

Mercy Kill of a Javan Rhino

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BY GABBYWILD

Replica at Zoological Museum, Bogor, Indonesia. Photo by Gabby Wild



In 1914, the last Javan rhinoceros of Preanger (West Java, Indonesia) roamed his lonely forests peacefully munching on leaves, grass, and branches found almost exclusively in Indonesia. He was the sole surviving rhino in the district of Karang-nuggal Tasikmalaya.

The hope of the West Javan population regaining vigor was snuffed out when his mate was killed earlier that year by poachers. Thoughts to transport the rhino from West Java to Ujung Kulon in the far south-west tip of the island where other Javan rhinos remained were not much of an option at that time-veterinary medicine wasn't quite as up to par as it is today in order to make such a mission like that successful.

So the Dutch government, which ruled Indonesia at the time, made a startling move in order to show defiance against the poachers: they decided that if the poachers would somehow find a way to kill the rhino, they would be certain that they killed the rhino first. Why be so hypocritical? To ensure that the body could be preserved for science, not for someone's trophy wall. So, in 1934 the male weighing in at 2280 kg (5,016 lbs. mind your toes) was killed by a single Mauser bullet (cal. 9.3).

His body remains today at the Zoological Museum at Bogor and has been most useful for my own research to preserve his species.



Replica of male Javan rhino Zoological Museum, Bogor, Indonesia. Photo by Gabby Wild

Today this male's relatives in Ujung Kulon National Park are one of the most protected animals in the world. And that is where you can currently find me, working to ensure that this species does not get added to the IUCN list of "extinct".

Stay Wild,

Gabby Wild

<https://gabbywild.org/mercy-kill-of-a-javan-rhino-2/>