

Introducing the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*)...



Conservation status: Globally Threatened: Critically Endangered

The Javan rhino is probably the most threatened large mammal species in the world, and it is on the very brink of extinction. Only two populations are known to exist; the largest group of 50-60 animals resides in Ujong Kulon National Park in Java, Indonesia. For a long time local villagers and Vietnamese scientists knew there was something special about the large mammals in Cat Tien National Park, in the southern Annamites, but it was only in 1988 that the presence of the Javan rhinoceros was confirmed by international scientists. Current estimates of the population in Vietnam range between 3 and 8 individuals. Although the two groups are the same species, scientists believe the populations belong to different and distinct sub-species so some suggest that they should not be crossbred. Very little is known about Javan rhinos, especially those in Vietnam.



Did you know that a rhino's horn is actually made from hair, not bone?

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Fast facts

Height: 1.6 – 1.75 m, Weight: up to 1,500 kg.

Social or solitary?

Rhinos are essentially solitary animals. If more than one rhino is seen at the same time, it is usually a female with her young. A young rhino stays with its mother for about three to four years and become sexually mature after four to six years.

A rhino's home

Javan rhinos need to cool their bulky bodies by wallowing. They spend a lot of time lying in water, and enjoy swampy open areas. Apart from needing access to water and wallows, Javan rhino's are quite adaptable to their environment. They usually live in semi-evergreen and evergreen forests where they browse on a large variety of plants, shrubs and twigs although their diet is largely unknown. Rhinos need to consume salt regularly, to supplement their diets. They do this by frequenting saltlicks - springs with mineral-rich water. Saltlicks are of crucial importance for this rhino to survive. If rhinos cannot get its minerals from the saltlick they will die.



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Threats

In the past, large numbers of Javan rhinos were hunted in Vietnam for food by local people and for their horns, which were traded. Javan rhinos remain under threat of poaching, although since 1988 no poaching incidents have been recorded. The situation is very serious: if only one animal is lost to poachers, it may well be the final blow to the rhinos in



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Vietnam. The tiny size of the Javan rhino population in the Greater Annamites is in itself a cause for concern; low genetic diversity means that this population is very vulnerable to disease, and the entire population could be wiped out by a natural disaster. Much of the rhino habitat is fragmented and rhinos cannot safely reach it all because of human settlements, agricultural land, and roads.

What we are doing

Specific activities supported by WWF, Cat Tien National Park, the IUCN-Asian Rhino Specialist Group, USFWS, NFWS and the International Rhino Foundation, include: equipping and training a special rhino patrol unit, periodic surveys, intensive patrolling in the rhino range, reclaiming a salt-lick by buying-out farmland, boundary demarcation and planning a resettlement of human populations which encroach upon the rhino range, and an intensive conservation education programme to raise awareness of the plight of the rhino.

In Lao PDR Rhino presence is suspected in the Nakai-Nam Theun catchment. A survey of the area is planned to collect further evidence and identify the Rhino species.



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