

FACES

SEPTEMBER 2007 | ISSUE 82 |
YOUR COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

OWN THE NIGHT

**Matt
Damon**
Delivers
the
ultimate
Bourne
action!

Che'Nelle
Falls in
love with
the DJ!

+

A book
lover's
dream
collection.
What's
inside the
Brangelina
bag? And
fantastic
new store
openings
you cannot
miss!

HALLE BERRY

Berry, Berry Hot!

She has a lethal combination of beauty and
brains that's simply too hot to handle.

Please Help Me!



The Tears of the Sumatran

Nature has proudly nurtured them for 50 million years. But in just 50 years, humans have shamefully almost wiped out the Sumatran rhinoceros from the face of this planet.

The hauntingly frail screech of the Sumatran rhinoceros echoes its fragile existence in a world that doesn't seem to want it. Standing at 4½ feet, the shaggy red-haired rhino dwells in the forested hills of Borneo and Sumatra that are quickly declining from deforestation. As illegal loggers cut, slash and tear the trees of their home down, the rhino also quivers his fringed ears in fear of the illegal poachers.

The rhino's life is of no value to the poachers who find more profit in the believed medicinal and aphrodisiac properties of the rhino's horn. The rhino's horn is also highly valued for its undeniable ornamental beauty that shines with a shimmering translucent colour when carved. In the jaws of a commercially driven world, what supposedly plays a role for the rhino's protection becomes a prize for a ruthless game of profit. More valuable than gold at a price of US\$200 per gram (US\$90,000 per pound), the rhino's horns are stocked by money driven poachers who mercilessly decimate their population, in the hopes of gaining even higher profit margins when these ancient beasts finally go extinct.

The rhino's short pillar-like legs run as fast as they can, but not faster than the bullets of the illegal poachers who can spend over a week tracking their movements through the dense highland and lowland tropical forests. After slaughtering the rhino, their sharp knives cut into the rhino's thick grey leatherback skin that hangs loosely in folds like an armour plate. With these sharp knives, the rhino's protective skin is mercilessly stripped from the muscles, just to obtain their horns.

Now, there are less than 300 of the Sumat-



ran rhino. They survive in small scattered pockets in the thick undergrowth of the rainforests, too far apart from one another to mate and create a productive population. Their food and habitat is threatened, and their future is bleak.

Their Lives, As They Should Be

Though they are one of the largest land animals, the Sumatran rhinos are elusive creatures. Their immense, solid bodies stand on short, clammy legs that carry them through the forests looking for their next meal.

Just before the break of dawn, the Sumatran rhino will scour the forests for food, indulging in wild durian, mangoes, figs, bamboo and foliage. Its upper lip curves down and can move around objects, flip-

ping the foods they find into their mouths. Their taste for tender leaves will have them knocking down young saplings and they are very fond of salt licks.

As the sun rises and the heat settles in, the rhino will move to water areas to stay cool. They spend much of the day rolling around in the mud wallows which they dig out themselves and whose perimeters are kept clean. The mud wallows protect them from insect bites and from the tropical sun. Meticulous and shy, these creatures will continue to feed after dusk and move around at night when the sun is resting.

Conservation Efforts

The IUCN (The World Conservation Union) has put the Sumatran rhino in its critically endangered list in 1996. The Sumat-

How Can You Help Me?



I am a Sumatran Rhino. I live in the jungles of Sabah in East Malaysia. And I live in constant fear. The illegal loggers, you see, have taken my home away. They cut, slash and tear the trees down. By encroaching my natural habitat, they have managed to drive the number of Sumatran Rhinos down to a very critical level.

This place used to be filled with rhinos. Now, the remaining rhinos can only be found in certain areas of the forest, but we are too far apart from one another to mate and create a productive population.

SOS Rhino is a non-profit, international foundation dedicated to preserving the five rhinoceros species in their natural habitats. Our conservation programmes combine research, education, marketing and advocacy, all working collectively to achieve sustainable results.

One of our major programmes is helping to save the last population of rhinos on the island of Borneo. The Sumatran rhino, the only rhino species found in Malaysia, is in danger of being extinct.

The encroachment of its natural habitat by illegal loggers has driven the number of rhinos to critical level. And while the Wildlife Department and the Malaysian government have designated certain areas as forest reserves, they are mostly too small, and too far apart from one another for the rhinos to mate and create a productive population.

A little help from you can go a long, long way towards helping the rhinos.

Just fill in the form below, and mail it back to us. And we will send you information on how you can save the Sumatran Rhino.



I would like to help by doing one or more of the following:

- Become a volunteer at SOS Rhino
- Donate funds for conservation projects
- Adopt a rhino

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Town / City:

State:

Email:

Please mail this page back to: SOS Rhino, D 611, 6th Floor, Block D, Kelana Square, 17 Jalan 88/26, 47301 Kelana Jaya, Selangor

ran rhinoceros has a life span of 35 years and live in a variety of habitats, but has a preference to spend their years in the high elevated moss forests and tropical forests that have few human developments. Their shy lives and scattered habitats make it hard to study them, but it is known that the females have territories approximately 1.2 to 2.2 miles in diameter. The estimated density is approximately one animal per 15 square miles, and can even be as sparse as one animal per 46 square miles.

Rhinos are solitary animals. The females live in territories, sometimes overlapping, while the males are believed to lead the nomadic life. Rhinos are not social crea-

tures and only come together to breed. The female only comes into estrus to make her ready for mating when she senses the nearness of a male. However, with a declining habitat that separates the rhinoceros from each other, natural propagation is becoming more and more difficult.

Females are mature to mate at 4 years old and males take 7 years to reach sexual maturity. The pregnancy period is 1 year and 4 months, and it takes another 2-3 years before the female rhino can become pregnant again. There is only one calf per pregnancy. The calf is covered with a thick coat of reddish hair that, as the baby rhino grows up, remains dense on the ears and the tail, giving the Sumatran rhino its in-

distinguishable shaggy look. Though the calf is weaned for a year and half, it will remain close to its mother for 2-3 years before venturing off on its own as an adult.

With a difficult gestation cycle and very few rhinos left, breeding programmes are faced with many challenges. Amongst many other breeding programmes across the world, here in Malaysia SOS Rhinoceros Reproduction Programme (RRP) coordinates with the American Zoological Association Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) on goals for reproduction in the rhinoceros to help increase the numbers of this endangered species. The locations where these scientific programmes are conducted in

Malaysia are at Sungai Dusun, Selangor and Sepilok, Sabah.

SOS Rhino also conducts research and community outreach programmes to better understand the needs of the rhinoceros and educate people to help protect them. For more information on SOS Rhino's efforts to protect the Eastern subspecies of the Sumatran rhinoceros, of which there are only 30 left, visit www.sosrhino.org.

To learn more about the programme that you can be involved in to save the Sumatran rhinoceros, get in touch with rhino@sosrhino.org.

Fast Facts

- The Sumatran rhino is the last surviving species in the same group as the extinct Woolly rhino.
- Man is the only predator of the rhinoceros.
- The Sumatran rhino is also known as the hairy rhino. Its coat of reddish hair allows the Sumatran rhino to live in higher, cooler altitudes.
- Their scientific name, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, comes from the Greek word *di* meaning 'two', *cerro* meaning horn and *rhinus* meaning nose. *Sumatrensis* refers to Sumatra where they are found, where the Latin suffix *-ensis* means locality.
- The first ever footage of the shy Sumatran rhino that shows its elusive natural behavior in the wild was caught on tape on April 24th, 2007, in Sabah. The footage shows the rhino eating, peering through jungle foliage and sniffing the film equipment.
- Rhino horn is made of compacted hair and keratin (the same component in fingernails). The rhino horn is always growing, just like how our hair and fingernails do, at a rate of 1-3 inches per year.
- As far back as A.D. 618, the Chinese have used rhino horns as ornamental drinking cups to detect poison. It is thought that this is because early poisons were strong alkaloids that react strongly with the keratin and gelatin of the rhino horn to indicate a poisonous substance.
- Rhino horn is a key ingredient in many traditional Chinese medicines as a fever reducer, but many of the consumers are not aware that they are taking rhino horn or even have the knowledge that the rhino is endangered.
- In Yemen, the handles of daggers called "Djambiyas" are still made of rhino horns as symbols of status.

