

## SOUTH-EAST ASIAN RHINO CONSERVATION WORKSHOP BOGOR, INDONESIA – OCTOBER 1 - 4



Photo by Charles Sempill  
Tigerpaper, Vol. XVII-2, 1990

*(Reported by Mohd bin Momin Khan, Chairman of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group at the SEA Zoos Conference as recorded by S. Walker)*

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group held a specialised workshop for S.E. Asian rhinos (Javan and Sumatran) in Bogor, Indonesia immediately following the Captive Breeding Specialist Group meeting in Singapore.

The mandate for this meeting was information gathering as well as trying to secure agreement between the different governmental and non-governmental support groups interested in the two species of South East Asian Rhino. The Specialist Group functions in an advisory capacity only; final decisions on the conservation in the two S.E. Asian Rhinos is left to P.H.P.A., the Indonesian wildlife establishment.

The Asian Rhino Specialist Group is a part of the Species Survival Commission of I.U.C.N., the World Conservation Union and deals with the three species of Asian Rhinos, that is the Great One-horned Rhino, the Sumatran Rhino and the Javan Rhino.

The Javan Rhino is the most endangered of the three and was thought to be found now in only in one area. Instead of 25 as according to the previous census, there are 55 to 80 and the species is found to be still in existence in Vietnam and Laos.

An issue between rhino enthusiasts has been that of capture for captive breeding with those for and against divided dramatically and often bitter criticism of the concept.

At this meeting, compromises could be reached without much disagreement and the atmosphere was generally positive. However, no agreement to capture Javan rhinos for

captive propagation could come out of this meeting but a great deal of work was done. The Population Viability Analysis was completed. There was a paper presented on a photo survey of Ulu Phulan National Park with photographs of 13 individuals and highlighting a new research method consisting of setting up trip-cameras at strategic points.

There was consensus on translocation however as all the rhinos are in one National Park. It was decided that there should be a second wild population and this should be established in three years.

The Sumatran rhino is not so critically endangered as the Javan. There are about 1000 left in the wild — 420 in Indonesia, 50 - 100 in Sabha and 50 - 100 in Sarawak. For the Sumatran rhino there had been criticism of the plan to capture it but it was done anyway and now there are 25 Sumatran rhinos in captivity throughout the world. The animals at the Rangun Zoo have bred and it is thought by the Director in Jakarta that conception has taken place. The P.V.A. has recommended that 150 should be in captivity to maximise the potential for success of the breeding strategy. In general the P.V.A. (Population Viability Analysis) has become more reliable and people are beginning to accept it more.

At the meeting the gathering broke up into eleven Working Groups which looked at different areas of rhino management, such as translocation and reintroduction protocols, biology, ex-situ conservation (including housing, yards, diet, veterinary care, etc.), Community relations, Conservation strategy, Monitoring, etc.

*Editor's Note: Although Mr. S. Debroy, Addl. I.G., Wildlife from India had been invited as an advisor and participant, he was unable to attend due to ill health. There was, unfortunately, no representative from India at this meeting.*