

“ 10,000 miles and 63 hours by plane, truck and ferry. ”

## ANDALAS<sup>2</sup>: Second-generation rhino poised to make contribution

In 1984 a group of scientists, zoologists and conservationists joined together and formed the Sumatran Rhino Trust, an agreement bridging several countries and symbolising the hope for an entire species. Sadly the Sumatran rhinoceros captive breeding effort that was a product of this concord would struggle for the next 27 years even as the first calf, Andalas, was born to parents Ipuh and Emi at the Cincinnati Zoo.

**Drs Robin W. Radcliffe, Dedi Candra, and Andriansyah**  
Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary

**T**wo more calves would follow Andalas before mother Emi, the only female to conceive in captivity and produce offspring, died this past year. This leaves only four of the original 42 rhinos captured in the 1980s still living. Yet hope remains. Andalas represents a level of collaboration that most zoos and conservation organisations can only strive for – to contribute with a direct impact back to the country of origin. This type of global collaboration is essential if conservation of a species such as the Sumatran rhino is to be realised.

The name Andalas comes from the ancient Indonesian word for the island of Sumatra. It is here, back on Indonesia's biggest island, where a new generation is beginning. In 2007 at the age of five and a half, Andalas made the historic journey to the other side of the world, a trip that spanned more than 10,000 miles and 63 hours by plane, truck and ferry. More than two years later, in the early morning hours of 5 December 2009, Andalas mated for the first time with the sanctuary female named Ratu. Although Ratu did not conceive on this breeding, or even on the one that followed on Christmas Day, the stage is now set for a pregnancy at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary located within the rainforests of Way Kambas National Park. It is a long time coming.

This marks the first time that a second generation Sumatran rhinoceros has moved around the world and begun to breed a new family of rhinoceros. With the wild population suffering persistent declines even as Rhino Protection Units (RPU) patrol the forests, ever more hope rides on the captive breeding effort. It would be naive to believe that the rhino can be saved in a zoo. Rather, in the years ahead, the captive Sumatran rhino programme will need to be integrated more closely into the field conservation efforts for the wild population rather than stand apart from it. In addition to their primary mission of propagating more offspring for eventual reintroduction back into the wild, the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary could serve other equally important roles. The rhinos represent a valuable resource for learning through scientific research including health and disease investigation, reproductive study, nutritional evaluation that may benefit other captive browsing rhinos and the testing of monitoring systems such as the application of radio-telemetry. The Sanctuary has already helped to train RPU teams in rhino track identification and field behaviour. The rhinos at the Sanctuary are also ambassadors that will help educate people, both children and adults, about the rhino and the rainforest.

### Thanks

We would like to thank the BBC Wildlife Fund (£5,000), Chester Zoo (£4,019) and the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation (£10,000) very much indeed for their grants to the SRS during 2009. The BBC Wildlife Fund gave another £5,000 to the SRS in 2010, together with £15,000 for the RPU programme.

If the Sumatran rhinoceros is to survive it will take more than captive breeding – it will take all of our collective efforts to protect the wild rhinos and their habitat, along with reintroduction efforts to restore captive animals back into formerly productive areas. Andalas is one very small and positive step toward reaching that goal. It is time that the Sumatran rhino made a real comeback and Andalas is ready to do his part.

IMAGES: SUMATRAN RHINO SANCTUARY



Andalas during his long journey from Cincinnati Zoo to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in February 2007.

