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Harry's Incredible Adventure International Rhino Foundation

By Bill Konstant

Harapan, ('Harry' to his keepers), the last of three Sumatran rhinos born at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, was sent to his native Indonesia late last year, the final pages in the North American chapter of an international managed breeding program for this critically endangered species. Harapan's voyage focuses the spotlight on international efforts to ensure the Sumatran rhino's survival, which will likely require every tool in the conservation tool chest.

Through Bowling for Rhinos and related fundraising activities, the American Association of Zoo Keepers contributes significantly each year to anti-poaching programs in Indonesia. Via the International Rhino Foundation, these funds support Rhino Protection Units (RPU) managed by Yayasan Badak Indonesia (YABI; the Rhino Foundation of Indonesia), a non-governmental organization that assists government patrols in three national parks. Two of the parks - Bukit Barisan Selatan and Way Kambas - are located in southern Sumatra and may harbor between one-half and two-thirds of the world's remaining Sumatran rhinos, currently estimated to number no more than 100 animals in the wild. RPUs are also active in Java's Ujung Kulon National Park, the world's last stronghold for the critically endangered Javan rhino, of which approximately 60 animals are believed to survive. In addition to

wild Sumatran rhinos, Way Kambas National Park is also home to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS), to which Harapan was sent.

Including the recent addition, the SRS holds six Sumatran rhinos:

- ▶ **Andalas**, a breeding male that was born at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden on September 13, 2001 (the first of his kind born in captivity in more than a century) and sent to Way Kambas in 2007;
- ▶ **Ratu**, a rescued wild female (believed to be about 14-years-old) that was successfully bred by Andalas, gave birth to her first calf in 2012 and is once again pregnant, with her second calf expected in May of this year;
- ▶ **Andatu**, Ratu's three-year-old calf born June 23, 2012 and the first of his kind born in captivity in Indonesia;
- ▶ **Bina**, an older wild-caught female (believed to be about 26-years-old) from Bengkulu Province where the species was formerly abundant;
- ▶ **Rosa**, a female of unknown age that was rescued from the forests surrounding Way Kambas when she wandered into a nearby village;
- ▶ **Harapan**, the third calf born in Cincinnati on April 29, 2007 to parents Ipuh and Emi.



Loading Harapan onto the international flight



Rhino keeper Paul Reinhart accompanying Harapan en route to Indonesia



Harapan's crate being unloaded at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary Way Kambas National Park, Indonesia

As the SRS lies within the boundaries of Way Kambas National Park, all of its resident rhinos benefit from regular patrols undertaken by the RPUs. RPUs also monitor and protect other species that share the surrounding forest habitat, such as elephants, tigers and tapirs, all of which are threatened by illegal hunting and trapping. As a result, the Sumatran rhino serves as a flagship species for wildlife conservation in Indonesia, and this program is an excellent example of *meta-population* management, in which captive and field-based programs are integrated in an overall survival strategy.

The successful breeding of Sumatran rhinos in captivity is thanks in large part to the pioneering research in reproductive physiology conducted by Dr. Terri Roth, the Cincinnati Zoo's Vice President of Conservation & Science, Director of its Center for Conservation and Research for Endangered Wildlife, and a member of the International Rhino Foundation's Board of Directors. The expertise of Terri's colleague, rhino keeper Paul Reinhart, has also contributed significantly to breeding efforts in the United States and Indonesia. His presence during transport and at times of impending Sumatran rhino births is considered mandatory.

Harapan's daily care is now the responsibility of a dedicated team of Indonesian rhino keepers and veterinary staff, who ensure the best available husbandry for these special animals. Each of the rhinos at the Sanctuary is maintained in a large natural forest enclosure, in which they can forage and wallow in safety thanks to the presence of the RPUs. In addition, the keepers inspect and bathe their charges daily, as well as provide them with fresh fruits and foliage that have been collected from the surrounding forests, and a variety of commercial produce that helps complete a balanced diet.

Back in the United States, the Greater Cincinnati AAZK Chapter also stepped up to the plate by hosting its inaugural Bowling for Rhinos event this past October and raising more than \$8,500. As with similar funds raised by zoo keepers across the country, a major portion helps support Sumatran and Javan rhino conservation efforts. Bowling for Rhinos dollars also contribute to anti-poaching programs that help protect African black rhinos and white rhinos in Kenya's Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, about which you can read in the April 2016 issue of *Animal Keepers' Forum*. 🐘

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Harapan just out of crate