

Sahabat Satwa

Friends of the Zoo
Ragunan Zoo Jakarta, Indonesia

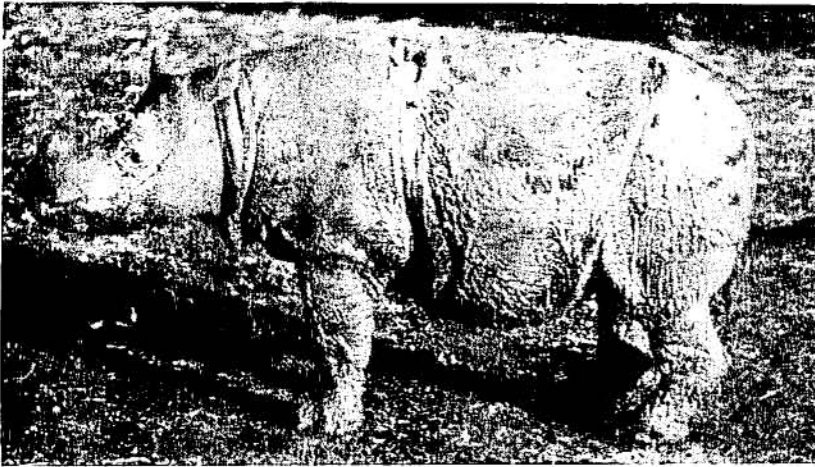


Newsletter for Members of Sahabat Satwa
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SPOTLIGHT ON ANIMALS AT RAGUNAN ZOO : SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS

Denise Lant



Approximately one-half of Indonesia's 500 mammals are found nowhere else in the world. Ragunan Zoo is fortunate to have many of these species on display. Two of the zoo's purposes are to educate the public and to contribute to the conservation of such species by maintaining notable captive breeding programs.

Out of an estimated thirty rhino species thought to exist during the Miocene, only five remain. The Black Rhino and the White Rhino are indigenous to Africa and have estimated populations of 4,000 each. The three species of Asian rhinos include the Indian (great one-horned), the Javan (lesser one-horned), and the Sumatran (Asian two-horned) with estimated populations of 1,700, 50-60, and 700-800, respectively. The Javan rhino is thought to be the rarest animal in the world and lives only in the Ujung Kulon nature reserve in West Java.

A controversial captive breeding program for the Sumatran rhino was established in 1985, and in 1986 two rhinos were captured for Ragunan Zoo. Jalu, which means "male" in the local dialect, was captured near Torgamba in the Riau Province of South Sumatra. He is now between 5 and 6 years old. Dusun, the female, was captured in the Dusun River area of Malaysia and is a year or two older than Jalu. They are fed every day at around 11 a.m. and again at 4 p.m. on a diet consisting of leaves, grass, cassava, bananas, and papaya. Rhinos are believed to have a very acute sense of smell, but very poor vision. Much of their time is spent wallowing in the mud to cool and moisten their hides and to prevent ticks and flies.

Rhinos in the wild reach maturity at about seven years, when their horns begin to grow. The horn is a compacted mass of hair-like fibers made of keratin, similar to fingernail or hoof material. Rhinos give birth approximately every three to five years, and gestation periods are about 16 months. It is thought that their life span is 30 to 40 years. They are solitary animals except during mating and during the 18 months that the mother attends to her calf.

To date, Jalu and Dusun have not mated. There is some speculation



In 1982 Dr. Linus Simanjuntak, then a private veterinarian, now Director of Ragunan Zoo, helped a small group of animal and nature lovers form a new group Sahabat Satwa, or Friends of the Zoo.

In the first years the activities were limited due to lack of members, and on more than one occasion the group disbanded. Then in 1988 some enthusiastic volunteers recognized that there was still a need for such a group, so they united and began organizing birthday parties and school tours at the zoo. Later they added a Sahabat Satwa logo, T-shirts and posters. When they began offering talks to women's organizations, such as the British and American Women's Associations and Ganesha, the number of members of the group started to grow.

In December, 1989 the first steps were taken to put F.O.Z. on a more organized footing and in February, 1990 a temporary Executive Board and committee chairmen started to function. In July, 1990 the many long hours of discussion and deliberation over an organizational document came to fruition and the Constitution was approved. In the near future it will be formally notarized and signed, following which an application will be made to the Minister of Justice for formal "recognition" of F.O.Z.

We feel very fortunate to have gained the support of the Governor of Jakarta, Wiyogo Atmodarminto, who is now our patron.

On September 26 we will host our first membership coffee morning. In preparation for this important milestone in the formation of Sahabat Satwa we think it is appropriate to point out to you, our members, the official purpose of Sahabat Satwa as stated in Article 5 of our Constitution.