

# Asian Rhino Project

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**AUGUST 2006**



## A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Elias Sadalla Filho, Phillip John Lewis, Louis and Clementine Coles and Wendy Kelton.

## World Famous Rhino PREGNANT AGAIN AT THE CINCINNATI ZOO & BOTANICAL GARDEN

### UNPRECEDENTED THIRD CALF EXPECTED! AND IT'S A BOY!

Emi, the world famous endangered Sumatran rhino at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, is expecting her third calf. Known internationally as the mother of the first Sumatran rhino to be bred and born in captivity in 112 years, and the only Sumatran rhino in history to produce two offspring in captivity, Emi currently is well on her way to producing a third calf. She is now 173 days into a 16-month-long pregnancy. Ultrasound images indicate that this new calf is a boy.

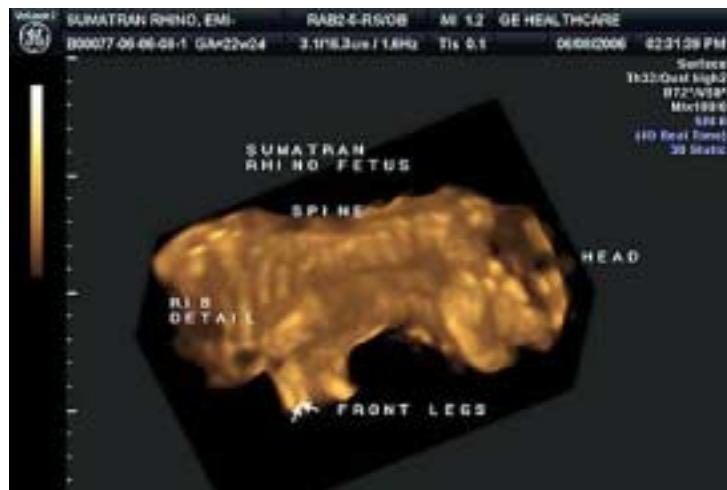


Photo courtesy of Cincinnati Zoo, USA

The scientific breakthroughs developed at the Cincinnati Zoo's Lindner Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) has made the Cincinnati Zoo the only facility in the world able to successfully use science to unravel the mystery of breeding Sumatran rhinos.

"A third successful pregnancy in just seven years will clearly demonstrate how successful a well managed, captive breeding program can be for this critically endangered species," said Dr. Terri Roth, Vice President of Conservation, Science and Living Collections at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden.

Only ten Sumatran rhinos exist in captivity worldwide. Emi, Ipuh, and their offspring Andalas and Suci are the only four Sumatran rhinos in the United States. The birth of Andalas on September 13, 2001 after a 475-day gestation provided a spark of hope for the future of this species. Repeating that success with the birth of a second calf was absolutely essential to validate the scientific methods developed at the Cincinnati Zoo and for the continued progress of the captive breeding program. Suci was born July 30, 2004 after a 477-day gestation.

Andalas is now almost 5 years of age and resides at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Garden. Suci is almost 2 years of age, weighs over 1200 lbs. and still resides at the Cincinnati Zoo. Emi and Ipuh were both sent to the U.S. by the Indonesian government as part of a Sumatran Rhino Trust agreement developed between Indonesia and four U.S. zoos (Cincinnati, Bronx, LA and San Diego).

The success story of the Cincinnati Zoo's Sumatran rhino breeding program exemplifies the importance and significance of science in endangered species conservation efforts. It was through research (ultrasound and endocrine monitoring) that Dr. Terri Roth was able to make the birth of a Sumatran rhino calf in

captivity a reality. These same scientific tools were used in producing the second calf and this current unprecedented third pregnancy.

Rhino preservation is one of the Cincinnati Zoo's *Signature* conservation programs with the Sumatran rhino serving as its flagship species. In the Cincinnati Zoo's plans for the future is a new Sumatran rhino indoor atrium, where visitors can see these incredible animals year-round. This expansion will also enable the Zoo to increase the number of rhinos at the Zoo which will enhance the gene pool of the breeding program.

Considered the most endangered of all rhino species and one of the most endangered mammalian species on earth, it is estimated that 70% of the Sumatran rhino population has been lost in the last two decades. The primary cause is poaching due to the demand for its horn that is believed to contain medicinal properties by some Asian cultures. Today, a population of less than 300 animals is thought to exist in isolated pockets of Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Cincinnati Zoo is working closely with the Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) and International Rhino Foundation (IRF), to protect this venerable species in its home range. The continued loss of animals in the wild, however, makes the success of the captive breeding program that much more important. This program was established as a collaborative effort among Malaysians, Indonesians and Americans.

In addition to visiting Emi at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Emi can be viewed up-close by using Time Warner Cable's Rhino iCam at [AroundCinci.com](http://AroundCinci.com). With the Rhino iCam, visitors have the ability to pan, tilt and zoom the camera and see full-motion live video of this world famous Sumatran rhino.

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## BORNEO RHINO PHOTOGRAPHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

**WWF International - June 14, 2006**

**Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia/Gland, Switzerland**

A motion-triggered camera trap set up in a remote jungle has captured the first-ever photo of a rhino in the wild on the island of Borneo, the Sabah Wildlife Department and WWF announced today.

The rhino is believed to be one of a population of as few as 13 individuals whose existence was confirmed during a field survey last year in the interior forests of Sabah, Malaysia in an area known as the Heart of Borneo. A handful of rhinos are thought to survive in addition to the 13, scattered across Sabah, but isolated from each other.

Conservationists hope that this population of 13 is viable and will be able to reproduce if protected from poaching. A full-time rhino monitoring team was established at the end of 2005 in Sabah, to monitor the rhinos and their habitat, and to keep poachers away. The camera traps, set up in February 2006, are remotely activated by infrared triggers when animals walk by.

This is an encouraging sign for the future of rhinoceros conservation work in Sabah, said Mahedi Andau, Director of the Sabah Wildlife Department.

"While the total number of Borneo rhinos remaining is uncertain, we do know there are very, very few. To capture a photo of one just a few months after placing camera traps in the area is extraordinary.

The rhinos on Borneo spend their lives in dense jungle where they are rarely seen, which accounts for the lack of any previous photographs of them in the wild.

These are very shy animals that are almost never seen in the wild, said Raymond Alfred, Project Manager of WWF-Malaysia's Asian Rhinoceros and Elephant Action Strategy (AREAS).



Photo courtesy of WWF-Malaysia / Raymond Alfred

Based on the photo, we can tell this is a mature and healthy individual thanks to the availability of plentiful, good-quality forage in the forest. We hope to take more photos over the coming months of other rhinos so we can piece together clues about this tiny, precarious population.

The rhinos found on Borneo are regarded as a subspecies of the Sumatran rhinoceros, which means it has different physical characteristics to the animals found in Sumatra (Indonesia) and Peninsular Malaysia. The Sumatran rhinoceros is one of the world's most critically endangered species, with a total global population of fewer than 300. On Borneo, there have been no confirmed reports of the species, apart from those in Sabah, for almost 20 years, leading experts to fear that rhinos may now be extinct on the rest of the island.

The main threats to the last rhinos on Borneo are poaching for its horn and virtually all of its body parts are valuable on the black market, and loss of its forested habitat due to land conversion for other uses such as agriculture. WWF is working with the Sabah Foundation and the Sabah Wildlife Department to establish a Rhinoceros and Orangutan Research Programme Centre in the Heart of Borneo forest area to bolster the rhino monitoring and research work in that area.

Sabah and the forests of the Heart of Borneo still hold huge tracts of continuous natural forests, which are some of the most biologically diverse habitats on earth, with high numbers of unique animal and plant species. This is one of the world's only two places, the other being Indonesia's Sumatra Island where orang-utans, elephants and rhinos still co-exist and where forests are currently large enough to maintain viable populations.

WWF aims to assist Borneo's three nations (Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia) to conserve the Heart of Borneo a total of 220,000km<sup>2</sup> of equatorial rainforest through a network of protected areas and sustainably managed forest, and through international cooperation led by the Bornean governments and supported by a global effort.

For further information:

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## ARP AGM – 31 October 2006

Please be advised the ARP AGM will be held in Perth on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006, at 7:00pm in the Lecture Theatre at Perth Zoo. Please, if you can not attend, return your important proxy vote ASAP. Official notices will be in the mail with the relevant forms.

A sausage sizzle will be provided beforehand so come along early – anytime after 6:00pm. Light refreshments will also be served and slide show presentations afterwards. Kerry is traveling down from Darwin and Brooke Squires, from Victoria, will also be attending. The committee and board members are looking forward to catching up with you there. We do hope you can make it!

## Donations

Just \$5/week goes a long way and donations over \$2 are tax deductible!

If you would like to set up regular small donations to the ARP,  
please don't hesitate to contact us for easy hassle free options.

[info@asianrhinos.org.au](mailto:info@asianrhinos.org.au) or phone 08 89760952.

# Project Updates

## ARP and the International Rhino Foundation

### Rhino Conservation Medicine Program Update

**Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary, Way Kambas, Indonesia, July 5 – July 26, 2006**

(Submitted by Robin W. Radcliffe, DVM, DACZM Rhino Conservation Medicine Scientist, IRF, FRWC, CUCVM)



The RCMP program began its inaugural trip to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in Southeast Sumatra's Lampung Province. The SRS is a breeding and research center managed by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) together with local and international partners for conservation of the Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) and as such is focused on captive propagation of these highly endangered rhinos, research of important health and management concerns, and education. It is hoped that these objectives will help secure the future for these rare forest rhinos and their habitat in cooperation with local people. The SRS is unique from zoological facilities in that managed care of the rhinos occurs in the rainforest where the rhinos live a relatively normal existence in their natural environment, eliminating many of the medical and nutritional problems these animals develop in zoos.

#### New Rhinos Settle In

Two new female Sumatran rhinos, named Ratu and Rossa, now call the SRS home after translocation to the sanctuary in October and November of 2005, respectively. Both females have adjusted well to life at the sanctuary. This RCMP trip was eventful in that both new females were introduced for the first time to the resident male rhino named Torgamba. Based on ultrasound exams – which help the staff determine the best time for pairing the male and female rhinos – both females were mixed with Torgamba. This is a learning process for both staff and rhinos alike as we soon discovered! Ratu's pairing with Torgamba was characterized by marked aggression and chasing – a behavior typical of the species when the humans don't mix at the appropriate time. Ratu was safely separated from Torgamba and we "went back to the drawing board." Next came Rossa, the young female that arrived from West Sumatra's Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park where she had "adapted" the RPU rangers as her own family for over a year. Perhaps as is her nature Rossa was very curious to meet Torgamba; however, he obviously did not share her interest. Torgamba ambled out of his wallow only after hours of coaxing by Rossa and staff alike, only to wander over and give but a passing sniff before returning to his wallow. We could only muse that this is perhaps why the species is becoming extinct!

#### First Breeding of Newly Captured Rhino, named Ratu

For the first time since her capture and relocation to the SRS late last year, Ratu mated with Torgamba. The two rhinos were mixed following serial ultrasono-graphic monitoring of Ratu over the first two weeks of the RCMP mission to Sumatra. This mating is significant given Ratu's apparent young age and Torgamba's improved health condition. Both animals remain unrepresented in the captive population and will be an important genetic contribution if mating proves successful.



Figure 1. Rossa climbing atop a fallen tree inside the SRS as she explores her new surroundings.



Figure 2. Torgamba mating with Ratu for the first time since her capture last October.

## Disease is where you look

A major focus of this trip was completion of a comprehensive disease survey surrounding Way Kambas National Park that is contiguous with the rhino sanctuary. The health of the rhinos we now know remains intricately linked with the health of the rainforest environment, including the local people and their livestock. In order to better understand this complex relationship and potential risks to the rhinos and other wildlife, we began a detailed disease survey of both domestic and captive wild animals in the region. In close collaboration with IPB Bogor – the local Veterinary College in Indonesia – the team was able to sample 50 elephants, 100 cattle and the 4 rhinos at the sanctuary. The information gathered from this study will be the first major effort to better understand the health risks of the Way Kambas ecosystem, information which will not only help us better care for the rhinos at the SRS but will also provide useful information for local people who base their livelihoods on agriculture.

Preliminary List of Agents Identified in Biological Samples and Host:

### Protozoan Parasites

<u>AGENT</u>	<u>HOST</u>
• <i>Balantidium sp.</i>	SRS rhinos
• <i>Entamoeba sp.</i>	SRS rhinos
• <i>Eimeria sp.</i>	TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos
• Unidentified Hemoparasite	SRS rhinos
• <i>Theileria sp.</i>	Domestic ungulates, TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos
• <i>Babesia sp.</i>	Domestic ungulates, TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos

### Helminth Parasites

- *Fasciola sp.* Liver fluke
- *Toxocara sp.*

TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos  
SRS rhinos, wild civets in TNWK??

### Ectoparasites

- *Amblyoma sp.* tick
- Tabanid fly

Domestic ungulates, TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos  
Domestic ungulates, TNWK elephants, SRS rhinos

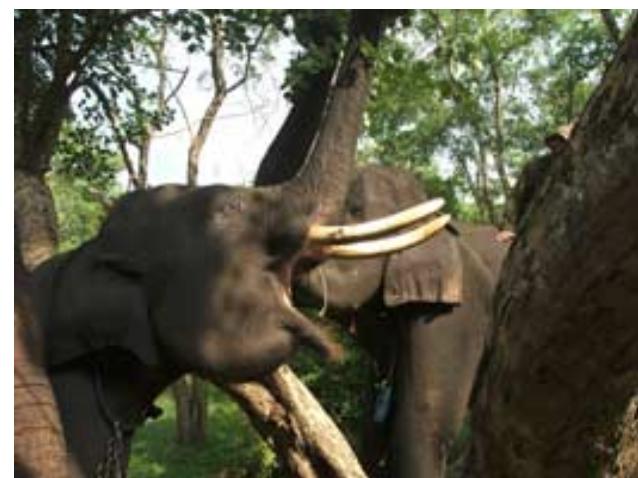


Figure 3. Sumatran elephants being sampled as part of a comprehensive disease survey surrounding Way Kambas National Park. This work included teaching of Indonesian veterinary students.



Figure 4. Photo of Rossa wandering in the local village of Suoh in West Sumatra.

The initial findings show a diverse array of diseases exist here – perhaps more prevalent than in the Americas because of the abundant insect vectors and animal reservoirs that persist year-round in the warm tropical climate. A variety of tick-borne diseases are found including *Theileria* species (a known problem in African black rhinos), *Babesia sp.*, *Anaplasma sp.* and others. Ectoparasites abound, including ticks and flies that have been collected as part of the sampling. A variety of endoparasites have also been discovered including *Balantidium sp.*, *Toxocara sp.*, and *Fasciola sp.* more commonly known as the liver fluke. *Fascioliasis* is very prevalent in the local elephant population and fluke infestation was also recently found in Bina, Ratu and Rossa – an infection Rossa most likely acquired

while still in Bukit Barisan as her travels routinely took her wandering outside the park boundaries and into local villages where she visited with people and their cattle.

### Life and Cultures Collide

One of the thrills of fieldwork in remote regions of the world is experiencing new sights, sounds and smells. In Indonesia these experiences are sure to include encounters with the diverse animal and plant life of the rainforest such as the amazing insects. Others include immersion into diverse cultures – new foods, customs and ways of life. Together with my two students on this trip, Laura Stokes-Greene of Ohio State University and Erin Goodrich of Cornell University, we began language courses with the local SRS staff. Twice each week we learned to write and read the local language, Bahasa Indonesian, along with the keeper staff as they learned English. The lessons made for a real cross-cultural experience (including lots of laughs from each group) for all involved, and in the end improved communication between staff and visitors alike.



**Figure 5.** Spectacular insect life abounds in the rainforest. Students experience more than science, but a slice of local culture as well by sharing the Indonesian traditional favorite fruit of the durian.



### Can You Help Cut Administrative Costs?

The ARP works to keep administration to a minimum so funds can be directed to our important conservation projects. Our offices are in need of essential equipment. If you or someone you know can donate the following items, we would be very appreciative:

- Printer
- Telephone with loud speaker
- Laminator
- Blank CD's
- Any kind of general stationary e.g.; pens, paper, envelopes, folders, paperclips, and so on.

If you can help, please contact Kerry at the ARP head office on 08 89760952 or by e-mail [kerry.crosbie@asianrhinos.org.au](mailto:kerry.crosbie@asianrhinos.org.au).

# Rapid Field Surveys to assess the status of the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* in remote, data-deficient and threatened forests in Kerinci Seblat National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia

Submitted by the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), in partnership with Fauna and Flora International-Indonesia Programme and Kerinci Seblat National Park Management.

## Background

At 13,300km<sup>2</sup> Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP) spans four provinces (South Sumatra, Jambi, Bengkulu, Jambi and West Sumatra) and is the largest protected area on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The vast tracts of primary rainforest inside KSNP that continue outside of the national park borders contain high levels of biodiversity, which has lead to KSNP being designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an ASEAN Heritage Site.

In the 1980s, KSNP was considered as one of the most important protected areas for the Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). Based on the amount of available habitat, located in a Western and Eastern forest blocks, some sources suggested that KSNP could hold a possible rhino population of up to 300 animals (see right). The Western Block comprises areas of Jambi, Bengkulu, West Sumatra and South Sumatra provinces and the Eastern Block falls entirely within Jambi province.

In the early 1990s, fieldwork conducted by the Sumatran Rhino Survey teams (N. Franklin, P. Wells and others) focused almost entirely on the Western Block of KSNP. These surveys revealed that poaching had decimated the rhino population, with an estimated 15-16 animals surviving.

During the mid 1990s, WWF-Indonesia Kerinci Program collected information on rhino presence from local villagers and hunters, and from forest and elevation data of potential rhino habitat. Based on these findings, WWF-Indonesia postulated that up to 40 rhinos might survive in the Eastern Block of KSNP. However, no rhino-focused field surveys or patrols have been conducted in this block for over a decade, even though in February 2000 a one-off field survey by FFI-Indonesia Kerinci Program, accompanied by Rhino Protection Unit (RPU) rangers found evidence of rhino presence (footprints and feeding sign). The purpose of this survey was to collect urgently required data on a flagship species present in a core area of KSNP to strengthen a campaign against local government road building plans through this forest block. Unfortunately, for various reasons, no repeat surveys have since been conducted in this area, which has now come under renewed threat from cross-park road building plans.

In 2000, FFI-Indonesia Kerinci Program also made a rapid assessment of flagship species present in the upper headwaters of the Batang Tabir river and Sungai Hitam area, Jambi province. No rhino sign was observed during this short trip, but the area had obviously been former rhino habitat, with a large inactive rhino wallow found and many old pit traps dating back to the 1960s and early 1970s.

To date, the KSNP/FFI Tiger Protection and Conservation Units (TPCUs) officers continue to record and receive occasional reports of rhino presence.

## Proposal

This proposal aims to conduct a series of rapid field surveys over two months, the majority for 10 days or more, in an almost entirely data-deficient core area of the Eastern Block in KSNP. It is this forest block where it is believed a small but potentially significant population of Sumatran rhino may survive. Thus, any subsequent conservation actions taken by KSNP will be wholly dependent upon the field results of this rapid assessment.



Only with the proposed field survey data can well informed management strategies be developed for the conservation of a critical area of forest that is now under imminent threat from road building plans and mounting pressure to clear this forest for oil palm plantations and small scale farmland, which seeks to exploit possible road building activities.

The primary purpose of this proposal is to confirm whether a population of rhinos does indeed survive in a remote core forest area in the KSNP Eastern Block and, if so, offer preliminary recommendations for subsequent conservation action.

Project findings will be conveyed to the director of the National Park Authority, the Director of Species Conservation at the Department of Forestry's directorate of Forest Protection and Species Conservation (PHKA) in Jakarta, LIPI Biology, the donor and the Indonesian Rhino Conservation Program (PKBI). Findings will not be released publicly without the approval of PHKA and other bodies and the location of any rhino present will not be released other than to key individuals tasked with Sumatran rhino protection and conservation.

The Asian Rhino Project has been asked to provide almost half of the funding for this survey which amounts to AUS\$8000. We are delighted to be a part of this project not only for the interests of a potential rhino population, but also in the hope that data collected on rhinos or not will assist in the conservation of this important habitat for all the species which reside there. We wish the FFI and DICE teams all the very best of luck.

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## ASZK Bowling for Rhinos Fundraiser – Over \$16,150 Raised in Total!

Approximately 30 zoos and wildlife parks from around Australia and New Zealand took part in a National bowling for rhinos fundraiser last year organised by the ASZK (Australasian Society of Zookeepers) and the ARP.

Last month the funds came through and the ARP received a whopping \$8,075! The total funds raised through the event was massive \$16,000+ - what a mighty effort by Zoo staff, friends and volunteers!

A special thanks to everyone involved – especially event coordinators Penny Cooper and Natalie Dunn for all their help. It wasn't easy, but together we did a great job and what a great outcome! The funds given to the ARP are being used for the Kerinci Survey Project mentioned above.



Picture courtesy of Nic Bishop

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## ARP WA Branch Update

The WA crew recently hosted another 'Rock Climbing for Rhinos' event. The night was quite successful, despite the chilly weather, with about 28 keen climbers attending. A profit of around \$300 was made. A big thank you to Petra and Jon for organising the event and cooking the sausage sizzle!!!

Karen Payne recently submitted an application to the Perth Zoo Conservation Fund for assistance with the Veterinary Training Program at Way Kambas.

Also, a warm welcome to Emma Gatehouse who has joined the WA Branch sub-committee. Emma is another Exotic Mammal Keeper at Perth Zoo and spends a lot of time working with the rhino there. Her input will be most welcome.

The WA committee are currently exploring new and exciting merchandise concepts, so keep an eye out for these in future newsletters.

## ARP Adopt a Rhino Project

A great gift just in time for Christmas! The Asian Rhino Project, Adopt a Rhino fundraising program. You can help us help save the Sumatran rhino by adopting a rhino today.

Two rhino have been bred in captivity in the past 6 years with a third on the way. These adorable calves were born at Cincinnati Zoo in the USA as part of a global breeding program for the species. With so many of the wild Sumatran Rhino populations in areas of suitable habitats facing imminent poaching danger, we are forced to resort to the establishment of secure healthy captive populations in sanctuaries. Here, they are better protected and



Photos by David Jenike courtesy of Cincinnati Zoo  
Top Emi and Andalas (Born 2001)  
Bottom Emi and Suci (Born 2004)



provide insurance for the survival of the species. With the recent success of the Cincinnati breeding program, scientists feel they have learnt a lot more about this species and it's captive requirements. This new breeding success has brought hope and demonstrated a real potential for future captive breeding success.

Breeding Sumatran Rhinos can be risky as they can become very aggressive when paired if the female is not receptive. The Sumatran Rhino are believed to be induced ovulators, meaning that they will only ovulate when

mated. The scientists at Cincinnati Zoo have found that by monitoring progesterone levels and conducting regular ultrasound procedures to monitor follicle growth, they were able to pin point the precise time to introduce the pair for mating. The usual telltale signs of rhino oestrus are not as visual as other species and very hard to detect through behavioral changes between the two. These rhino are also very solitary animals, and are only compatible when the female is in full oestrus. If this oestrus is not detected at the right time, the breeding will not be successful and the rhino can be injured.

You can adopt for 6 or 12 months. Funds raised by this program will be used to support the vital rhino breeding program. To find out more, please contact Kerry by calling 08 8976 0952 or at [kerry.crosbie@asianrhinos.org.au](mailto:kerry.crosbie@asianrhinos.org.au)

We hope to have it up on our web site soon.

## Special Thanks

Thanks and appreciation goes out to ARP members

- Tony Alcock for his continued support and kind donation of well needed stationary. In the past, Tony has also donated uniforms and he is always volunteering his time for Zoo based ARP functions. His ongoing commitment to the ARP is greatly appreciated.
- Karen Payne for assisting with grant applications and also the kind donation of a printer which will be used by our membership coordinator for newsletters and membership mailings. Karen is also assisting us with the veterinary specialist program in Way Kambas, coordinating a team of Australian specialist veterinarians to assist in the rhino program over there.
- Marc Bowden for his continued support, passion and generous ongoing monthly donations to the ARP of which he has recently increased. Marc has been actively involved in Sumatran rhino conservation for the past two years and continues to contribute his time and energy to the plight of the Bornean sub-species. We would also like to congratulate Marc on the completion of his thesis on the Conservation of the Sumatran Rhinoceros and to wish him luck in his future dream of completing a PhD based on ecological restoration of oil palm plantations in Borneo. Well done.
- Peter Hall and Hunter Hall Investment Management Limited for another generous donation and continued support. Peter and Hunter Hall have been instrumental in the growth of the ARP and the ongoing commitments to Sumatran rhino conservation in Indonesia. Their generosity is astounding and critical for the future of the species.

## ASIAN RHINO NEWS

To keep up-to-date with current events and happenings in the world of Asian rhino conservation, the Asian Rhino project searches regularly for updates on breaking rhino news. The shorts and news story links are available on our website [www.asianrhinos.org.au](http://www.asianrhinos.org.au) – click on the Rhino News link on the home page. If you are interested in receiving regular rhino news updates, please let us know by contacting [info@asianrhinos.org.au](mailto:info@asianrhinos.org.au) .

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