Government of India establish a PROJECT RHINO, similar to Project Tiger and Project Elephant.

6. The Government of India and Nepal are already providing considerable funds to conserve the rhino and their habitat. These government efforts have been very successful for *in situ* rhino conservation. However, because of the human demographic pressures in both of these countries, to carry this success forward into the next millennium, the efforts of the Governments of India and Nepal should be augmented with significant funds from international (external) sources.
7. The AsRSG should have more interface with the *Rhinoceros unicornis* range state governments, so that rhino conservation receives continuing and increasing support.
8. Toward this objective, the AsRSG will sponsor a technical management advisory group comprising representatives from all major rhino areas in India and Nepal.

Financial support for the meeting was provided by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF), WWF-Netherlands, WWF-U.S., and WWF-UK. Some funds from the meeting budget that were not used for the session due to the frugality of the organizers were applied to support census in March/April 1999 of the rhino in Kaziranga, Orang, and Pabitora where full counts have not been conducted since 1993.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The AsRSG is planning to have a Regional Meeting for South-East Asia in 2000 or 2001. It has been proposed to convene this meeting in Vietnam. The actual dates and place will be announced as soon as the details are available.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RHINO RANGE STATES

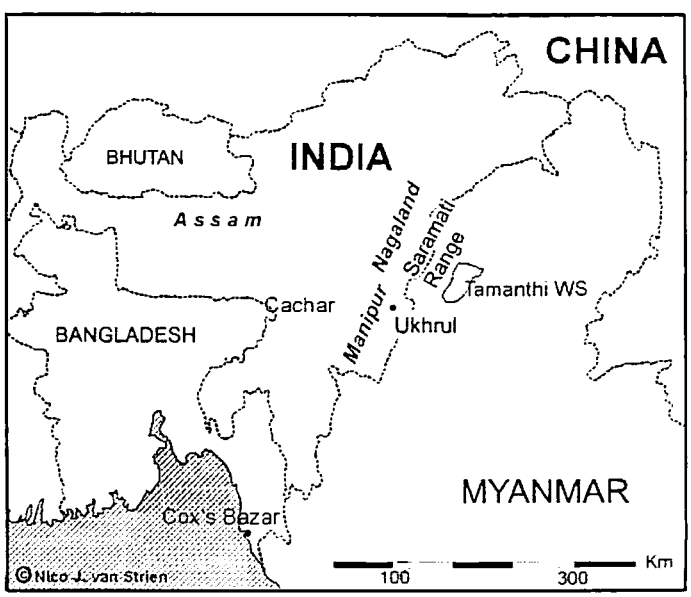
INDIA

Sumatran Rhino Sightings in N. E. India

There are still occasional reports about the presence of rhinos in the mountainous parts of North-East India, possibly referring to the Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). In 1967, a rhinoceros was killed near Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. An animal was sighted by locals in Punikhal of Sonai Reserved Forest, Cachar District, Assam, India.

In January 1996, Anwaruddin Choudhury visited the Anko Range in the Ukhrul District of the state of Manipur. He learned that villagers at Konkan (88 km SE of Ukhrul town) had observed signs of rhinos in the area in the early 1990's. In the 1970's a rhino was shot near Khamsong vilage, N.E. of Ukhrul town. In Nagaland, where he visited in June 1996, he received reports of rhinos in the Saramati range on the Myanmar border dating from 1967-68, as was also recorded by the 1994 survey around Tamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary in Northern Myanmar (see *Asian Rhinos*, No.1, p.10 and *Oryx* 29 (2): 123-128, 1995). The two areas in Manipur and on the Nagaland-Myanmar border are still virtually inaccessible and covered with mature forests. Further investigation and protection is recommended.

Source: A. Choudhury, The status of the Sumatran rhinoceros in north-eastern India. *Oryx*, 31 (2): 151-152, 1997; and A. Choudhury, Sumatran rhinoceros rediscovered in India, *Newsletter of the Rhino Foundation for Nature in NE India*, vol. 2 no.1, June 1998.



THAILAND

Recent patrols and surveys by Penisula Malaysia RPUs and by wildlife officials from Thailand on their repective sides of the border between these two countries has suggested that Sumatran rhino do still indeed survive in Halabala National park, Thailand. Halabala is part of an ecosystem that still encompasses forest habitat on both sides of the border. On the Malaysian side, it is know that appreciable numbers of Sumatran rhino still inhabit the Belum region.

PENINSULA MALAYSIA

In 1999, the RPU program in Peninsula Malaysia was reorganized to operate on a more semi-autonomous basis as has been the case in Indonesia since the outset of the GEF project there. The RPUs in Peninsula are now being coordinated by AsRSG Chair Mohd Khan working closely with the Dept. of Wildlife & National Parks and through the State Wildlife Directors in the highly federalized Malaysian system of government. The increased patrols occurring under this reorganized program are detecting new and often encouraging information about rhino distribution. More details on this information will be published in future issues of *Asian Rhinos*.

SABAH

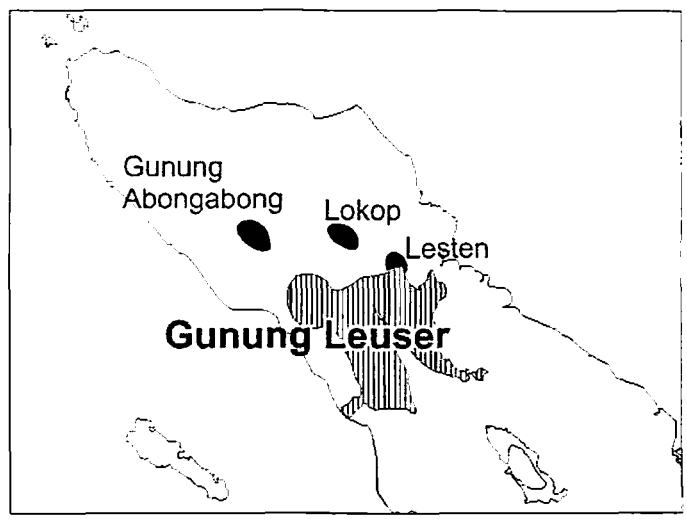
Since the conclusion of the GEF Project, there has not been as much outside support for the RPU program in Sabah as there has been in both Peninsula Malaysia and Indonesia. IRF is exploring with SOS-Rhino and other organizations, including the USFWS RTCF, how additional support may be provided.

INDONESIA

Sharp Rise in Poaching and Encroachment

The current political and economic situation in Indonesia has resulted in a sharp rise in poaching, extraction of timber and forest products, and illegal occupation and encroachment in all conservation areas. So far, the Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) have not reported an increase in rhino poaching in the areas where they operate, but the number of cases of other illegal activities is increasing. It appears that the rhino populations in the areas where RPUs operate have not yet been effected, but if this situation continues the rhinos will certainly suffer from loss of living space, increasing disturbance and possibly increased poaching. There also appears to be a trend among rhino poachers to use firearms instead of the traditional falls and snares, because this enables them to operate more quickly and avoid detection by the patrol units. If firearms become more easily availabe in the future, the patrol system will have to be intensified and the risk for the personnel will increase dramatically. (Source: Dr Nico J. van Strien)

Extinction of Rhino in Northern Aceh, Sumatra



From 20 July to 26 October 1997, field surveys were undertaken by the members of a University of Bristol Expedition in the Beutong forests of Aceh, Sumatra. The study area includes the Gunung Abongabong region where a remnant population potentially might have survived. Although the project was specifically designed to determine if any rhinos existed in the area, no fresh signs could be recorded. A few trails, rubs and wallows were found, some of which were approximately two years old, while the majority was at least five years old. The report concludes that the data collected would indicate, but not conclusively prove, that rhino have been eradicated from the study area.

The latest AsRSG Action Plan also mentioned the possibility of Sumatran rhino surviving in the areas of Lokop and Lesten (Serbodjadi). Recent information

provided by the EU Leuser Project team indicated that there is very little hope of any survivors in these regions of Aceh.

Source: Catherine R. Bloxham, James A. Burton, Ir Kuswandono, James McPerson and Barney Long, University of Bristol Expedition Report Series No. 3: Faunal and Floral Survey of Beutiong, Aceh, Sumatra 1997. University of Bristol, 1999; and personal communications by the staff of EU Leuser Project.

Ujung Kulon now has Rhino Protection Units

On the Javan Rhino Colloquium the Head of the Ujung Kulon National Park expressed the need for the establishment of Rhino Protection Units to supplement the regular park staff. Although Ujung Kulon has the highest budget and largest guard force of any National Park in Indonesia, the Park staff does not feel confident that they can provide maximum security to the 50 odd Javan rhinos (Refer also to page 8). Consequently the Indonesian Rhino Conservation Program was requested to include Ujung Kulon in the area of operation.

In the second half of 1998 the IRCP started recruitment and training and in January 1999 three new Units were established in Ujung Kulon, with funds from IRF, WWF Indonesia and the USFWS RTCF. A base camp was established at Tanjong Lama near the Park boundary. The RPUs in Ujung Kulon consist of 2 regular Park Rangers and three patrollers recruited from the local community.

In addition to the land patrols by the RPUs two teams of Park rangers are formed to patrol the eastern coastline of the Park, to prevent poachers from landing on the Peninsula.

TRADE ISSUES

Recent Prices of Rhino Parts in Sumatra

Some prices of rhinoceros horn and hoofs in the Southern part of Sumatra have been investigated.

Value of Sumatran Rhino Horn in Southern Sumatra, per 100 grams (in Rupia)

1990	1997	1999
($ = Rp 2000)	($ = Rp 2500)	($ = Rp 7000)
Hunter's sale price		
1-1.5 million	2-2.5 million	3.5-4 million
Intermediary's sale price		
2.5-3 million	4-5 million	no data

Value of Sumatran Rhino Hoofs in Southern Sumatra, per piece (in Rupia)

Hunter's sale price		
20.000	25.000	40.000

Source: Personal Communication from Arief Rubianto, RPU Regional Coordinator, Bukit Baritan Selatan, Sumatra, Indonesia.

CITES: in Need of Standardized Indicators of Success

All five species of rhinoceros have been included in Appendix I of CITES since 1977. At the Ninth Conference Of Parties (COP) held in 1994, the southern white rhinoceros was transferred to Appendix II for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in hunting trophies and live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations. At the same COP, a review of the conservation status of rhinoceroses and the impact of conservation measures resulted in the adoption of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Conservation of Rhinoceros in Asia and Africa). This resolution directed the CITES Standing Committee to pursue actions aimed at reducing illegal trade, while ensuring that (i) all such activities are accompanied by evaluations of their effectiveness; (ii) standardized indicators of success are developed to measure changes in levels of illegal hunting and of the status of rhinoceros populations in the range states; and (iii) the policies guiding interventions are responsive to the outcome of evaluations and are modified accordingly.

In search of these main indicators of success, a workshop was held in Cambridge on 9-11 December 1998. A large number of possibilities was discussed and evaluated. The workshop participants recommended a two-component indicator system, based primarily upon range-state indicators at the site level, which include: level of illegal killing (carcass detection, illegal activity/site data, adjusted for effort) and population status (rhino numbers, trends and number of populations). This *can be* strengthened by some trade or trafficking indicators,