

## STATUS OF THE SUMATRAN RHINO IN SABAH

by

Mahedi Andau

Current Rhino habitat : Two areas in Sabah have already been identified as important areas containing breeding populations of Rhino namely, the Tabin Wildlife reserve (120,521 ha) and the Danum valley conservation area (42,255 ha). Another new area which may contain a breeding population is the Maliau basin area including part of the Kuamut forest reserve. New sightings of at least two Rhinos were reported in the Kulamba Wildlife reserve but more surveys are required to determine the status of the rhino there.

Surveys of the south western part of Sabah adjoining the Kalimantan border were also carried out in late 1989 and early 1990 to determine the presence of rhinos but unfortunately none have as yet been found.

The Tabin wildlife reserve is now being established with a MR 3,000,000.00 grant from the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) which would provide for an office and staff quarters at Tabin, upgrading of the access road and purchase of two 4-WD vehicles and two motorcycles for monitoring and patrolling of the reserve. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) has also provide technical aid in providing a consultant/reserve manager for Tabin for a 2-year period. It is therefore hoped that a proper management plan can be drawn up for Tabin Wildlife Reserve to ensure proper protection and conservation of the rhinos there and that the experience gained can be applied to management of other important rhinos areas in Sabah.

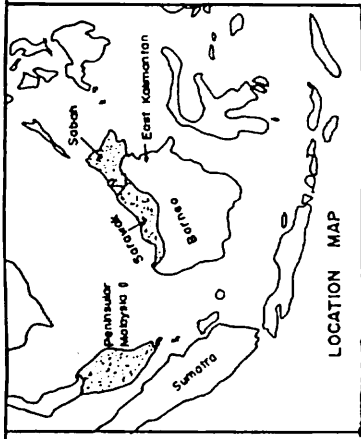
### Captive Breeding Programme:

The capture programme for rhinos in Sabah is guided by two factors, namely, that the habitat clearly cannot be preserved and that the rhino is in immediate danger of being poached. Sabah now have 3 rhinos in captivity at our facilities in Sepilok in Sandakan. The breeding programme have not actually started because we have two adult males but one immature female.

The rhinos, however, have proved to be extremely useful in educating the local visitors particularly in convincing them of the false belief that the horn is an aphrodisiac. The myth of the rare Sumatran Rhino and its valuable medicinal value is somehow dispelled by the sight of the "ugly" animal !

The Wildlife Department hopes to be able to do translocation of "doomed" rhinos directly to the Tabin Wildlife Reserve but not until certain problems such as habituation of the animal to the area, security and actual monitoring of the animal upon release is worked out.

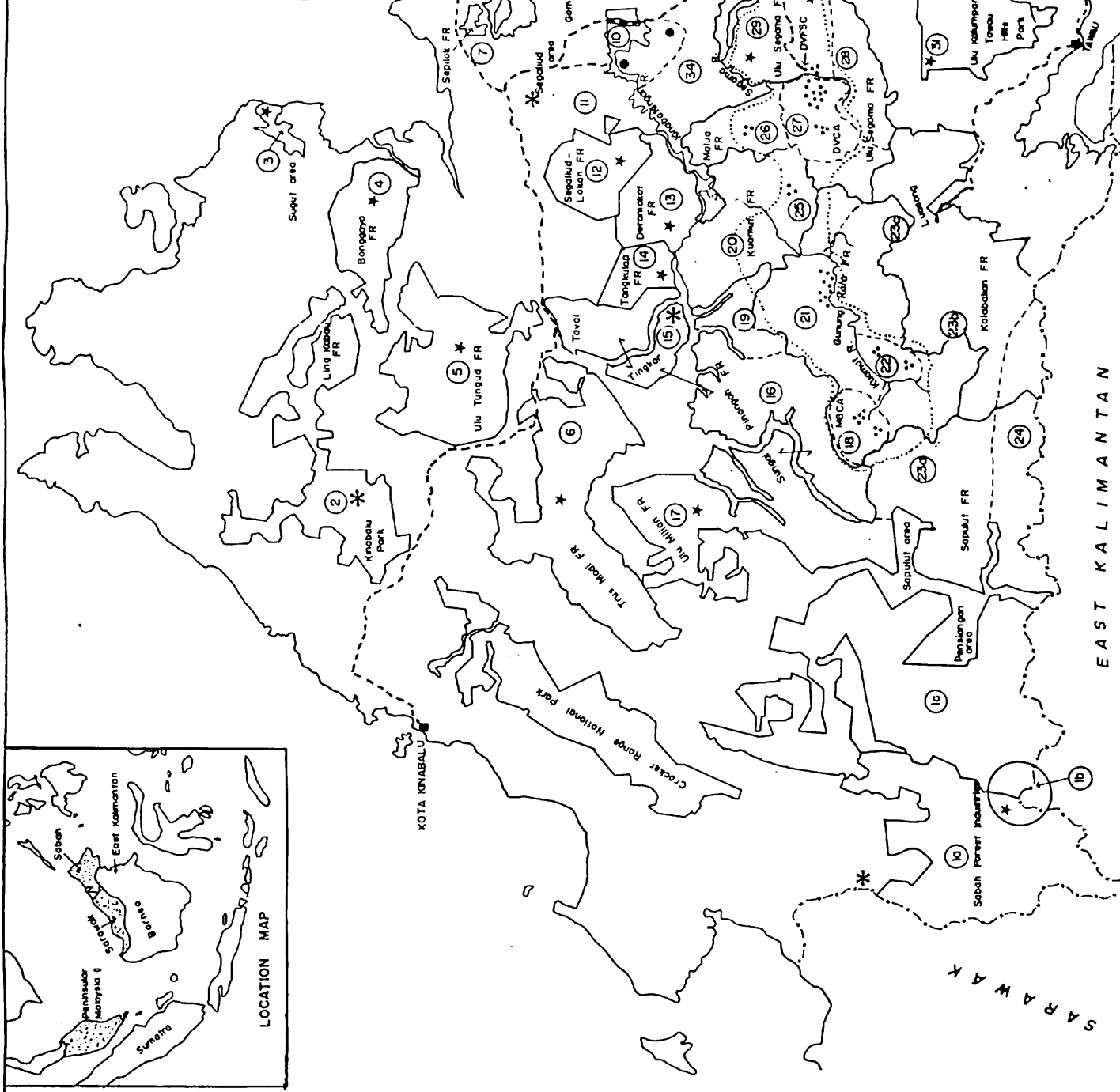
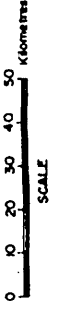
Map 2. MAJOR FOREST AREAS AND OCCURRENCE OF THE ASIAN TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS IN SABAH



**Key**

- Rhinos present and part of major breeding population (dots do not represent precise numbers or distribution of rhinos)
- Rhinos outside the permanent forest estate
- ★ Rhinos present in these areas, but numbers and distribution unknown
- \* Locations where rhinos present in 1960's but now extinct
- International and interstate boundary
- Main permanent roads in regions where rhinos exist
- Boundaries of main Reserves and Parks in Sabah's permanent forest estate
- Boundaries between Forest Reserves
- ① Area described in text
- Arbitrary divisions between areas described in the text
- ~ Rivers which form partial barriers to movement within rhino populations
- Approximate extent of Ulu Segama - Kuamut rhinoceros population, based on available data, February 1990

DVCA Danum Valley Conservation Area  
 DVFSC Danum Valley Field Studies Centre  
 FR Forest Reserve  
 MBCA Maliau Basin Conservation Area



EAST KALIMANTAN

SARAWAK