



**Programmatic and Financial Report
Indonesian Rhino Protection Units
Submitted to the American Association of Zoo Keepers Bowling for Rhinos
Program
3 March 2009**

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 Unit (RPU) program in Indonesia. In 2008, this support helped to ensure that there were no incidences of poaching of Sumatran rhinos in Bukit Barisan and Way Kambas National Parks in Sumatra, and Javan rhinos in Ujung Kulon National Park in Java.

For the foreseeable future, the protection 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. The Indonesian Parks do not have resources to adequately fund these kinds of proactive measures to prevent harm to its unique and at-peril biodiversity. Protective measures are, for now, the best option and can only be achieved when there are dedicated and reliable teams in the field that can render poaching and other illegal activities both unprofitable and risky.

IRF is pleased to provide the following report on the work of the Rhino Protection Units over the last half of 2008 and the use of AAZK Bowling for Rhinos funding.

INTRODUCTION

Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) are highly trained four-man anti-poaching teams that intensively patrol the key areas within national parks. RPUs deactivate traps and snares and identify and apprehend illegal intruders, including poachers, and 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 recruited from local communities. Recruits undergo a rigorous selection and training process, which includes classroom instruction and field exercises, focusing on navigation, record taking and law enforcement practices. Only candidates that pass the final

test are recruited. Competition is fierce. A refresher/ upgrading course is conducted periodically, and a special team of trainers has been formed to provide field training for guards.

The teams use standard field data sheets and record detailed data on: all rhino tracks and sign encountered, other endangered or important wildlife, and on human disturbance encountered. All data are transferred to the RPU database that is used to make monthly, quarterly and annual Activity and Performance Reports, to analyze and plot the rhino, wildlife and disturbance records on maps in the RPU GIS system.

Any traps or snares discovered during patrols are removed immediately and any illegal activity is investigated. If appropriate, evidence is collected, arrests are made, and a crime report prepared. Perpetrators are taken to the National Park headquarters for further processing by a civil investigator from the Park or the police. Beyond this point the RPUs have no further role, but are called as witness if the case is brought to court. The National Park and the police are responsible for preparation of a case and formally charging suspects.

Proactive prevention of poaching is the main objective of the RPU program. The ongoing presence of RPU patrols, which are deployed for ~15 days per month per Unit, 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 all other wildlife indirectly benefits from the presence of the RPUs.

The success of RPUs funded by the AAZK Bowling for Rhinos program is widely acknowledged in Southeast Asia. Several other organizations are using this model for similar anti-poaching units for other species of endangered wildlife, including inviting the RPUs as trainers for these units. Over the past several years, RPUs have provided training for Tiger Protection Units, Elephant Protection Units, and Orangutan Patrol Units throughout Sumatra, Borneo, and Malaysia.

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. Originally, the BBS anti-poaching units 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 (Intelligence and Law Enforcement Unit or ILEU) 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, and regularly patrol the entire Park. In early 2008, in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society, RPUs undertook an intensive survey in BBS, both in the north and the south, to document as accurately as possible how many animals live within the Park boundaries.

From July 1 – September 30, 2008 and from October 1 through December 31, 2008, RPUs averaged around 18 days/person/month on patrol. Details of patrol findings can be found in IRCP reports, available on request.

During the past 3 years, there have been no large mammal (rhino or elephant in particular) poaching events in BBS. However, there have been increasing invasions of people for extraction of timber, non-timber forest products, fish, and meat from the Park. The ongoing presence of RPUs in the area decreases their chances for a good return.

Specific results of patrolling during this 6-month period include:

- 54 rhino footprints identified; one direct rhino sighting.
- 6 instances of illegal logging encountered.
- 6 instances of encroachment encountered.
- 5 instances of fish, bird, deer and/or pig poaching encountered.
- 2 investigations conducted to gather information on illegal wildlife trade near park boundaries.
- 3 instances of animal-wildlife (tiger and elephant) conflict reported.
- 1 poaching suspect arrested.
- RPU members testified at one trial of suspected poacher.
- Began new mapping of park habitats.
- Conducted socialization with local communities about recognizing park boundaries.

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 core, intensive protection zone in Way Kambas has maintained status quo for the past 5 years, with a stable rhino population. In collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society, RPUs undertook an intensive survey in Way Kambas to document as accurately as possible how many animals live within the Park boundaries. We estimate that the park is home to 27-33 adult rhino, plus 5-7 juvenile rhino.

From 1 July – 30 September, RPUs spent 14.62 field days per person per month on patrol, and from 1 October to 31 December, RPUs were on patrol for 13.89 field days/person/month. All illegal activities, including encroachment, timber theft, illegal hunting, and forest product theft, were recorded and investigated. Animal traps set by poachers in Way Kambas were dismantled, illegal activities investigated, and suspected poachers were arrested.

During the past 2 years, there have been no cases of large mammal poaching events in Way Kambas. However, there have been increasing invasions of people for extraction of timber, non-timber forest products, fish, and meat from the Park. The ongoing presence of RPUs in the area decreases their chances for a good return.

Specific results of patrolling during this 6-month period include:

- 81 rhino footprints identified; one direct rhino sighting.
- 7 instances of illegal logging encountered.
- 32 instances of illegal encroachment encountered.
- 28 instances of illegal poaching (bird, fish, pig and/or deer) recorded.
- At least 80 deer and pig traps encountered and removed.
- Extinguished 2 forest fires (suspected arson).
- Halting 3 poaching incidents and chased away poachers (but were not able to apprehend them.)
- 5 poachers apprehended and arrested.
- Confiscated 3 bicycles belonging to poachers.
- Testified at 2 trials of suspected poachers.
- Helped to plant 8,000 trees as part of park reforestation effort.
- After encountering numerous domestic buffalo grazing within park boundaries, conducted training for local buffalo owners about importance of keeping domestic animals out of the park.

The RPUs continue to have an exceedingly close working relationship with the managed breeding center in Way Kambas. The RPUs, 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.

UJUNG KULON NATIONAL PARK, JAVA

Between 35 and 50 Javan rhinos 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. In late 2008, WWF Indonesia resumed intensive camera trapping to determine population demographics, with supplemental cameras provided by the IRF. The most recent survey, completed in late 2008, confirmed that there are 35-50 animals in the park.

Four RPUs now work in Ujung Kulon National Park and are operated in partnership with YABI and WWF Indonesia. The fourth RPU was just added in late 2008, in response to an increasing need to patrol the eastern section of the park. These RPU teams have successfully prevented poaching and have secured habitat. However, significant challenges still exist for rhinos and other wildlife species.

RPUs 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. However, park encroachment has been increasing significantly in recent years. In response, IRF and its partners are establishing a new Intelligence and Law Enforcement Unit in Ujung Kulon, to investigate and arrest encroachers, and also to work closely with local communities to build closer relationships and support for rhino conservation.

The RPUs in Ujung Kulon operate throughout the Ujung Kulon peninsula and in the Southern parts of the mainland part of the National Park, where rhino occur

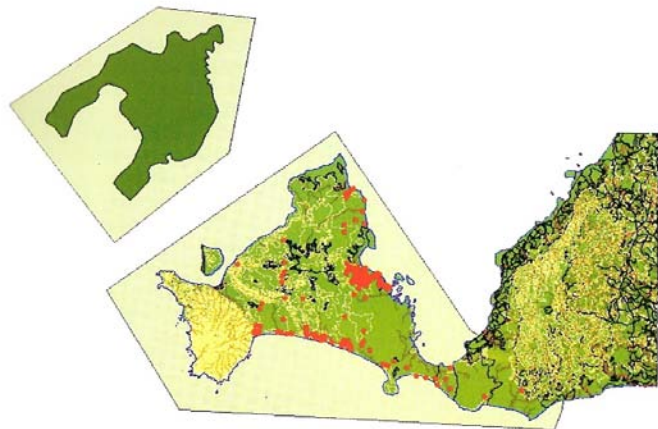


Figure 1. Map of Ujung Kulon National Park with Javan Rhino distribution indicated by red areas. (from *Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation of Rhinos in Indonesia 2007-2017*, Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia)

(Figure 1). RPUs operate from a base station at Legonpakis, close to the border of the Park and stage their patrols from the Guard posts that are available on strategic locations along the coast. Boats bring the teams to and from their starting locations and transport supplies.

From July 1 – September 30, and from October 1 – December 31, 2007, the RPUs averaged nearly 16 field days/person/month. Few illegal activities were observed and recorded during the period of this report.

Specific results of patrolling during this 6-month period include:

- 144 rhino footprints identified; 1 direct rhino sighting.
- 12 instances of illegal logging encountered.
- 9 instances of park encroachment encountered.
- 20 instances of illegal poaching (fish, bird, deer and/or pig) observed.

The highest priority is maintaining and protecting the current population of Javan rhinos in Ujung Kulon. Additional habitat in the Park has been earmarked to be secured, and active management will be undertaken, including determining how best to deal with an invasive Arenga palm (*Arenga obtusifolia*). In this manner, it may be possible to achieve a small increase in numbers inside Ujung Kulon, with a target of about 70 animals. A further increase inside the Park is unlikely because its carrying capacity for rhinos is nearly saturated already. Expansion of the population beyond the boundaries of Ujung Kulon National Park is not possible as the neighboring areas are completely occupied by people, even areas like Gunung Honge, which rhinos occasionally use. The continuation of RPUs in Ujung Kulon is essential to the future survival of the species and it is critical that these efforts continue.

Lessons Learned

Effective and efficient protection of endangered wildlife in a habitat that severely restricts one's movement, observation and operational options, can be successful if sufficient resources, manpower and management are provided in a sustainable and stable manner. The current RPU efforts are long-term and probably will need to continue for several decades into the future and in all likelihood will need to be expanded, especially as depleted populations of the endangered target species recover and increase their ranges and numbers. If anti-poaching and other direct protection and prevention efforts of rare and endangered species with a high economic value cannot be sustained for as long as necessary, it will only give a temporary respite and will not prevent the target species becoming extinct. For the foreseeable future, current RPU intensive protection efforts will need to be continued while the threats from poaching, habitat degradation and habitat loss are resolved by means of public education, economic development and other long term civil processes.



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for the Period from 1 July – 31 December 2008

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INCOME

Balance in IRF AAZK/RPU Allocated Fund Account 30 June 2008	\$33,448.28
Funds received from AAZK BFR on 9 Sept 08	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL	\$38,448.00

EXPENDITURE

AAZK Contribution to Operating Expenses for Bukit Barisan Selatan, Way Kambas, and Ujung Kulon National Parks Rhino Protection Units (1 July – 31 December 2008)	\$ 38,448.28
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Balance in IRF AAZK/RPU Allocated Fund Account 31 December 2008 **\$0**

The \$ 38,448.28 expended represents about 18% of the funds required for operating the 17 RPUs in the three parks during the reporting period.

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3 March 2009