been constructed over the Banumuda river. A lorry-road into the area and a basecamp ~~are~~ being build.

The first proposals for the inclusion of the Banumuda area into the Kutai reserve date back to 1977 and in 1978 it was incorporated into the PPA management plan for Kutai. This has apparently not led to any action and logging in the proposed extension was allowed to start, making the realisation of that part of the management plan in fact unrealistic and impossible.

The Banumuda area was the last part of undisturbed lowland forest adjoining the Kutai reserve. In the other concessions bordering Kutai (Silva Duta and Georgia Pacific) logging has already proceeded right up to the boundaries. With logging continuing in the Banumuda area the enlargement of the Kutai reserve with undisturbed lowland forest, to compensate for the extensive areas that have in the past been cut off from the reserve, has become impossible.

#### Oil exploration in Kutai

Under an agreement between the Direktur Jenderal Kehutanan and the Direktur Jenderal Minyak dan Gas Bumi, dated 4 May 1977, Pertamina was given permission to explore and exploit oil and natural gas in the coastal part (Zone I) of the reserve, which was divided into three zones for this purpose. Since then large-scale developments have taken place in the northern and southern parts of this zone I, and Pertamina has in fact taken over the control of the area from PPA. Only the central part of the Zone I, west of Sangkimah is still rather undisturbed, but Pertamina plans to extend their activities into this area.

Pertamina also seeks permission to extend exploration and exploitation into Zone II. Although this permission has apparently not yet been granted a large-scale seismic survey started in the beginning of 1980, covering most of Zone II, as well as the Banumuda area. Substantial reserves of oil and gas are expected in this so-called Masuk field.

For this survey basecamps have been made at Kabo on the Sangata river and at km 41 on the Silva Duta road in the reserve. In the forest helipads are employed in the field-camps that are scattered over the area.

Under the present economic system it is very unlikely that any significant reserve of oil and gas is not brought into production, whether it is in a nature reserve or not. So it can be expected that exploitation in Zone II will start when the present survey is successful. This will only leave Zone III, an area of not more than 50,00 ha, that has already partly been logged by Silva Duta.

#### Conclusions

The present survey has made it clear that there is no viable population of Sumatran rhino left in the Banumuda catchment. Since there are no

reliable reports that indicate the existence of such a population in any other part of Kalimantan (i.e. the Indonesian part of the island of Borneo), it must be concluded that the rhino in Kalimantan is probably extinct or on the verge of extinction with some scattered non-reproductive individuals left in remote parts. The frequent reports on rhino from Sabah indicate that the Bornean subspecies of the Sumatran rhino has a chance for survival there, but there is no information with regard to numbers and distribution, and no reason for optimism.

Since the extension of the Kutai Nature Reserve, as proposed in the management plan, is highly unlikely, and since oil and gas exploitation are about to take over another large part of the already diminished reserve, the future value of Kutai for conservation becomes questionable. The current developments in the area, which are not likely to be stopped for the sake of nature conservation, will further damage the integrity of the reserve and reduce its value for conservation. Serious consideration should be given to the question of whether the area still qualifies for the status of National Park, or whether attention and money is better spent on other areas where there are less severe conflicts of interest and the chances for proper management are better.