

While not as large as the 10 hectare optimally planned, an enclosure of this size should significantly enhance the probability that animals will breed. Moreover, the 10 acre enclosure can be easily expanded into larger ones when hopefully funds are available in the 7th Plan.

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CAPTIVE POPULATION OF SUMATRAN RHINOS?

I have seen the facilities for the Sumatran rhinos in Jakarta, San Diego and Melaka. Those in Melaka are the best. but I would like to make a comment which applies even to this one: too much sunlight.

Recently Julian O'Dea, a Visiting Fellow in the Division of Archaeology and Natural History, A.N.U., made UV-B measurements in North Queensland rainforests, and compared them with those made in the open nearby. The results are dramatic, and unanticipated:

Time	Outside conditions	microWatts per cm ² :	
		outside	inside
11-1	strong sunlight	189-245	0-4
11-2	fairly overcast	68-156	0-5
			(6 in a small clearing)
4pm	overcast, rain	30	0
9am	clear sky	70	0-5
-	winter in Canberra	80	0-4

This means that Sumatran rhinos - in fact, any terrestrial rainforest animal - will get far too much UV radiation if kept even partly in the open.

The prevalence of cataracts in the captive stock supports this conclusion.

I speculate that, in addition to this, they will be too hot and, especially, too dry outside the humid rainforest microclimate.

I stress that all three zoos have obviously been concerned to keep their rhinos in the best possible conditions. These observations are offered in that spirit.

Submitted by Colin Groves