



Way Kambas National Park

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

### International Rhino Foundation

Under the leadership of the Government of Indonesia, IRF is working with on-the-ground partners including Way Kambas National Park, local NGO the Indonesian Rhino Initiative (IRI), the University of Lampung and local farmers groups to reforest Sumatran rhino habitat in Way Kambas National Park.

Way Kambas National Park is a lowland rainforest habitat that serves as a refuge for some of the planet's most endangered species, including Sumatran rhinos, tigers, and elephants. However, unlike other national parks in Indonesia, Way Kambas lacks a buffer zone. Approximately 228,000 individuals reside in close proximity to the park's boundaries, relying on the forest for their livelihoods. The neighboring villages are predominantly inhabited by low-income farming families, who earn around \$700 to \$1,000 annually.

These local farmers frequently allow their cattle, goats, and sheep to graze within the park and occasionally intrude upon its territory for hunting or

gathering forest resources to supplement their earnings. Additionally, people resort to igniting fires within the park to drive game out of grasslands.

Due to this persistent encroachment and the resulting deterioration of the habitat, the rhinos, tigers, and elephants of Way Kambas are now confined to a mere 155-square-mile area. This is unsustainable for both the park's wildlife and the nearby human population. If the rainforest vanishes, they stand to lose invaluable ecosystem services and economic opportunities.

Working with the local communities, IRI has hired teams to help plant and maintain three sites within the Park, monitor the sites for illegal activities and remove snares. The community members sign agreements not to encroach into the Park and participate in alternative livelihood opportunities, chosen by the groups, that do not require encroachment. These opportunities include eco-printing fabrics, honeybee agribusiness and cassava



Elephants in Way Kambas National Park

waste processing for livestock feed. The reforestation project has been a success and over 45 different species of wildlife have been recorded visiting the reforestation sites since planting efforts began in 2018.

