

Manas National Park. At least three large meetings per year are held with local parties, including the Bodo Territorial Council, to continue to engender support for IRV 2020. Additionally, local community members are hired for any employment opportunities that arise, including construction of the fence along the southern border of the park.

With a program as significant as the rhino translocations in Assam it is critical to communicate the correct information on the program to all constituencies, in particular, via the media. The IRV 2020 has a Communications Strategy which will guide these interactions, with a short-term aim of at least three major stories per year about post-translocation events. Because of the sensitivity of the moves, the Government of Assam will closely manage

media coverage of the first translocations, and will organize press conferences for releases of print and photographic coverage.

This is the second grant awarded to the ARP from the Taronga Conservation Society Australia. The support from Taronga Zoos has been outstanding with funding last year for a rhino rescue program around Kaziranga National Park and the Vision 2020 program this year. Taronga Zoos also supports ARP through professional support of Dr Benn Bryant to the ARP Veterinary Support Team and the whole of the ARP NSW Branch are Taronga Western Plains Zoo staff. This valuable support is greatly appreciated and goes a long way to helping us help the rhinos. Thank you!

## Javan Rhinos Share Wallow Holes: Impact of Climate Change?

Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) in Ujung Kulon National Park, Banten-Indonesia are known as solitary mammals, for the tendency of these animals to roam individually (except during mating season, or when nurturing the young calves). However, the recent finding from video trap equipment is not consistent with the above view. During the months of September and October, the survey teams were perplexed by the occurrences of several video clips from different parts of rhino habitat in Ujung Kulon National Park that show two male rhinos wallowing together as a "pair" (at the same time in the same wallow holes). Other than pairs of mother and calf, this "communal" wallowing behavior of male rhinos was never previously recorded; thus adding on to the list of activities (ethogram) comprising the behavior of the Javan rhinoceros.

Further investigation in the field revealed that during this period (the dry season) many of the wallow holes, as well as any sources of water are depleted. Some of the wallow holes are completely dry, rendering the spot useless for rhino wallow. Previous observations indicate that wallowing is a major requirement in rhino's daily life, so wallow holes / water depletion would force the rhinos to find alternative sites for wallowing. Is this an example of climate impact on rhino's habitat? No one can know for sure, but climate modeling and prediction calculated by a team from Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) showed a

tendency of drier climate in Ujung Kulon National Park for the next ten years. Drier climate would mean more severe water and wallow holes depletions in the Javan rhino habitat, and consequently we could predict higher occurrences of such "communal" wallowing. Therefore, this behavior can potentially be used as an indicator of climate change impact on the behavior of the rhinos.

The next question from derived this finding is: how will the water and wallow hole shortage affect the well being of the rhino in terms of stress level and other physiological effects? Hormonal assay from feces, as well as the study of water deprivation using animal model are being discussed to provide more insight to anticipate and prevent harmful effects to the endangered javan rhinoceros.

Article: Adhi Rachmat Hariyadi – WWF Indonesia  
Photo: Ujung Kulon NP – WWF Indonesia

