

# Sumatran Rhino



Sumatran rhinos are the smallest of the living rhinoceroses and the only Asian rhino with two horns. They are covered with long hair and are more closely related to the extinct woolly rhinos than any of the other rhino species alive today. Calves are born with a dense covering that turns reddish brown in young adults and becomes sparse, bristly and almost black in older animals. Sumatran rhinos compete with the Javan rhino for the unenviable title of most threatened rhino species. While surviving in greater numbers than the Javan rhino, Sumatran rhinos are more threatened by poaching. There is no indication that the population is stable and just two captive females have reproduced in the last 15 years.

The Sumatran rhino once roamed as far away as the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas in Bhutan and eastern India, through Myanmar, Thailand, possibly to Vietnam and China, and south through the Malay Peninsula. Two different subspecies, the western Sumatran and eastern Sumatran, cling for survival on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Experts believe the third subspecies is probably extinct.

## **Protecting the Sumatran Rhino**

The plight of Sumatran rhinos needs global attention and commitments if conservation is to succeed. The science is telling us that we can't put off mounting a serious, concerted effort to save Sumatran rhinos. We have pulled three species of rhino back from the brink, so we know we can do the same for the Sumatran rhino.

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# WHY THEY MATTER

In almost all rhino conservation areas, there are other valuable plants and animals. The protection of rhinos helps protect other species.



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**Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park in Sumatra is thought to have one of the largest populations of Sumatran rhinos.**

## HABITAT LOSS

Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park in Sumatra is thought to have one of the largest populations of Sumatran rhinos, but it is losing forest cover due to conversion for coffee and rice by illegal settlers.

## ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE



### **Medicines containing rhino horn.**

Demand for rhino horn from prosperous Asian communities is escalating. Poaching is a very real threat facing all populations of Sumatran rhino. Rising demand from countries like Vietnam where rhino horn is believed to cure cancer has seen a surge in poaching despite the efforts made by the traditional Chinese medicine community to call on practitioners to stop using rhino parts and products. Investigations by TRAFFIC, the world's largest wildlife trade monitoring network, and WWF reveal that use of rhino horn in traditional medicine still persists in many countries.



## **GENETIC LOSS**

No single Sumatran rhino population is estimated to have more than 75 individuals, making them extremely vulnerable to extinction due to natural catastrophes, diseases, and inbreeding.

## **WHAT WWF IS DOING**



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WWF works to secure a future for Sumatran rhinos and their habitats through a landscape-based approach that goes beyond isolated protected areas. WWF and TRAFFIC, the world's largest wildlife trade monitoring network, monitor the illegal trade in rhino horn, fund antipoaching patrols, and support intelligence networks in strategic locations to prevent exploitation of rhinos for international trade.

## **PROTECTING SUMATRAN RHINO HABITAT**

In Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, the critically endangered population of Sumatran rhinos is threatened by the conversion of forest to cash crops on both the eastern and western sides of the island's central mountain range. WWF works with park officials to collect population data on the rhinos, and with local communities to halt deforestation and preserve and restore natural habitat. We also support antipoaching efforts in the park.

## **STOPPING FOREST CONVERSION**

Surveys by WWF, Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD) and Sabah Foundation (SF) found the largest known Sumatran rhino population on the island of Borneo. Together we run rhino monitoring units to prevent poaching. WWF also works with local landholders, agri-businesses, and the government to stop the conversion of more than 7,722 square miles of forest to oil palm and timber plantations between Kinabatangan and Sebuku Sembakung. The destruction of this forest would likely lead to poaching of the remaining Sumatran rhinos in the area.

