

First-ever footage of a wild Sumatran rhino

Due to the increased protection and intensive patrolling by the Rhino Protection Units of the key rhino areas in Sumatra, some of the rhinos are gradually losing their natural shyness and are now more approachable. More and more sightings of Sumatran rhinos are being recorded, and one female in particular, in Bukit Barisan Selatan (BBS) National Park is now fully habituated to the presence of the patrols in her range.

There are thought to be around 60-80 Sumatran rhinos in BBS, and the female has now been under close observation for over a year. Overall more rhinos have been seen feeding in the fringes of the Park, but it's too early to say whether this is because of an increase in rhino population, or of the rhinos' loss of fear of the RPUs. The "tame" rhino has a normal home range of about 10 km sq that is partly overlapping with the ranges of five other animals along the road corridor through BBS; one male, three females, and one unknown. There is plenty of food in this area, as there are many secondary patches created by former disturbance. The area is by far the most intensively patrolled area in the whole Park and therefore the rhinos living there are in a very safe position.

Cameraman Alain Compost recently accompanied the RPUs and was able to shoot stunning, high-quality footage of this rhino, the first time such filming of



LEFT AND BELOW LEFT: THE INDOONESIAN RHINO CONSERVATION PROGRAM, RPU, RIGHT: NICO VAN STRIEN/IRF

a wild Sumatran rhino has been possible. Based on this new material, a promotional video on the work of the RPUs was produced on DVD, in English and Indonesian, with funding from the CEPF project. Apart from the unique Sumatran rhino shots, the film also contains some new footage of the elusive Javan rhino from Ujung Kulon. The programme

will be distributed free of charge to schools, communities and institutions in Indonesia. A limited number of the DVD will be available for purchase at the Rhino Mayday conference on Monday 9 May.

Nico van Strien
SE Asia Coordinator
International Rhino Foundation



The next Rhino Mayday will take place on Monday 9 May in the Huxley Conference Theatre at the Zoological Society of London. The speakers are:

- Hubert Planton on a plan to find Cameroon's last black rhinos
- Yvonne Verkaik (Rhino Fund Uganda) on the re-introduction of white rhinos in Uganda
- Nick Lindsay (International Zoo Programmes at ZSL) on the forthcoming EAZA Rhino Campaign
- Tim Woodfine (Head of Conservation and Wildlife Management, Marwell Preservation Trust) on Marwell's rhino work in Zimbabwe
- Paul Pearce-Kelly (Zoological Society of London) on the progress of Kenya's 5-year black rhino management plan
- Matt Walpole (Fauna and Flora International) on the rhino monitoring programme in the Masai Mara
- Nico van Strien (SE Asia Coordinator, International Rhino Foundation) on Javan and Sumatran rhinos, past, present and future

For information on times and how to buy tickets, please visit the UK Rhino Group's website: www.rhinogroup.org.uk

Cathy Dean
Chair, UK Rhino Group