

# Sumatra:

## Rhino Patrol Units in Way Kambas



The RPU programme in Way Kambas National Park, on the southern edge of Sumatra, has benefited greatly from a new vehicle provided last year by Save the Rhino. The old vehicle was literally falling apart on the rough Sumatra roads, and keeping it running was consuming an ever-larger part of operational funds.

There are now five Rhino teams of four persons each in Way Kambas, and next month they will be joined by two Tiger teams with funding from the Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program, to cover the 130,000 ha Park even more intensively. The threat to both habitat and wildlife is increasing in the current political and economic crisis, with members of the army and police playing an active lead in the destruction. This has greatly increased the pressure on the teams, making good equipment vital for successful operations.

The Save the Rhino vehicle transports the teams to their starting points and collects them after the patrol. The car and driver are on a 24/7 schedule, ready to go any time the teams radio in for assistance.

The photographs show two RPUs departing for a patrol on the eastern side of the Park, an area where illegal deer-hunting is rampant. They are delivered by car to Way Kanan, one of the internal guard posts, and from there they travel a few kilometres downstream in a Park boat. They will then head north and reach the coast after about a week in the field. This area of operation is the core range of the Sumatran rhino, but it also has good populations of elephants, tigers, deer and other wildlife.

As the poaching gangs are now often heavily armed and will not hesitate to fire

on the patrols, two teams usually operate together. Each team has just one gun, effective only at short range. It's the knowledge that they are supported and backed up by a strong alliance of conservation groups that keeps the RPUs going. Other forces have already given up the battle.

**Dr Thomas J Foose**  
Program Director  
International Rhino Foundation

In 2002 Save the Rhino made a grant of US \$19,000 to the International Rhino Foundation enabling the purchase of a patrol vehicle, followed by a further grant of US \$5,990 to cover a year's worth of fuel and maintenance.

## Search for a Sumatran rhino... in Sabah!

2002 heralded a new era in the history of Save the Rhino with our first grant to support anti-poaching teams in their desperate battle to protect the last few hundred Sumatran rhinos. Our aim is to build support for this species (the most threatened of all of the five rhino species) in 2004 by a fundraising challenge in Sabah, located in the Malaysian section of the island of Borneo.

The Borneo Rhino Challenge will be held in conjunction with our US partner charity, SOS Rhino, whose sole aim is the protection of the remaining 50 Sumatran rhinos in Sabah. As part of the challenge, you'll spend two days on patrol, searching for these elusive creatures and camping out in the rainforest - an unforgettable experience.

The chance of finding a Sumatran rhino is roughly a million to one. To give you an idea

of the difficulties, Save the Rhino funded a research project in Sumatra in the mid-1990s and the project co-ordinator spent three years in the jungle without seeing a single rhino! However, there's a good chance you'll see some of the other creatures, including elephants, tapirs, orang-utans and gibbons. There are also tigers and leopards although, like the rhinos, they're rare sights indeed.

The itinerary also includes a visit to the ex-situ breeding programmes for orang-utans and Sumatran rhinos at the Sepilok Sanctuary. So one way or another, you will get to see these incredible creatures.

The challenge is scheduled for 1-14 May 2004 and the full itinerary is as follows:

Check the website for further details...

## BORNEO RHINO

- Days 1-2** Depart UK to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, via Kuala Lumpur
- Day 3** Transfer to Mt Kinabalu National Park
- Day 4** 1st day of trekking on Kinabalu
- Day 5** Complete trek to summit (4,095 metres) and descend
- Day 6** 1st day of cycle challenge through roker Mountains
- Day 7** Complete cycle challenge and transfer back to Kota Kinabalu
- Day 8** Transfer by air to Sandakan and to Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary to see orang-utans and rhinos
- Day 9** Transfer to Tabin Wildlife Reserve
- Day 10** 1st day of searching for Sumatran rhino and other jungle wildlife. (Overnight in forest in hammocks)
- Day 11** Trek back to Tabin HQ and stay overnight
- Day 12** Morning in the Reserve, transfer by air to Kota Kinabalu, have a swim in the sea and stay overnight
- Days 13-14** Return home