



**Programmatic Report
Indonesian Rhino Protection Units
Submitted to the American Association of Zoo Keepers Bowling for Rhinos Program**

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The International Rhino Foundation is deeply grateful for the support provided by the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) Bowling for Rhinos program to the Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) in Indonesia. These anti-poaching units currently operate in three national parks (Bukit Barisan and Way Kambas in Sumatra, and Ujung Kulon in Java) that are home to significant populations of Sumatran and Javan rhinos, both Critically Endangered species. With the generous funding provided by AAZK Bowling for Rhinos, the RPUs have been extremely successful in preventing rhino poaching – in fact, since the RPUs have been operating in each park, there have been no recorded incidents of rhino poaching.

In the next few years, the type of preventive action that is provided by the RPUs will remain crucial for the survival of Indonesian megafauna. Since 2003, apprehension and prosecution of poachers and other violators has been successful, and many activities of the RPUs now are being directed to intelligence gathering for law enforcement. The cooperation with the authorities has been good, but law enforcement is costly in Indonesia. Proactive measures to prevent harm is, at this time, the best option for the future and this can only be achieved when there are dedicated and reliable teams in the field that can render poaching both unprofitable and risky.

IRF is pleased to provide the following report on the work of the Rhino Protection Units over the past year and the use of AAZK Bowling for Rhinos funding.

INTRODUCTION

Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) are highly trained anti-poaching teams that intensively patrol the key areas within national parks to deactivate traps and snares and identify and apprehend illegal intruders, including poachers, and to investigate crime scenes, thus preventing or reducing the loss of wildlife to poachers. Each RPU is led by a wildlife ranger who has qualifications of a civil investigating officer (*Penyidik Pegawai Negeri Sipil*) and has the authority to carry firearms and arrest suspected poachers. Other members are contracted from the local community. All RPU members receive rigorous training and evaluation before joining the program.

As part of the RPU patrols, all incidences of sightings, including location and species, are recorded as part of the patrol records. For each patrol, a detailed field report is prepared using a standard format. The reports record the routes traversed, the position of overnight camps, all signs of large wildlife encountered and all signs of encroachment, poaching and other illegal activities. All data are recorded with date/time/coordinates, and a route map is included.

Any traps discovered during patrols are removed immediately upon discovery. All illegal activities are recorded and

investigated. Evidence is collected and if possible the perpetrators are delivered to the Park Headquarters for further processing. RPUs also gather intelligence on poaching and other illegal activities through the use of informers recruited from the local people. Members of the RPUs may also attempt to infiltrate illegal operations in areas where they are not known. Intelligence is used to provide information on suspects, their movements, methods, and areas of operation. RPUs may arrest suspects in the act of committing a crime. They must then, and as soon as possible, hand them over to a civil investigator from the National Park, or the police. They may temporarily confiscate items (to be formally confiscated by the park or police) as evidence, and they must prepare a crime report for the civil investigator. Beyond this point they have no further rights, but will be called as witness if the case is brought to court. The National Park, along with the police, are the two bodies responsible for preparation of a case and formally charging suspects.

However, proactive prevention of poaching, more so than apprehension of poachers after an attempt at or success



RPU members measuring rhino footprints



Large mammal snare set in Park by poachers



RPU members dismantling a poacher's snare

with poaching protected wildlife, is the main objective of the RPU program. The ongoing presence of RPUs in the area increases the risks for potential poachers, while their chances for a good return are decreased. This deterrent has worked well over the past years, and once an area is regularly patrolled, normally no more poaching is detected and indirectly all other wildlife benefits from the presence of the RPUs.

Over the past 12 months, largely due to the extremely effective efforts of the rhino protection units, there have been no cases of large mammal (rhino, in particular) poaching in Bukit Barisan, Way Kambas and Ujung Kulon National Parks.

More specific detail on the activities of the RPUs within each of the three parks over the past year can be found below.

BUKIT BARISAN SELATAN NATIONAL PARK, SUMATRA

Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (BBS) in Sumatra, Indonesia, is one of the highest priority areas for Sumatran megafauna, and in particular, for the Sumatran rhino, the Sumatran tiger, and the Sumatran elephant. Approximately 60-85 rhino, 40-50 tigers, and about 500 elephants inhabit the Park. Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) have been operating in BBS since 1995, and Tiger Protection Units (TPUs) since 2001. Originally, the BBS anti-poaching units initially had focused mainly on rhino, but now cover all the megafauna and habitats in both the southern and northern portions of the Park (rhinos occur only in the southern half), counteracting all forms of wildlife crime and habitat destruction, such as illegal logging and encroachment. This work is augmented by a law enforcement and advocacy program that facilitates prosecution of poachers. These programs are administered under IRF, in partnership with Yayasan Badak Indonesia (YABI).

The northern half of BBS has only a very few rhinos surviving, but the populations of tiger and elephant are still good. Prior to the present grant, the northern half of BBS was only patrolled minimally once a year to monitor the developments. Eight anti-poaching units now operate in BBS (six RPUs and two TPUs), and regularly patrol the entire Park.

Each of the eight RPU/TPUs was on continuous patrol for the past year, averaging a minimum of 15 days on patrol per month for each anti-poaching unit. From 1 July – 30 September 2006, 283 field days were spent on patrol (15 field days/person/month), and from 1 October to 31 December 2006, RPU/TPUs were on patrol for 331 days (15 field days/person/month). From January 1 through March 31, 2007, RPU/TPUs were on patrol for 301 days (15 days/person/month) and from April 1 – June 30, 2007, 297 days were spent on patrol (14 days/person/month). During the most recent quarter, the average days on patrol per month was slightly less than the target of 15 days because several RPU/TPU members were on a short leave to train newly-established Orangutan Protection Units elsewhere in North Sumatra.

Patrol units also search for and immediately remove any animal traps in the park. No traps were found during Quarter 3, 2006. On the patrol from 5-16 December 2006, large mammal traps were encountered and removed in Lampung in the Kabupaten Kaur Bengkulu Selatan. A unit encountered and removed a wire snare during a patrol from February 20 to March 1, 2007 near Blimbing. On a patrol from March 25 – April 1, 2007, a unit found an elephant trap set in the main entrance to the Pangekahan area and removed it. No traps were found during Quarter 2, 2007.

The RPU/TPUs collected a significant amount of information on illegal activities, including encroachment, timber theft, illegal hunting, and forest product theft in BBS. Major successes in identifying, arresting and prosecuting illegal poachers and traders include:

- Arrested seven suspects for forest encroachment and destroyed 13 illegal settlements on patrols in Belimbing, Sinar Harapan, Pengekahan, Way Pengekahan, Way Kawat, Way Ru and Way Belimbing. The suspects were prosecuted and sentenced to 8 months in prison and were fined 1 million rupiahs (~US\$80) each.
- Investigated seven suspects for forest encroachment and turned over the evidence to the Liwa District Attorney in Krui.
- Identified suspects holding elephant tusk and tiger skin on Pemerihan, Bengkumat, Pematang Langgar, Panji Wayang patrols. The suspects were arrested in February 2007 and now are awaiting prosecution.
- Helped the Wonosobo police arrest a suspected illegal logger.
- Assisted police in arresting two suspects in Way Sesah for illegal poaching of tigers (with possession of tiger skin as evidence).
- Confiscated nearly 50 traditional guns from local villagers.

As a result of this intelligence and law enforcement work over the past year, eight individuals have now been convicted of illegal poaching and/or trading in Bukit Barisan. Each individual was sentenced to between six months to a year in prison, and was charged a significant fine.

UJUNG KULON NATIONAL PARK, JAVA

The Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) is Critically Endangered, with fewer than 60 animals believed to exist in two known populations. Between 40 and 60 individuals inhabit Ujung Kulon National Park in West Java, Indonesia, and between 3 and 5 individuals live in the Cat Loc section of Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam. Since the establishment of the Ujung Kulon peninsula as a Wildlife Reserve and later a National Park, considerable emphasis has been placed on studying and monitoring the Javan rhino population. The population appears to have peaked in about 1980 at about 63 animals. After 1980, the population stabilized slightly below the peak, between 50 and 60 animals, and now is presumed to be between 40 and 60 animals and has not grown since that time. It is possible that the population has saturated its carrying capacity and no longer had potential for expansion within the area available – or, perhaps, other factors such as disease may play a role. Ujung Kulon is a small area and the total habitat available for the rhino is probably no more than about 30,000 ha, or an average density of about 1 rhino per 400 ha.

Three Rhino Protection and Monitoring Units (RPMUs) have been established and maintained in Ujung Kulon National Park and are operated in partnership with YABI and WWF Indonesia. These three RPMU teams have successfully prevented poaching and have secured habitat. However, significant challenges still exist for the conservation of rhinos and other wildlife species.

RPMUs have improved and intensified the protection of Javan rhino in Ujung Kulon in essence by creating an Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) in the areas occupied by rhino, especially along the east side of the peninsula where poaching is more likely to occur. Since the RPU program was established, the IPZ in Ujung Kulon has maintained status quo and the rhino population is stable.

The three Ujung Kulon RPUs were on continuous patrol for the past year. From 1 July – 30 September, 178 field days were spent on patrol (18.75 field days/person/month), from 1 October to 31 December, RPUs were on patrol for 139 days (16.00 field days/person/month), and RPUs were on patrol for 179 days (19.74 field days / person / month) from 1 January 2007 – 31 March 2007. For the period of April 1 – June 30, 2007, a total of 180 days (or 19.89 field days/person/month) were spent on patrol.

Over the past one-year period, RPUs identified 274 footprints and 158 other signs of Javan rhino in Ujung Kulon, and recorded 5 direct sightings of rhinos. Due to the success of rhino protection efforts in Ujung Kulon National Park, very few illegal activities were observed and recorded during the period of this report. There were 10 incidents of illegal fishing recorded during Quarter 4 of 2006, and no illegal activities discovered during the first half of 2007.

In February 2007, a workshop, partially funded by IRF, was conducted in Jakarta on the Evaluation and Update of the Indonesian Rhino Conservation Strategy. The ultimate goal articulated at this workshop was “to create conditions conducive to and then actually to develop viable populations of Javan rhinos in the wild.” The workshop outlined a new strategy that will focus on maintaining and then expanding by 20 percent the wild population in Ujung Kulon, and secondly, on establishing an additional wild population elsewhere through translocations, after identifying and securing additional, suitable habitat (> 400,000 ha). The highest priority is maintaining and protecting the current population in Ujung Kulon. By providing security and other support, the number of rhinos in the Park first must be maintained at current levels. Additional habitat in the Park has been earmarked to be secured, and active management will be undertaken. In this manner, it may be possible to achieve a small increase in numbers inside Ujung Kulon, with a target of about 70 animals. The RPUs have continued and intensified their activities and it is critical that these activities continue if the rhino population in Ujung Kulon is to survive and grow.

WAY KAMBAS NATIONAL PARK, SUMATRA

Way Kambas National Park is one of the highest priority areas for Sumatran megafauna, and in particular for the Sumatran rhino, the Sumatran tiger, and the Sumatran elephant. Way Kambas’ five rhino protection units have been fully functional since 2001.

The RPUs have successfully maintained and expanded the intensive protection zone (IPZ) for Sumatran rhino already in Way Kambas National Park, which has a resident population of 40+ rhino. The rhino population of the park is stable, and no rhino poaching incidents have occurred since the establishment of the RPUs.

From 1 July – 30 September, the five RPUs spent 170 field days on patrol (13.5 field days/person/month), and from 1 October to 31 December, RPUs were on patrol for 127 days (11.17 field days/person/month). RPUs spent 214 days on patrol from January 1 – March 31, 2007 (15 field days/person/month). From April 1 – June 30, 2007, RPUs spent 175 days (16.6 field days/person/month) on patrol.

The RPUs collected a significant amount of information on illegal activities, including encroachment, timber theft, illegal hunting, and forest product theft in Way Kambas. Major successes in identifying, arresting and prosecuting illegal poachers and traders include:

- More than 25 deer traps located and destroyed; one live wild pig freed from a trap.
- Arrested five suspects for poaching birds and gaharu (agarwood). These suspects are currently awaiting prosecution.
- Launched a major intelligence gathering effort to identify and infiltrate several illegal trading cells operating in the vicinity of the park that are offering rhino horn, tiger skin, and elephant tusk for sale. RPU's are still in the process of gathering information on the poachers and traders so that they can be arrested and convicted.

Since the IPZ in Way Kambas is secure, and the park is also home to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary, there are opportunities to translocate unprotectable rhinos to this area. Two animals, Rosa and Ratu, were translocated to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in late 2005 from Bukit Barisan National Park and from the fringes of Way Kambas, respectively. Both have adapted well to the Sanctuary and we are hopeful they will reproduce now that a young captive-bred male, Andalas, has been transferred to the Sanctuary from the Los Angeles Zoo.

The RPU's continue to have an exceedingly close working relationship with the managed breeding center in Way Kambas. The RPU's, in conjunction with the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary, conduct community outreach and education programs for local communities around the rhino areas. These latter activities, in addition to the anti-poaching efforts, are essential since habitat encroachment is becoming an increasing threat to the Sumatran rhino. Way Kambas has recently and rapidly lost 15% (180 km²) of its area (1200 km²) in the last 5 years. Moreover, not only is habitat being lost due to human encroachment but also to climatic and other ecological changes such as the catastrophic drought and fires that occurred in Way Kambas in 1997. We are in the process of developing additional proposals to expand the community outreach aspect of the work in Way Kambas, and the existing relationships of the RPU's with local communities will form a solid foundation for that endeavor.

Proposal for Future Allocation of AAZK Bowling for Rhino Funds

Prior to 2002, AAZK Bowling For Rhino (BFR) Funds allocated to IRF were used exclusively to support the RPU's in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park. In 2002, the AAZK, the IRF and the Minnesota Zoo Adopt-a-Park Program, which also has received substantial support from AAZK Bowling for Rhinos for its work in Ujung Kulon National Park, formed a closer alliance with the objective of coordinating the protection in southern Sumatra of rhinos and tigers, which are largely sympatric and subject to the same poacher pressure. For the past several years, the Minnesota Zoo has directly channeled its BFR grant to IRF for this work. Several situations have changed since that initial agreement. The Minnesota Zoo has closed its program in Indonesia, and IRF has assumed funding responsibility and management of the TPU's in Bukit Barisan National Park. (Way Kambas National Park TPU's are no longer operational because of a lack of funding.) The new Executive Director of IRF has extensive experience in Indonesia, as well as close working relationships with the Ministry of Forestry, Yayasan Badak Indonesia (YABI), the local NGO which implements the RPU/TPU programs, and WWF Indonesia.

With these changes, it may be timely to re-examine how BFR funds are allocated. Since Minnesota Zoo BFR allocation has been ultimately transferred to the IRF in its entirety for the past several years, the IRF respectfully proposes to the AAZK Board of Directors that a more straightforward arrangement would be to have the BFR funds go directly to IRF, with the Minnesota Zoo kept apprised as to how funds will be used.