

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

W I L D L I F E E X P L O R E R

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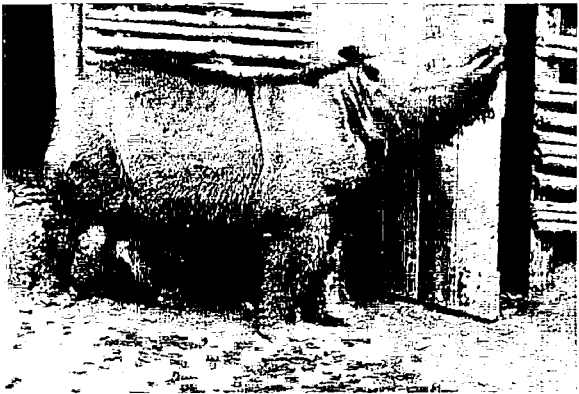
A RHINO NAMED
EMI

WILD LIFE
HELD
OVER UNTIL
OCTOBER 31!

AFRICA'S NATURAL MOVEMENT



A RHINO NAMED EMI • BY DR. Terri Roth, Vice President of Animal Sciences



She was found in a pit trap deep in the forests of Sumatra in 1991, the 28th of 40 rhinos acquired for a captive breeding program. This program was initiated in 1984 with the goal of producing a vigorous captive population of Sumatran rhinos that could serve as a back-up to the dwindling wild population. Rhino #28 was a very young female, estimated to be about a year old. Today, this rhino is known as "Emi".

Because there were no tracks of an adult rhino in the area, it appeared the rhino calf was alone and had been orphaned. Her mother was probably killed by poachers who covet the rhinos' two small horns. The horns are crushed up and sold for top dollar on the black

(right) Known as the "hairy rhinoceros," Sumatran rhinos have a distinctive longhaired reddish-brown coat not seen on other rhino species.

(above) A very young Emi, about a year old, in Sumatra in 1991.

market as "medicine" to cure anything from headaches to arthritis to upset stomachs even though there is no scientific proof that rhino horn contains any medicinal value.

Although Emi had probably never seen humans before, when the trackers arrived at the pit and looked down on her, she did not panic. Within hours, she was eating the leafy tree branches they offered right out of their hands.

Forests of Sumatra typically are dense, but what had been Emi's home territory was rapidly disappearing due to logging. Making her potential future in the wild even bleaker was the fact that the logging roads were opening up the forests and making them more accessible to poachers. Those same roads actually helped the rhino trappers in transporting Emi out of the forest and

to the coast where she boarded a ferry and crossed the ocean to the island of Java, the most populated island of Indonesia. Had she remained in that forest, Emi's fate most likely would have ended up in the hands of poachers.

Many of the rhinos captured for the captive breeding program had remained on Java, but several had made yet another long journey, this time by airplane, to the United States. Emi was the fifth of seven rhinos to come to America. She arrived at the Los Angeles Zoo in good condition and began her new life on the West Coast.

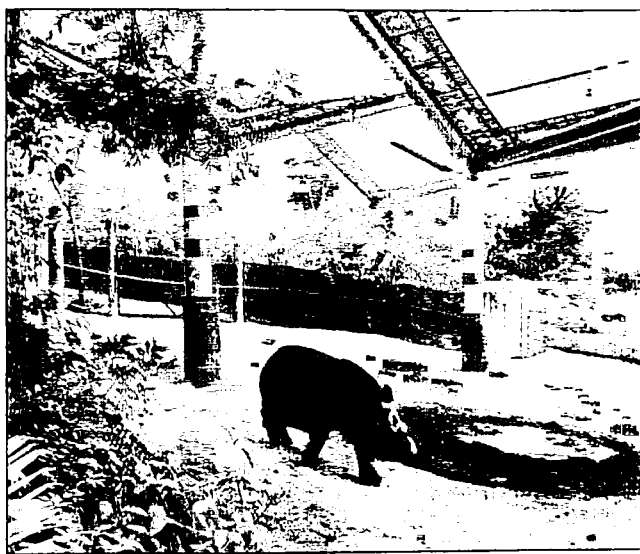


Even Rhinos Need Protection from the Sun!

Most people these days are pretty careful about protecting themselves from too much direct sunlight because we all know the potential health risks associated with too much UVB radiation. But only recently have we discovered that, like us, our invaluable Sumatran rhinos also need protection from direct sunlight. These deep forest dwelling rhinos have evolved in an environment so dense with vegetation that their eyes simply cannot tolerate too much direct sun. In fact, recent research by CREW scientists who took light readings in Malaysia revealed that the forests inhabited by wild Sumatran rhinos filter out 98-99% of all types of light, allowing only 1-2% to penetrate the thick canopy.

Because we continually strive to provide the best possible care for the animals at the Zoo, we recently installed a unique, custom designed shade canopy structure over both Sumatran rhino exhibits. Our hope is that we can now have Sumatran rhinos on exhibit for people to enjoy, learn about, and become inspired to help us save them, while providing the rhinos maximum protection from the sun.

Come see Emi and her new calf under their protective shade canopy at the Zoo – and don't forget your sunscreen!



A custom designed, unique shade canopy structure protects our rhinos from too much sun.

The Sumatran rhino exhibit is generously supported by the Helen G., Henry F. and Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation, Stan Koller and Fifth Third Bank Co-Trustees.



Sumatran rhinos spend much of their time in mud wallows to keep cool.

Quite a transition, straight from the forests of Sumatra to the bustling city of L.A. but Emi handled it all in stride. Her adaptability is one of the traits that makes Emi so exceptional.

Known as the "hairy rhinoceros," the Sumatran rhino has a distinctive longhaired reddish-brown coat not seen on other rhino species. This coat is especially prevalent on young rhinos, and Emi had far more hair than any of her adult relatives previously imported to the United States. Growing up on the California coast, Emi's coat changed from reddish-brown to almost blond, but at six years of age, it was not the color of her hair that concerned animal managers, it was the challenge of trying to breed her.

In 1995, only three of the seven imported Sumatran rhinos were still alive, and efforts to breed the species had met only with failure. Not only was the U.S. struggling, but breeding efforts in Malaysia and Indonesia also proved fruitless. Because the only male Sumatran rhino in the U.S., Ipuh, was at the Cincinnati Zoo, and because of our reputation for breeding endangered species, Emi was transferred on breeding loan from L.A. to Cincinnati. A year later, I arrived at the Cincinnati Zoo and had the privilege of working with this extraordinary rhino called Emi.

Growing up around dogs, cats and maybe cattle, people often take for granted that if you put male and female animals

together, they will naturally breed and produce offspring. This scenario is far from reality when it comes to many wildlife species. Sumatran rhinos are very solitary by nature, and early efforts to breed them by housing a male with a female resulted only in aggressive battles between the two who wanted nothing to do with each other.

Because of our concern for Emi's well-being, we dared not force her into an enclosure with the male rhino if the risk of him attacking and hurting her was significant. However, our goal was to breed Emi and Ipuh, a goal that clearly could not be achieved if the animals were never in the same yard. Therefore, we decided the best approach was to study Emi and learn about her reproductive cycle so that we might be able to determine when she would be receptive to Ipuh before placing the animals together.

Science is only as good as the data that can be collected, and when working with non-domestic species, data collection can be incredibly challenging. Most folks would not expect a rhinoceros to tolerate a lot given their reputation as tough, cantankerous animals. However, these impressive animals can actually be rather docile. We were fortunate that Emi's ready acceptance of so many things allowed us to collect data by ultrasound on a regular basis (even though the procedure had to be performed rectally). Furthermore, after a conditioning period, our veterinary technicians were able to collect blood from a vein in her ear so that we could monitor hormone levels.

Like a lot of us, Emi will tolerate quite a bit if rewarded with her favorite foods, and as long as she was fed pieces of apple, banana and sweet potato, she stood quietly in her chute during these research procedures. In fact, Emi had the right of refusal every day because her entrance into the chute for this work was always voluntary and never forced. But Emi was a trooper, and always cooperated with us.

Eventually, the data we collected from Emi allowed us to unravel the mysteries of reproduction in this species and provided the information we needed to determine the right time to pair her with Ipuh for mating. Emi's contribution to science and to our knowledge of her species is profound, and yet to her, it was just all a part of the daily routine.

Proof of Emi's tolerant demeanor was perhaps best demonstrated by her behavior the first time Ipuh attempted to mate with her. Ipuh, having also come from the



Emi's ready acceptance of so many things allowed the collection of data by ultrasound on a regular basis.

forests of Sumatra, was captured as an adult in 1990. He had spent seven years in captivity without breeding a female when suddenly he found himself in an enclosure with a receptive Emi. Throughout the day and into the night, Ipuh attempted to mate Emi. In fact, over a 19-hour period he mounted her 47 times, and each time, Emi stood quietly. Unfortunately, Ipuh never was successful, and by morning, the exhausted pair was separated. Twenty-one days later, Ipuh got his second chance. This time Ipuh figured it out and succeeded.

Emi's first pregnancy occurred in the fall of 1997 and was diagnosed by the presence of an embryo observed by ultrasound 16 days after mating. Surprise and then elation quickly spread throughout the Zoo and then extended to Emi's native land of Southeast Asia where our international partners in the effort to save this species rejoiced with us. This was the first pregnancy produced in a captive Sumatran rhino in over 100 years!

Unfortunately, our euphoria came to an abrupt end when, at day 42 of gestation, Emi lost the pregnancy. Over the next two years, Emi became pregnant four more times, but lost every pregnancy within the first three months of gestation. Of course, Emi was completely unaware of the optimism and excitement her pregnancies inspired nor the heart-wrenching disappointment her miscarriages brought. It was an emotional roller coaster for those of us involved, and I started to envy Emi and her state of blissful ignorance.

Through it all, Emi appeared perfectly healthy and content, once again, taking everything in stride. Little did she know that she was a primary topic of conversation during a Sumatran Rhino Masterplanning Workshop in Southeast Asia that was sponsored by the International Rhino Foundation. The recommendation coming out of that workshop was to supplement Emi with the hormone, progesterone, the next

time she conceived to see if that might help her sustain a pregnancy to term.

When Emi became pregnant for the sixth time in May of 2000, she was prescribed a daily dose of oral progesterone. The rhino keepers diligently ensured Emi received the entire dosage of liquid hormone every morning by injecting it into a stack of bread and then feeding Emi the hormone-soaked slices of bread while she stood in the chute. Always interested in food, Emi quickly became accustomed to her morning bread treat, and would stand in position in her chute waiting for it even if the front door of the chute was wide open.

One afternoon, 174 days after

Protecting Wild Rhinos Against All Odds

The deck is stacked against the survival of the fewer than 300 Sumatran rhinos still inhabiting the remnant forests of Malaysia and Indonesia. Logging continues in areas that once were home to breeding populations of rhinos, and the rhinos have moved on. But, moving on is becoming difficult as habitat shrinks and forests become fragmented. Furthermore, logging opens up the forests making them easily accessible to poachers who kill the rhinos for their prized horns. Additionally, as the human population expands, encroachment on the edges of the remaining forests increases, reducing the forest habitat and introducing the threat of new diseases from livestock.

The future appears pretty grim for our Sumatran rhinos, but there is hope because there are heroes fighting for the rhinos' survival. Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) in both Indonesia and Malaysia are patrolling the forests for poachers and removing snares set to trap the wildlife. These dedicated wildlife rangers put their lives on the line every day to help save the few



Wild Sumatran rhinos in southeast Asia are protected from poachers by specially trained rhino protection units.

remaining rhinos. The program, overseen and supported by the International Rhino Foundation with help from organizations like the Cincinnati Zoo, has saved numerous rhinos from a fate at the hands of poachers. To further increase RPU effectiveness, small, non-viable populations of rhinos (1-4 animals) are to be trapped and moved to areas with larger rhino numbers. By doing so, more RPUs can patrol the forests that contain larger, viable populations of rhinos. Hopefully, this strategy will make the wild that much safer for these few survivors of the species.

It's a Girl!

mating with Ipuh. Emi came into the barn for the evening and just wasn't acting quite herself. She spent most of the night pacing between her stalls, vocalizing, frequently lying down and getting back up and spraying urine. In fact, in the 12 hours leading up to Emi's delivery, she sprayed urine an amazing 69 times! We knew this because our Zoo Volunteer Observers were watching her on monitors and recording her behaviors all night long at the *Lindner Center* for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW).

In the early morning hours of the 475th day, Emi appeared to be going into labor, but about that time Head Keeper Paul Reinhart arrived, and suddenly Emi's interest shifted to her breakfast. Keeping us all waiting in suspense, Emi proceeded to eat almost her entire breakfast before returning to the task of delivering her calf, which she then did relatively quickly and without complications. With this successful delivery, Emi became the first Sumatran rhino in 112 years to produce a calf in captivity and brought international attention to both herself and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. The birth of this calf was a spark of hope for the future of the species. But none of this concerned Emi, she had a calf for which to care.

Despite the fact that Emi had been orphaned young and raised in captivity, her natural instinct is strong, and Emi proved to be an ideal mother from the very start. True to form, Emi calmly accepted the new arrival, cleaned him, watched near by as he struggled to stand and then helped guide him to nurse. Her first calf, named "Andalas", thrived in Emi's care. At one year of age, a robust Andalas was weaned, and attention turned once again to Emi.

Our attempt to produce a second calf from Emi and Ipuh was initiated in October of 2002. Using the same management protocol that had produced the previous pregnancies, Emi and Ipuh were paired for mating when our scientific data indicated Emi would be receptive. The two had not forgotten what to do, but it took six consecutive matings before Emi became pregnant. This time, no hormone soaked bread was offered to Emi and, finally, she carried a pregnancy to term successfully on her own.

In the very early morning hours of July 29th, Emi became restless. She proceeded to pace, paw, rub her horn, vocalize and spray urine almost continuously for 36 hours before finally lying down and having serious contractions. Within 45 minutes of starting those contractions, Emi's second calf entered our world 477 days after it was conceived. This one, a female with a unique white sock on her right front leg, was every bit as big, vigorous and healthy as her brother had been.

With the successful delivery of this calf, Emi has become the only Sumatran rhino in history to produce two calves in captivity. With the captive population plummeting to just eight animals prior to this birth and the wild population now hovering below 300 rhinos, the species is in an unprecedented state of crisis.

Emi, the orphaned rhino calf from Sumatra, has become a shining star in the struggle to save her species from extinction. With every calf she produces, Emi moves us one rhino further away from losing the species, and in her calm and unassuming way, gives us hope and provides inspiration. Whereas once I envied Emi and her blissful ignorance, now I wish she could somehow comprehend all she has achieved and just what she means to her species and to all of us who are fighting for its survival against all odds. ♣

On July 30, Emi, a critically endangered Sumatran rhinoceros, became the first Sumatran rhino in history to produce two calves in captivity. Emi delivered a healthy female calf at 12:51 p.m. in her indoor stall.

"This is a historic birth. It is proof the science of breeding Sumatran rhinos has been developed at the Cincinnati Zoo and the first birth was not a one time wonder," said Dr. Terri Roth, Vice President of Animal Sciences. "Because Sumatran rhinos are on the brink of extinction, this calf serves as a lifeline for a species clinging desperately to survival."

Emi and her new calf can be seen in their newly renovated exhibit in Wildlife Canyon. If not on exhibit due to weather, visitors can get a glimpse on the monitors in the public exhibit at the *Lindner Center* for Conservation & Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) and through Rhino iCam, courtesy of Time Warner Cable, a web-controllable video camera, accessible through the Zoo's website at www.cincinnati-zoo.org.

Emi's New Calf

Born July 30, 2004, 12:51 pm

Gestation length 477 days

Sex Female

First stood 1.0 hours

First walked 1.5 hours

First nursed 2.25 hours

Weight 75 pounds

