

Operation of Sumatran Rhino Protection Units (RPU) in Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia.

SUMMARY

After the GEF Project on Sumatran Rhino Conservation (1995 – 1998) terminated, operation of the Rhino Protection Unit (RPU), especially in Way Kambas National Park, has continued with the assistance of the USFWS Rhino and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF) and the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) and its grants from the Bowling for Rhino Program of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK).

The 5 RPU in Way Kambas have been successful in preventing poaching of rhino or other wildlife. However, the current politic and economic situation in Indonesia still poses a significant challenge for the conservation of rhino and other wildlife.

The pressure on the natural resources is increasing in all conservation areas in Indonesia, including Way Kambas, while the effectiveness of the Park staff to counter the pressure is being reduced by lack of support from other sectors of Government.

Currently the RPU are the most stable and most effective force in the protection of the NP when confronted with illegal activities. Hence, the RPU need to continue their activities in Way Kambas.

NARRATIVE

1. Statement of Need:

The Sumatran rhinoceros is probably the most endangered species of rhinoceros. Only about 300 are estimated to survive almost entirely in two range states, Indonesia and Malaysia. Moreover, the population has declined at least 60% from 1989 to 1998. Although the numbers of Javan rhinos are even fewer, the combination of the extent and rate of population reduction in the Sumatran renders it the most critical of the species. The cause of the decline is almost entirely poaching for the horn through the use of traps and snares placed in the forest for the rhino. In Indonesia, Sumatran rhino survive in only 4 known locations (Gunung Leuser, Bukit Barisan Selatan, Way Kambas, Kerinci Seblat National Park) as illustrated in the map in Figure 1. Small remnant populations may exist in some areas in central Sumatra and possibly in Berbak NP.

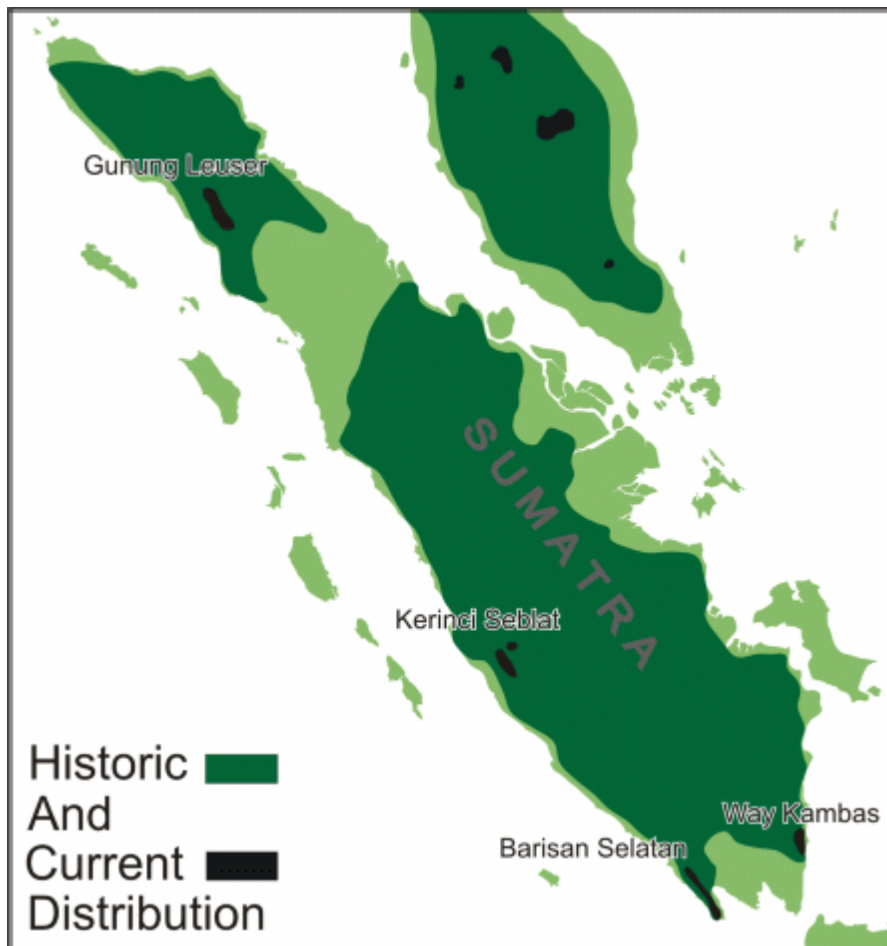


Figure 1: Sumatran rhino distribution in Sumatra and Malaysia

A major project of US \$ 2 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from 1995-1998 provided substantial funds to initiate and catalyze an intensive anti-poaching and community outreach program for the Sumatran rhinoceros in 2 of the 4 major areas for this species in Sumatra: Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park and Kerinci Seblat National Park. Originally, 9 resident rhino protection units had been recruited, trained, and deployed.

However, surveys and analysis in the course of the project have revealed somewhat different distributions and more intense poaching of rhinos than believed at the outset of the project. Hence there was need to add additional Sumatran rhino protection units and to establish RPU in Way Kambas National Park which has been confirmed to contain a sizable rhino population which may be the third largest in Indonesia (after Bukit Barisan Selatan and Gunung Leuser).

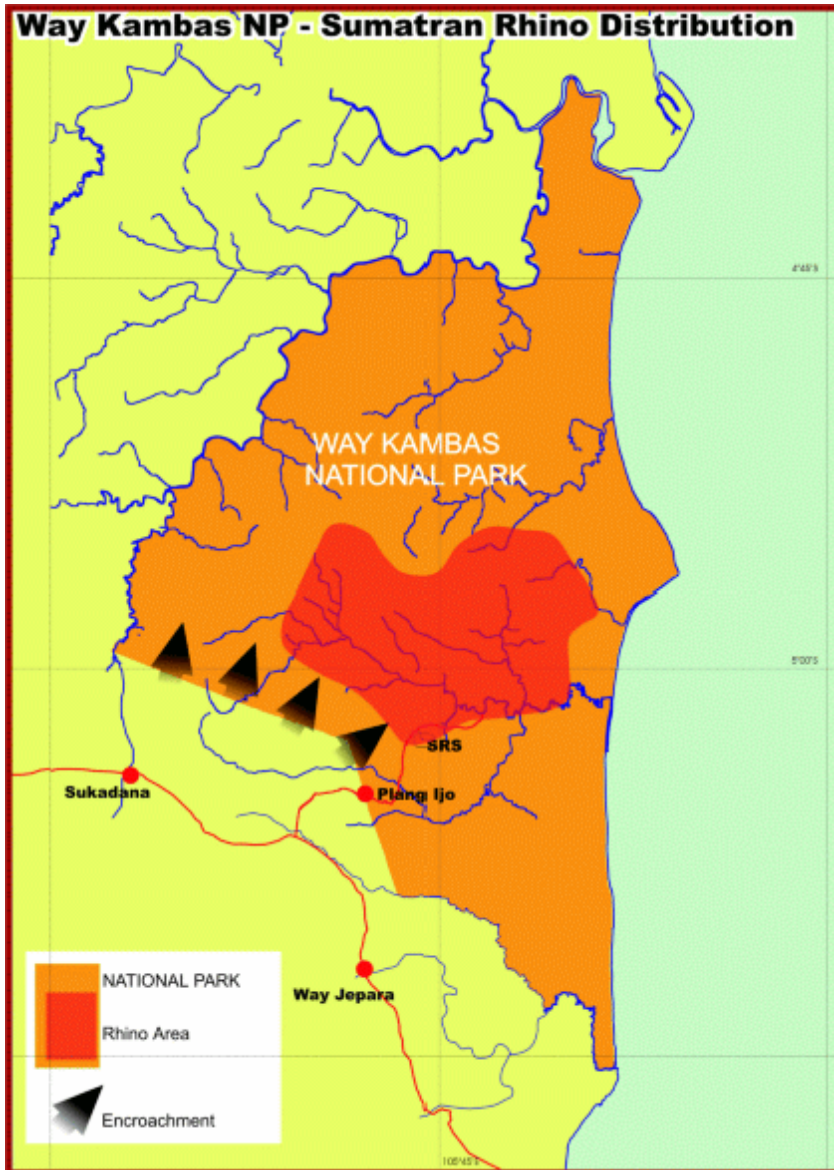


Figure 2: Sumatran rhino distribution in Way Kambas NP

With the assistance of a Grant (14-48-98210-97-G070) from the USFWS Rhino and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF), it was possible to establish and operate another 3 RPUs in the Program specifically for deployment in Way Kambas. Subsequently 2 more units were added for Way Kambas in 1999 (14-48-98210-99-G352) and 2002 (98210-1-G848) respectively with support of the RTCF. Continued operation of the 5 RPUs in 2003-2004 was supported by Grant 98210-1-G485

The RPUs in Way Kambas have been very successful in preventing any poaching of rhinos, and so far no poaching specifically targeting rhino has been recorded, though poaching for meat and sport is increasing in Way Kambas. With the current 5 RPU teams the rhino area in the center of the Park (See *figure 2*) can be covered adequately. To provide additional protection of the wildlife two Tiger Protection Units (TPUs) have been added to the program with funds from the Sumatran Tiger Program. These units will concentrate on the Northern part of the Park.

Over the last two years massive encroachment has occurred along the Southern boundary of the park, by villagers falsely claiming traditional land rights. So far the authorities have not responded to this infringement and if unchallenged it's likely that people will settle across the park borders in other places as well. To date, the areas encroached, about 10-15 % of the Park area, are not suitable for rhino, but the infringements are moving closer and closer to the rhino habitat. Furthermore the new settlements are points of departure for poachers and loggers that penetrate now far into the interior of the Park.

To summarize the results:

- An intensive protection zone has been established for Sumatran rhino in Way Kambas.
- 5 rhino protection units of 4 members each, each led by a team leader and supervised by a field coordinator, have been established and are operating in Way Kambas.
- Since the establishment of the RPUs, there had been no sign of rhino poached, and after some cases of successful tiger poaching in the first years, no recent tiger poaching events have been found. Throughout the Park infringements and poaching of other wildlife is common.
- Outreach activities are conducted informally and opportunistically.
- The intensive and extensive intelligence collecting program which has been which was established in 2001 continues to function well, and several court cases for wildlife crimes have been initiated.
- The RPUs and SRS in Way Kambas have indeed combined to form an integrated and intensive management zone for Sumatran rhino in Way Kambas.

In summary, the RPUs have been very successful in protecting the rhino in Way Kambas. However, the political instability and economic problems in Indonesia are significantly increasing the challenge for rhino and other wildlife conservation. Encroachment, illegal logging, hunting and forest produce extraction are increasing and the management capability is decreasing because of the reductions in government budgets and uncertainty about the ongoing reorganization of the government. The pressure on the natural resources is increasing in all conservation areas in Indonesia including Way Kambas, while the effectiveness of the Park staff to counter the pressures is being reduced by lack of support from other sectors of government.

Currently the RPU's are the most stable and most effective force in the protection of the National Parks, as regular Park staff is severely restricted and are often unable or unwilling to act when confronted with illegal activities. Hence, the RPU's need to continue their activities in Way Kambas indefinitely.

2. Project Goals and Objectives

Goals

Protection of Sumatran Rhino population and their habitat in Way Kambas National Park

Objectives

- Deploy 5 teams of 4 members, 3 of which to be funded by the RTCF, to intensively patrol the IPZ for intruders and traps.
- Maintain and expand the intensive protection zone (IPZ) for Sumatran rhino already in Way Kambas National Park, which has a resident population of 40+ rhino.
- Continue coordination with the managed breeding center in Way Kambas to create an integrated intensive management area for Sumatran rhino that can be a model for other IPZs for this species elsewhere in Indonesia and Malaysia.
- Serve as a secure IPZ for unprotectable rhino that can be translocated from other areas to the Way Kambas IPZ.
- Continue to be the primary training center for new Sumatran rhino RPU's, including anti-poaching teams from other programs such as the Tiger Patrol Units for the Sumatran Rhino Program and Orangutan Patrol Units for FFI planned for January 2003

3. Project Activities, Methods and Timetable :

- **Project Activities include:**
 - Operational of RPU's (patrols, apprehension of suspects, destruction of traps/snares, intelligence operations, community outreach).
 - Program management (database management)

- **Methods:**

The existing RPU's will continue their activities (patrols, apprehension of suspects, destruction of traps/snares, intelligence operations, community outreach) according to the Protocol for Operational Procedures on file at the USFWS RTCF Office. There will be an attempt to increase their number of patrol days and to engage more in intelligence operations.

4. Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement :

- There are some different programs of NGOs operated directly or indirectly to support the conservation effort in Way Kambas National Park.
- In order to compliance all activities with The Management Plan, National Park Management has to coordinate all stakeholder's, as an integrated one.
- Coordination of activities has been discussed since in the planning process, in the implementation and in the evaluation.

5. Anticipated Benefit and Outputs :

- 5 anti-poaching teams (RPUs) that can concentrate on patrols in an increased area to interdict intruders and destroy traps.
- Prevention/elimination of any traps and intrusions in the rhino areas of Way Kambas.
- Effective protection of the rhinos currently free-ranging in Way Kambas.
- Better protection for the other wildlife, especially large mammals (e.g. tiger) in Way Kambas.
- Creation of a secure haven (the IPZ) where unprotectable rhino from other locations might be concentrated on the model of consolidating rhinos into sanctuaries and IPZs in Africa.
- Training of anti-poaching teams from other areas and programs.

6. Project Monitoring and Evaluation :

The IRCP Staff will conduct reviews of the patrol reports of the rhino protection units every 3 months. There will be greater 12-month reviews supervised by IRF and AsRSG Program staff.

7. Sustainability :

IRF/AsRSG are committing core funds to the RPUs for at least the next 3 years. Moreover, IRF/AsRSG has developed a partnership with the WWF-Indonesia program that has been committed to providing totally \$47,500 for the RPU Program July 2004 through June 2007 (FY2004 : 8,500 USD; FY2005 : 15,000 USD; FY2006 : 15,000 USD; FY2007 : 9,000 USD).

Until other sources of funds become a reality, the IRF/AsRSG is again requesting assistance from the USFWS RTCF to contribute toward continued and increased operation of RPUs in Way Kambas. IRF/AsRSG had indicated in its application for the first grant to establish the RPUs in Way

8. Description of Organization(s) Undertaking the Project :

The RPU program for Sumatran rhino, is a collaborative effort among the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), the International Rhino Foundation (IRF), YMR (Yayasan Mitra Rhino - Rhino Foundation of Indonesia); the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) and WWF-Indonesia (WWF-I), and operates under an MOU between PHKA, IRF and YMR.

The Program is managed under the Indonesian Rhino Conservation Program (IRCP), or in Bahasa Indonesia, *Program Konservasi Badak Indonesia* (PKBI). The overall RPU Program Manager is, and has been replaced In February 2004 Ir. M. Waladi Isnan assumed the function of Program Manager, replacing Drs. A.A. Hutabarat. Ir. M. Waladi Isnan is PHKA official, full-time seconded to the Program.

Ir. M. Waladi Isnan will be the Project Officer. Data compilation and report production on the RPUs in the IRCP (PKBI) Office will be the responsibility of Dadan D. Subrata, DVM.

The Regional or Area RPU Coordinator for Way Kambas is Ir. Mega Haryanto who replaced Ir Bintoro in February 2004.

Adhi Rachmat Hariyadi is the Project Executant for the WWF-I component of the RPU program, replacing Drs. Nazir Foad.

The IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) will facilitate and coordinate the Project as has been the case since the start of the GEF Project on Sumatran Rhino Conservation for UNDP. The AsRSG maintains an office in Indonesia.

The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) provides financial and administrative back-up. IRF acts as the official financial agent for the AsRSG through a Memorandum of Agreement with IUCN (copy attached) and provides AsRSG with program office support.

Dr. Nico van Strien, one of the two Program Officers for the AsRSG and the IRF S.E. Asia Program Coordinator, is the primary field adviser for the Project. He has over 25 years of field experience in research and conservation of Sumatran and Javan rhino in South East Asia.