

INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION



July 31st is World Ranger Day!

It is a time to recognize and celebrate the women, men and even dogs that help keep rhinos safe across the world. Protection is a key component to the International Rhino Foundation's strategy with boots (or paws) on the ground to ensure rhinos thrive in the wild.

You can support rangers on this and every day through some very special ways:

Fill a Ranger's Backpack

\$300 fills a Ranger's backpack for three weeks

This gift will help 'Fill a Ranger's Backpack' and provide the essential supplies needed by Rhino Protection Units such as food, first aid kits, flashlights and other essential equipment that they carry with them for several weeks at a time to keep critically

Adopt a K9

You can help provide care for a K9 ranger and protect rhinos by symbolically adopting an anti-poaching dog, either in your own name or as a gift for a dog or rhino-loving relative or friend.

For each adoption, you'll receive:

- A digital certificate to print

endangered Sumatran and Javan rhinos safe from poachers.

Each backpack donation comes with a digital certificate and shareables for you and your gift recipient if this is a gift.

- A digital photo of your adopted K9 ranger to share on social media
- A bio on your adopted K9 ranger
- An exclusive K9 ranger adoption sticker

Seeing a Javan Rhino

IRF is often asked how long one would need to spend in Ujung Kulon National Park (UKNP) to see a Javan rhino. The answer is that it could take a lifetime. Javan rhinos are shy and tend to hide from people in the dense rainforest that is UKNP. Even members of the Rhino Protection Units (RPU) that patrol the park on a daily basis rarely see the rhino even though they document various signs of their presence.



Because it is so uncommon, spotting a Javan rhino is a special experience and one not soon forgotten. Inov, IRF's Indonesia Program Manager, fondly remembers his chance meeting with the Critically Endangered rhino.

Inov and Bibhab Talukdar, IRF's senior advisor for Asian rhinos, were hiking with an RPU team - a great experience on its own. They had stopped for the evening at an RPU camp and were cleaning up after a hot and humid trek through the jungle. The camp was near one of the rivers that criss-cross the park.

The RPU team asked Inov and Bibhab if they would like to look for rhinos on the river. Javan rhinos love the water and most often are spotted in or near the rivers. There was one challenge - they did not have a boat at the time. This fact, however, did not stop the RPUs.

A makeshift canoe was fastened from available buoyant materials, and paddles were cut from fallen branches. Amazingly, and to the credit of the RPU's knowledge and innovation, the makeshift craft was watertight and took to the river without any flaws.



The river cruise had lasted about an hour and the daylight was beginning to fade. Darkness falls quickly in the jungle. Inov was just suggesting that they turn and head back to the safety of camp. Just then, Bibhab spotted something rustling in the leaves along the river bank.

And, there it was - a Javan rhino! Bibhab was able to alert all of the members of the boat and everyone was able to share the moment before the rhino disappeared into the dense forest. "I had no expectations, and that is important for anyone hoping to see a Javan rhino," said Inov. "It increased the joy of actually seeing one."



Since it is difficult to see Javan rhinos, the best way to see them is by using cameras positioned around the park. Park officials can identify each individual rhino from the camera images and document the sightings and relevant data. IRF, with your help, supports the Javan rhino monitoring program with equipment purchases and other needs.



Camera trap footage of a female Javan rhino and her calf.

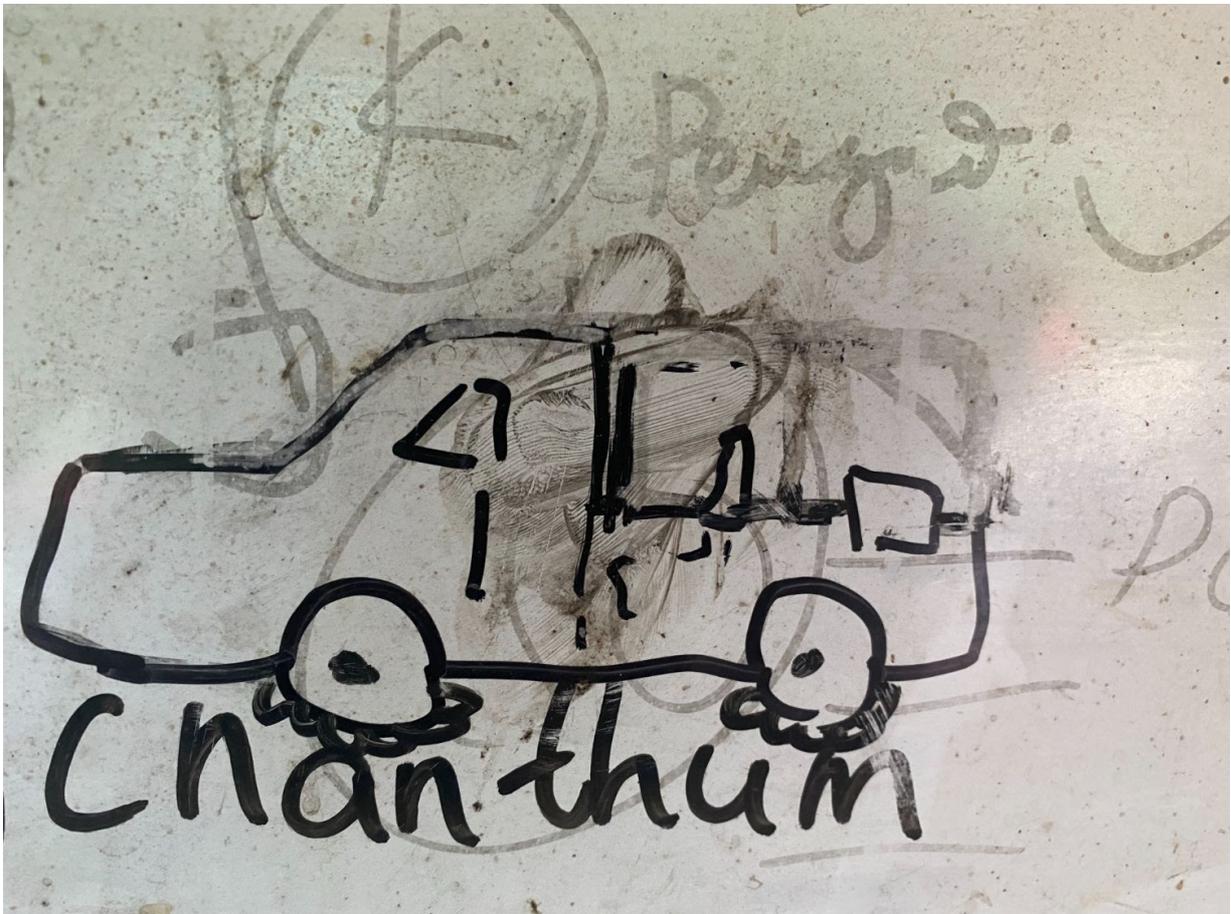
Javan rhino photos are courtesy of the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry.



Drawing and Driving a Truck



Sunandar is secretary of the Farmer Group of Bada Labuhan Ratu 7, a local village that borders Way Kambas National Park in Sumatra, Indonesia. IRF, with our local partner, Indonesian Rhino Initiative (IRI), is working with the farmer group to grow and plant seedlings in the nearby Rawa Kidang restoration site thanks to support from IRF's donors. This is the second site of the larger Way Kambas restoration project which was initiated to restore critical habitat for rhinos and other wildlife that had been degraded due to human encroachment.



He drew the above truck on the whiteboard used to list all of the plants designated for regeneration in this section of rainforest in Way Kambas National Park in Sumatra, Indonesia. He drew the picture in 2020. “I drew the truck as a wish,” he said. “It was something we needed to help the village and to transport seedlings from the nursery to the restoration area.”

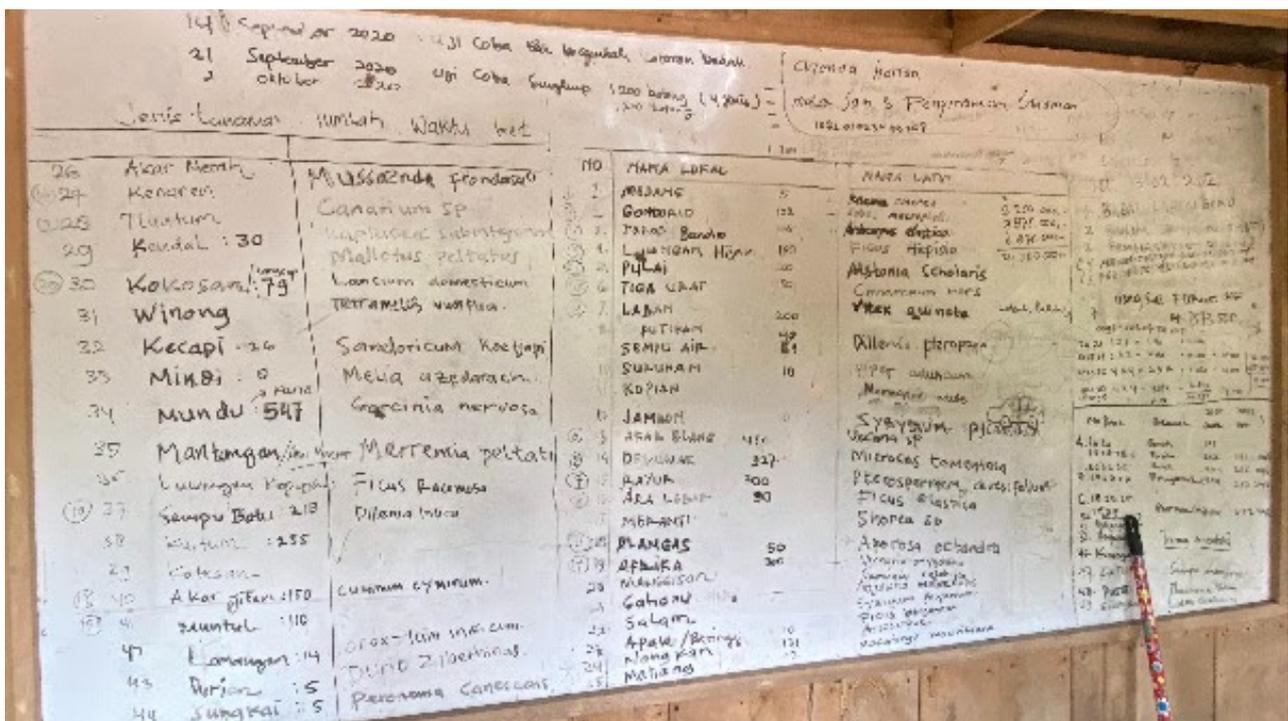
Sunandar did not know at the time that, as part of our community development programs, IRF would ask what other needs the village had. IRI recommended that a truck could help the residents in many ways, including responding to fires in the area, moving people and plants and helping the community get materials to renovation projects designed to improve living conditions for the families.

IRF funded the purchase of this truck for the Farmer’s Group in 2021 and they have put it to good use in many ways, including carrying a variety of plants that have led to the initial successful regeneration of rainforest in the Rawa Kidang area of the park. What was once a degraded grassland is now full of the trees and plants that naturally grow in the Way Kambas ecosystem, and wildlife is already returning to take advantage of the food and shelter now available again.



The number of plants written on the whiteboard has overtaken Sunandar's original drawing, but he does not want to erase it just yet. "It was a dream come true" he says.

Sunandar is following another dream. He is training to become a guide as part of a Way Kambas National Park program. He is learning the layout of the park, the wildlife, and even to speak English. He already understands the importance of the ecosystem and its value to his neighbors and the world.



TEAM RHINO SPOTLIGHT

In each newsletter, the International Rhino Foundation spotlights a different Team Rhino member, sharing the stories of how they became interested in rhinos and became involved in wildlife conservation.



This month, we feature Muhammad Hanif, executive director of the Indonesian Rhino Initiative (IRI).

Hanif founded IRI to support local people living near Sumatran and Javan Rhino habitat, and ensure these communities understand the benefits of conservation and sustainable natural resource management. He works to develop opportunities so community members can benefit from conservation through livelihood programs.

“If people do not know about these amazing animals and the problems they are facing, how can we expect them to do something to help save rhinos?” says Hanif.

Hanif has an impressive background, with past employment in journalism, marketing and conservation. He has a Bachelor’s degree in agriculture and a Masters of Science from the prestigious Institut Pertanian Bogor, known as IPB. He also is no stranger to IRF, since he stepped in as an IRF liaison when Inov took leave to study for his Master’s degree in Australia.

IRI focuses on education and conservation awareness, community and livelihood, and rhino habitat restoration. IRF supports IRI’s efforts working in all three reforestation sites in Way Kambas, as well as their development programs in the surrounding communities.



One locally driven project has already made a difference in protecting habitat for Sumatran rhinos and other wildlife. Most families surrounding the National Park keep livestock to generate income and provide food for their families. As such, the demand for livestock feed is high and often results in resources being taken directly from national park habitat. IRI identified an opportunity to instead utilize the offcut waste generated from local cassava farms to feed the family livestock, using a specially designed processing machine. The people who use the waste and machine have made an agreement to not enter the park to take food for their livestock.

The pilot project has been very successful, with more than 46 members using the processing machine. IRI hopes to expand the project and reach more communities. “The more we do all together, the more people will learn about rhinos,” said Hanif.





IN THE SHOP

Team Rhino is getting an update. Well, at least a new color. You can sport your favorite team and proclaim your passion for rhinos with an all new look. It is now available in a variety of unisex sizes.



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