

CONSERVATION HOTLINE

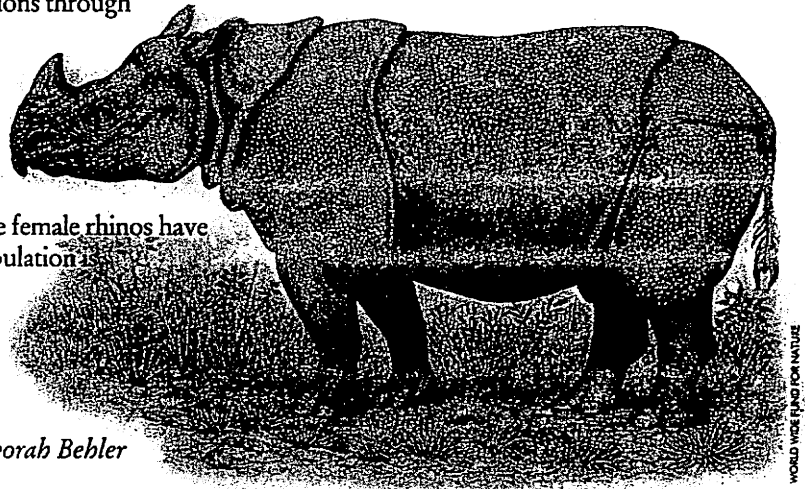
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Javan Rhinos Expose Themselves

RANTAU, FLAT TOP, AND IBU ARE THREE OF 26 JAVAN RHINOS THAT HAVE TAKEN THEIR own photographs in Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park, the species' last stronghold. Mike Griffiths has been surveying the reserve's rhinos with automatically triggered cameras for the World Wide Fund for Nature and Indonesia's Department of Conservation since January 1991. Griffiths had already been using the technique for about five years, but setting up the 40 camera units in Ujung Kulon was particularly difficult. The equipment had to be backpacked to selected locations through forest and dense bamboo thickets during the height of the monsoon season. In addition, dampness seriously affected the film and electronic components.

Nevertheless, Griffiths has been able to identify the sexes of the adults and has gotten photos of some of the park's other residents—banteng, wild dogs, leopards, and barking deer, to name a few. Three of the female rhinos have been accompanied by calves, which may mean the population is still growing. Rising numbers may provide argument for establishing a second group of Javan rhinos in former habitat on Sumatra.

Source: Mike Griffiths, WWF-Indonesia



Deborah Behler

Roadblock in Quebec Dam Project

Quebec's plans to start the second phase of the James Bay hydroelectric project, including the flooding of the Great Whale River basin, have been postponed following New York Governor Mario Cuomo's announcement on March 27 that the state was cancelling a proposed 20-year, \$19.5 billion contract to buy electricity from the province. Cuomo said his decision was based on economics and not environmental concerns; the state would spend less through energy conservation and use of natural gas.

Jeffrey Wollock—executive director of the James Bay Defense Coalition, an alliance of environmental, native, and energy efficiency organizations in New York—called Cuomo's decision a "big victory for ethical decision-making in New York energy policy. But this is a victory for just one aspect of the fight."

Officials of Hydro-Quebec, the government-owned utility, said the project would ultimately continue. If completed, the James Bay Project would destroy 11 major rivers and affect a wilderness area the size of France. In addition to the environmental impact, the project would alter the way of life of some 12,000 Cree Indians and 6,000 Inuits living in the area.

Following the Cuomo cancellation, Lise Bacon, Quebec Energy Minister, attacked the native peoples, whose leaders have fought the project. "I blame them for discrediting Quebec all over the world," she said. "The territory that they claim is theirs is still ours. We haven't given it up yet."

To voice your opinion of the James Bay hydroelectric project, write to Direction Generale de la Resource Faunique, Place de la Capitale 150 East, St. Cyrille Blvd., Quebec City, Canada G1R 4Y1.

Sources: Jeffrey Wollock, James Bay Defense Coalition; New York Times; Ottawa Citizen; Washington Post

Steven D. Mirsky