

REALLY RHINOS!

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ONLY 500 SUMATRAN RHINOS MAY NOW EXIST

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Only the Sumatran rhino (*rhinoceros sumatrensis*) population was around 1,000. 10 years later, according to World Conservation Union, that figure has been cut in half. Fewer than 500 Sumatran rhinos are now thought to exist in Indonesia, Thailand, and Burma. The population of the Sumatran rhino is less than that of all three species of Asian rhinos: Javan (<100) and Indian (@1,900). In Africa, black rhinos now number less than 2,000 in the wild (a 95% decline since 1970) and about 1,000 white rhinos remain. African rhinos in the wild number less than 11,000.

Thomas Foose, head of the International Rhino Foundation says, "With this information, the Sumatran rhino has probably lost its distinction as the most critically endangered of rhinos and, perhaps of all mammals." He adds, "Although the numbers of the Sumatran rhino are lower, the combination of low numbers and a high rate of decline make the Sumatran rhino more endangered."



The Sumatran rhino, also known as the Asian two-horned or hairy rhino for the distinctive heavy coat of hair it develops, especially in captivity, is related to the woolly rhino of the Ice Ages. The woolly rhino lived in Europe and Asia until about 10,000 years ago when it became extinct, probably the victim of human hunters.

According to Ginette Hemley, who directs TRAFFIC-USA, WWF's wildlife trade monitoring unit, the drastic decline of all rhino species stems primarily from the demand for rhino horn for traditional Asian medicines and for dagger handles in the Middle East. Taiwan, China, and Korea are the largest markets for rhino horn products, using them as treatments for fever, arthritis and other ailments.

WWF and other conservation groups continue to press CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species),

the European community, and the U.S. government to take strong steps, including trade sanctions, in response to continued trade in rhino horn.

U.S. ENFORCES PELLEY AMENDMENT

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President Clinton announced trade sanctions against Taiwan on April 11 for its lack of progress in eliminating its illegal trade in rhino horn and tiger bone. The decision marks the first time the United States has imposed sanctions under a 15 year-old provision of U.S. law known as the Pelly Amendment. The move followed a finding by a United Nations panel that Taiwan remains in serious violation of international rules designed to curb smuggling that endangers rhinos, tigers and other vulnerable species.

"The U.S. has taken a critical first step, but we have a long way to go before we can declare victory for rhinos and tigers," said WWF President Kathryn S. Fuller. "Sanctions on Taiwan must lead to lasting progress in curbing smuggling in that country. In addition, China, Korea, and other countries with serious wildlife smuggling problems must remain under scrutiny