

**Project MYR-58**

**A Conservation Management Study of Hunted Wildlife in Sarawak**  
WWF-Malaysia Expenditure 1984/85 — M\$107,520 (US\$44,246)

**Project Executants:** Dr Jules Caldecott, Mr Adrian Nyooi.

A variety of wild animals are hunted by the rural peoples of Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo) as their major source of protein. Logging and clearing of the forest for agriculture has depleted wild stocks at a time when the population is expanding. This study aims to assess hunting pressures on the main species involved — sam-bhur deer, wild pig and mousedeer — and to recommend measures for future hunting practice on a sustainable yield basis compatible with the conservation of wild stocks. First results indicate that over 100 million dollars' worth of game meat is consumed annually in the State.

**Project MYR-63**

**Conservation Management Study of Proboscis Monkey in Sarawak (NW Borneo)**  
WWF-Malaysia Expenditure 1984/85 — M\$72,500 (US\$29,835)

**Project Executant:** Dr E. Bennett.

The proboscis monkey is found only in Borneo where it is restricted to coastal swamps and riverine habitats. Hunted and disturbed by forest clearing, they have been eliminated from many areas. Little is known of the requirements of this endangered species and the aim of this project is to study the small protected population in the Samunsam Wildlife Sanctuary with a view to making recommendations for their long-term survival throughout Sarawak. This project is partly funded by the New York Zoological Society.

**Project MYR-61**

**Development of Conservation Areas in Sabah, North Borneo**  
WWF-Malaysia Expenditure 1984/85 — M\$123,000 (US\$50,617)

**Project Executant:** Dr Junaidi Payne.

**Participating Organization:** Sabah Forest Department.

**Objectives:** To continue efforts to develop Tabin Wildlife Reserve and to protect its rhinoceroses. Surveys of rhinos, orang utans and small conservation areas elsewhere.

Sabah, one of the thirteen states in the Federation of Malaysia, occupies the northern part of the island of Borneo. Major features of interest include evergreen tropical forests of extraordinary floral and faunal diversity, and Mount Kinabalu (4050 m), the tallest mountain in southeast Asia. Sabah's wealth and development has come about as a result of exploitation of the native hardwoods, mainly trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae, a major component of the biologically rich lowland forests.

During 1979-81, WWF-Malaysia assisted the Sabah Forest Department in conducting a state-wide faunal survey (IUCN/WWF Project 1692), which resulted in suggestions for several new conservation areas, primarily for large mammals. A followup project (IUCN/WWF Project 3050) was able to establish that the Asian two-horned rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) can live and breed in selectively logged forest, and that the species is endangered in Sabah because of poaching and forest clearance for agriculture. This project saw the gazettelement under new legislation of Tabin Wildlife Reserve (120,521 ha) for the rhinoceros and Asian elephant, and of Kulamba Wildlife Reserve (see separate Project MYR-62). WWF-Malaysia continues in Project MYR-61 to provide the services of an experienced biologist to the Sabah Forest Department. Development of Tabin Wildlife Reserve



*A young female Sumatran rhino. It is hoped to save this very rare species through a captive breeding programme.*  
*Photo: IUCN/Nico van Strien*

is of highest priority, together with several other projects related to development of conservation areas in north Borneo.

Tabin Reserve has been, and continues to be, selectively logged for large trees of the family dipterocarpaceae. In the long-term, this activity should be beneficial for all the large mammals present, in providing more food plants, but it has the unfortunate effect of facilitating access for poachers, a very serious threat to the rhinos. The Wildlife Section of the Sabah Forest Department, although chronically understaffed, has been helped under another WWF Project (No 1972) to protect Tabin's rhinos, with the donation of funds for two vehicles for Wildlife Rangers to patrol the region.

Since 1983, there has been much discussion in Sabah on the merits or otherwise of captive breeding of the Asian two-horned rhinoceros as part of a species conservation plan. Although the WWF-Malaysia project executive has provided information on the status and distribution of this species, both within Tabin and where individuals are isolated and doomed outside of protected areas, WWF-Malaysia has not been involved directly with these discussions. Late in 1985, the Sabah government formed a high level committee to assess methods and direct work for conservation of the rhinoceros. At the time of writing (December 1985), no firm decisions had been made, but it is hoped that if captive breeding proceeds, it can be linked closely with protection of Tabin and its wild rhinos. A management plan for the Reserve has been drafted, but publication awaits further clarification on its relationship with the captive breeding project.

Evidence of rhinos has been reported from several parts of central Sabah, separate from Tabin but all within contiguous Forest Reserve, probably representing a small, scattered but viable population.

A start has been made on a survey of orang utan distribution in Sabah by helicopter surveys of nests. This technique, originally used by Forest Department and WWF-Malaysia personnel in the neighbouring state of Sarawak, was used in five separate areas in Sabah through a generous donation of flying time by the Royal Malaysian Air Force. The surveys confirmed results from ground surveys, and indicate curious localized gaps in the species' distribution, not clearly related to habitat or human presence. It is hoped that survey work can continue once a Sabahan candidate has been located to carry out the project. As a general comment, orang utans are widely distributed and not endangered at present, but areas with known highest densities tend to be either small Reserves or land allocated for agriculture.

Several different areas of conservation interest have been visited, such as Gomantong Caves, home of about 1 million bats and 2 million swiftlets. It is hoped that access and visitor facilities can be improved. This would be beneficial for educational purposes, for development of tourism, and for prospects for long-term conservation of Sabah's especially varied flora and fauna.