

Appendix 3

DISTRIBUTION AND ECOLOGY OF THE SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS (*DECERORHINUS SUMATRENSIS* IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA)

REPORT TO THE FEDERAL GAME DEPARTMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF 1975

Submitted by

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This research project was initiated on January 1, 1975. After initial discussions with Game Department officers it was decided that the project would involve a study of the distribution and ecology of the Sumatran Rhino in a region of Peninsular Malaysia that contained a suitable rhino population. The justification for the project was that the status and ecology of the animal is essentially unknown and that it is thought to be highly threatened with extinction.

The first thrust of the study was to locate an area that would be a suitable research area, determine field methods, and formulate objectives. Preliminary trips were made into several regions that were believed to contain rhinos in order to evaluate the above points. The period from 17th January, 1975 until 1st July, 1975 was spent on this activity including the following trips to the field in the Endau-Rompin area.

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) January 17th-20th | Ulu Juaseh, Kemidah |
| (2) January 28th-February 2nd | Ulu Segamat |
| (3) February 21st-26th | Sungai Selai. |
| (4) March 21st-25th | Sungai Endau |
| (5) May 7th-10th | Sungai Jekatih |
| (6) May 13th-May 15th | Ulu Juaseh |
| (7) May 30th-June 6th | Sungai Selai |
| (8) June 11th-14th | Ulu Segamat |
| (9) June 20th-25th | Sungai Selai (lower) Ulu Emas |

From the above trips a considerable amount of rhino sign was found and this area (Endau-Rompin area) was selected as the study area. The Sungai Selai area appeared to have the highest rhino density without this larger region and was selected as an area for intensive study. Field methods were tried and determined, project objectives also evolved. (Annual Report 1976).

One field technique that was decided upon to try was radio telemetry. A plan was then devised to capture and tag several rhinos. During July one trap was constructed along the Sungai Selai around a wallow that had been monitored for use over several months. The remainder of the year was then spent attempting to capture a rhino including the building of another trap. The capture attempt was not successful and was terminated on 20th November, 1975.

Time spent in the field from 1st July until 31st December includes the following:

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) July 20th-27th | Sungai Selai (Building Trap II) |
| (2) August 24th-27th | Sungai Jenai, Sungai Endau |
| (3) September 10th-29th | Sungai Selai |
| (4) October 18th-30th | Sungai Selai (Building Trap 2) |
| (5) November 7th-19th | Sungai Selai |

December was spent on leave in India and Nepal where considerable information was collected on the India rhino and consultations were made with another field researcher on rhinos.

During 1975 I was assisted on each trip in the field by Game Ranger Abdullah bin Ibrahim who is stationed in Kulai, Johor and by several Orang Asli from Kampong Juaseh, Johor. Abdullah was used on 110 days and Orang Asli for a total of 185 man-days.

The primary information gained during the year was the distribution of rhinos in the areas visited. Many wallows were located and monitored for use. By the careful measuring of tracks an attempt was made to identify individuals. Information on habitat-use group associations and defecating behaviour was collected, but information is too limited at this point to draw any conclusions. No attempt was made to estimate numbers. At this point I was still planning on using the radio telemetry data to collect information on movements how range and to help in population estimation.

Since an animal was not captured much of the above information was not collected. A special effort was made not to disturb the rhinos in the Sungai Selai area which limited my activities. Methods have since been alinated.

An attempt was made to determine proposed land development in the rhino occupied areas. This was done by contacting the District Forest Officers in Segamat, Kluang, and Mersing as regards to forest use in Johor. The Pahang Tenggara office was also contacted and information collected since development plans in Pahang could have a very serious affect on the Endau-Rompin rhino population and a paper was produced suggesting changes. The report was sent for consideration of the Penang Tenggara Board, but it was referred to the State Government without any action.

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