

generations to come. Rhino Linings looks forward to and encourages others to seek involvement with the Black Rhino Foundation. For more information, contact Rhino Linings USA, Dept. SI, 9537 Candida St, San Diego, CA 92126. (800) 447.1471.

GENETIC DIFFERENCES IN RHINOS COMPLICATE CONSERVATION EFFORT

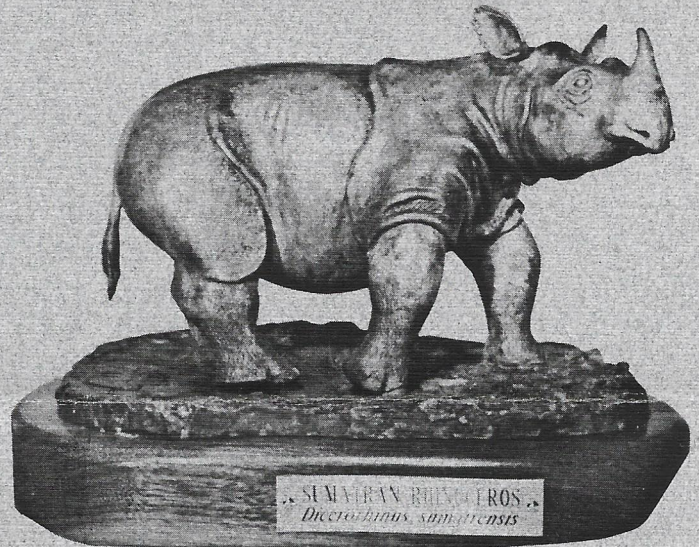
by Les Line [New York Times, 1997]

Saving the Sumatran rhino is one of the more challenging tasks facing wildlife conservationists. Geneticists have confirmed that one of the animal's scattered populations is significantly different from the others and needs its own rescue effort. The remnants of the Borneo population, numbering 70 animals concerns scientists at Columbia University. Taxonomists recognized the Bornean rhinos as a separate subspecies in 1965, based on physical characteristics like skull shape. Some scientists say the outlook for the Sumatran rhinos is so bleak that any differences should be ignored and all of the species' populations managed as a single conservation unit.

But, Dr. Don Melnick, an evolutionary geneticist, director of the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation at Columbia disagrees. "If the remaining rhinos on Borneo are not bought into an area of sufficient size and habitat quality and protected against poachers, we will lose a unique part of the genetic heritage of this species." He said interbreeding Bornean rhinos with relatives from Sumatra or the Malay peninsula could produce offspring, ill-suited to survive and reproduce in the wild. An earlier genetic study by Melnick and a colleague resolved a long-running dispute among scientists over the classification of rhinos. They showed that the Sumatran rhino was closely related to the African species rather than to the one-horned Asian species as some authors had argued.

Though the Sumatran rhino is not the rarest of the species (that honor goes to the Javan rhino, of which only 75 or so survive, mostly in the relative security of Ujung Kolon National Park in western Indonesia), the Sumatran is more critically endangered because of its fragmented and poorly protected population. The island of Sumatra has the largest number of rhinos, but the animals are found in widespread pockets and poachers are active even in areas where wildlife protection staff are present. Even habitat loss is not as serious a threat as poaching. All

efforts to breed the Sumatran rhino in zoo captivity have failed. Thirty-nine animals have been captured, 21 have died and not one calf has been produced. "Saving wild populations in their native habitats and galvanizing local communities to help should be conservationists' priority," says Melnick.



DON'T TAN..... BRONZE! A reminder that Susan Beatie has a limited edition (30 each) of the five existing species of rhinos. Scale: 1 inch = 1 foot. The bronzes are mounted on walnut bases which have a recessed turntable to encourage touching and turning the animals. Contact Susan directly. 10025 El Camino Real #8, Atascadero, Ca 93422. (805) 466.5389.

Got \$50,000 in your mattress? A man from Massachusetts has 120 rhino sculptures, collected over the past 20 years. Each one-of-a-kind and an object of art. Included in the collection is a Chinese cloisonné piece from the late 1800's, a papier maché by Bustamonte and numerous jade, crystal, glass, ivory, bronze, pottery, semi-precious stones, lead, leather, wood, etc. If you dare to inquire, contact Mel Prenovitz, Tremont on the Common, 151 Tremont Street - 22P, Boston, MA 02111-1120. (617) 482.4505.

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