

Exciting News from the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary

This month has brought us some exciting news from the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Indonesia! On December 5th, Andalas (the centre's young male, who was born at the Cincinnati Zoo and later transferred to Indonesia) successfully bred with Ratu, one of the sanctuary's young female rhinos, for the first time.

There have been just three Sumatran rhinos born in captivity during the past century, all at the Cincinnati Zoo. Andalas was the first, followed by his sister, Suci, who still lives in Cincinnati, and brother Harapan, who now resides at the White Oak Conservation Centre in Florida.

With the unfortunate death of Emi (mother to all three youngsters) earlier this year, the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary is now home to the only potential breeding pairs of Sumatran rhinos in captivity anywhere in the world. Although behaviourally normal, Torgamba, the SRS's older male, is suspected to be infertile, leaving Andalas as our best hope for breeding this Critically Endangered species in captivity.

Over the past year, Andalas's vets and keepers have been working to introduce him to the females at the sanctuary – Ratu, Rosa and Bina. During these initial introductions, Andalas seemed very unsure of how to

behave, and when in doubt, tended to be aggressive. But after numerous socialization sessions, in which the male and female rhino are fed together on opposite sides of a gate and then gradually allowed to interact at their own pace, Andalas – with some guidance from Ratu, an older and more experienced rhino – learned what to do.

As you can see from these photos of the twosome, typical rhino courtship behaviour includes chasing, nudging, and sharing a relaxing wallow in the mud.

All of us are hoping that the New Year will bring us welcome news of a Sumatran rhino pregnancy!

Article and photo: International Rhino Foundation Newsletter



Rhino Protection Units remove nearly 300 snares from Cat Loc in the first three months

Joint patrol units consisting of 8 local community members and 8 rangers from the Forest Protection Department have removed 295 snares from the core zone of Cat Loc, habitat of the last remaining Javan Rhinoceros in Vietnam. The majority of the snares are placed in traplines to target animals such as Muntjac, Wild Pig and Pheasants but more than 30 of these snares were of large size, capable of trapping animals like Rhino, Gaur and Bear. All snares were removed from the forest and destroyed along with three hunters' camps found by the rangers.

The removal of snares from Cat Loc and general increase in enforcement in the area is providing enhanced protection for the park's biodiversity. Rangers and local community members recorded tracks and signs of Gaur, Rhino, Wild Pig and Buff-cheeked Crested Gibbon on multiple occasions on each patrol.

October also marks the beginning of an intensive survey of Cat Loc for Javan Rhino. WWF have brought in conservation detection dogs from the United States which have been trained to find Javan Rhino dung, with the aim of collecting multiple dung samples from every individual. The survey will last 6 months; DNA and hormonal analysis will then be conducted to determine population size, sex ratio and hopefully investigate breeding condition and stress levels. This survey and analysis is supported by WWF, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, International Rhino Foundation. DNA analysis will be conducted by Queens University, Ontario and hormonal analysis by the Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society London.

You can follow the progress on this survey through a personal blog: <http://rhinomania.blogspot.com/>.