

New project: Increasing enforcement within Cat Loc (Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam) for the protection of Javan Rhinoceros and other globally threatened species

Cat Loc of Cat Tien National Park is home to several species of globally threatened mammals, including the Buff-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) and, most significantly, the Javan Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*).

The Javan Rhino is classified as Critically Endangered (IUCN 2008) with only two remaining populations in Java and Vietnam, and numbering less than 70 individuals in total. The Vietnamese subspecies is considerably more imperiled with probably less than eight individuals restricted to sub-optimal habitat in a sector of Cat Tien National Park. This population is under constant pressure from surrounding human settlements and its long-term future at this site is in question, given the current lack of political will to undertake adequate measures to ensure its protection.

There is an urgent need to assess the status of this population to determine appropriate conservation action and motivate the government to support these measures, and also to increase current enforcement efforts to ensure the rhino is adequately protected. WWF are planning to conduct this population assessment from November 2009 to April 2010 and through support from several donors, will have an established presence in the Park for at least a year, to conduct the fieldwork and improve protection on the ground.

WWF Vietnam therefore forwarded a request from ARP to support improved enforcement measures for one year whilst the status of the population is assessed, and appropriate future conservation efforts determined. ARP is proud to support this project and has awarded the full request of \$11,200AUD.

Goal

To ensure Javan rhinos are maintained in Cat Loc by providing adequate protection.

Objective

This will be achieved by increasing the frequency and coverage of enforcement patrols through:

- supporting 10 local villagers to undertake joint patrols into the core zone with Forest Protection Department rangers
- providing technical advice regarding patrol routes and locations.

Project outcomes

1. The removal of snares and reduction of other illegal activities which threaten many species inhabiting Cat Loc, including Gaur, Bear and Javan Rhino
2. The involvement of local communities in wildlife protection and enforcement
3. Increased capacity of Forest Protection rangers in enforcement and monitoring of illegal activities

Anticipated follow-up activities

Following the population assessment which will be conducted at the same time as the increased enforcement measures, decisions will need to be taken regarding the future strategy for Javan Rhino in Cat Loc. These decisions will be made on the basis of the viability of the population and could involve: translocation of the rhinos to larger and more optimal habitat in Cat Tien sector of the NP; translocation of the rhinos to a secure breeding facility in Cat Tien National Park; fencing of the core zone for the rhino in Cat Loc to prevent further encroachment of habitat; and/or bringing rhinos from Ujung Kulon to supplement the population in CTNP.

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Thanks once again for the continued generous support from Auckland Zoo who recently donated another \$5,000NZD in March. This brings the total funds donated to ARP to over \$20,000AUD since March 2008! Well done guys. The funds from this recent donation will be allocated to Javan Rhino Projects in Indonesia. Always on a mission – Auckland Zoo keeper Nat Sullivan and her crazy colleagues are planning another fundraiser 'Skydiving for Sumatra' to support rhino, orangutan and tiger projects. Stay tuned for more.

