

## The rarest rhino: the Javan

Since the establishment of the Ujung Kulon peninsula, at the very western tip of Java, as a Wildlife Reserve and later a National Park, considerable emphasis has been placed on studying and monitoring the Javan rhino population.

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It is possible that the population (which has remained at 40-60 for years) has saturated its carrying capacity and no longer has potential for expansion within the area available - or, perhaps, other factors such as disease or competition with other species for resources may play a role. Three Rhino Protection and Monitoring Units (RPMUs) have been established and maintained in Ujung Kulon National Park. The RPMUs have improved and intensified the protection of Javan rhino by creating an Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) in the rhino areas, especially along the east side of the peninsula where poaching is more likely. The IPZ in Ujung Kulon has maintained status quo and the rhino population is stable.

Over the past year, the RPMUs were on continuous patrol and identified 274 footprints and 158 other signs of Javan rhino in Ujung Kulon, and recorded five direct sightings of rhinos. Due to the success of rhino protection efforts, very few illegal activities were observed during 2007: only two incidents of encroachment, and no other illegal activities.

In February 2007 a workshop, partially funded by IRF, was conducted in Jakarta on the Evaluation and Update of the Indonesian Rhino Conservation Strategy. The workshop outlined a new strategy that will focus on maintaining and then

expanding by 20 percent the wild population in Ujung Kulon, and establishing an additional wild population elsewhere through translocations. The highest priority is maintaining and protecting the current population in Ujung Kulon. Additional habitat in the Park has been earmarked to be secured, and it may be possible to achieve a population increase, with a target of about 70 animals. The RPMUs have continued and intensified their activities and it is critical that these activities continue if the rhino population in Ujung Kulon is to survive and grow.

### Javan rhinos: the lowdown

**Common name:** Javan rhino, aka Lesser one-horned rhino. **Scientific name:**

*Rhinoceros sondaicus*

**Physical characteristics:** Single horn, usually less than 20cm long. Long, pointed upper lip for grasping food (they are browsers). Grey or grey-brown skin, with pink colouring in heavy folds. Smaller and lighter than the Greater one-horned rhino: 900-2,300kg and 1.4-1.7m tall

**Location and habitat:** The largest population in Ujung Kulon, Java, recovered from fewer than 30 in 1967 to about 50-60 in 1980, but has been stagnant ever since at between 40-60. The only other population is 3-5 animals in Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam. **Mosaic habitat:** Glades mixed with forest. Javan rhinos spend a large part of the day wallowing in mud holes  
**Under threat:** From poaching; habitat destruction and loss for agriculture and development; and very small population size, which leads to loss of genetic variability and vitality.

KLAVIS LANG

Rare image of a Javan rhino

INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION

International Rhino Foundation  
- An RPU at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary.

### BBC Wildlife Fund

We are delighted to announce a grant of £19,980 from the BBC Wildlife Fund. We sent £10,520 to the RPMUs in Sumatra, to buy five motorbikes each for Way Kambas and for Bukit Barisan Selatan National Parks, and then to cover the fuel and running costs of the ten bikes for one year, to help patrol and protect wild populations in the Parks. We also sent £6,460 to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas, where five rhinos (two male, three female) are kept. It is hoped that the five rhinos there will breed in captivity, providing a tandem approach to Sumatran rhino conservation. Our thanks to the viewers of Saving Planet Earth and the BBC Wildlife Fund for this tremendous grant.

We'll be reporting on progress in Sumatra in the next issue of *The Horn*.

**Below:**  
The Cigentour river, Java. Javan rhinos are extremely elusive

## Grant

Our thanks to the EAZA Rhino Campaign, which enabled a grant of 50,000 euros in October 2006 towards the Rhino Protection Unit programme 2007 costs in Java and Sumatra (for Bukit Barisan, Way Kambas, and Ujung Kulon National Parks).