



Physical Description

The Sumatran, or hairy, rhino is the only Asian rhino with two horns. Other characteristics include fringed ears, reddish-brown skin variably covered with long hair, and wrinkles around its eyes.

The front horn is usually 25-80 cm long, while the posterior horn is usually quite small and often no more than 10 cm. Calves are born with a dense covering of hair that turns reddish brown in young adults and becomes sparse, bumpy and almost black in older animals. The body length ranges from 2 to 3 m and usually from 1 to 1.5 m in height. Body weight has been estimated at 600-950 kg.

The habitats of Sumatran rhino range from lowland swamps to montane forests, with the species generally favouring forests with thick vegetation. The Sumatran rhino is a browser and feeds on fruit (especially wild mangoes and figs), leaves, twigs, and bark. They prefer lower altitudes, especially secondary forests where low-growing plants are more abundant. In the wild, Sumatran rhinos live at low densities and are mostly solitary.

Threats

For many years, hunting for its horn and other body parts used in traditional medicines has depleted populations of the Sumatran rhino throughout its range. Now, habitat loss is threatening the very survival of the last few small populations.

Forest destruction and accompanying human disturbance have become so severe that they are pushing the Sumatran rhino to extinction. The populations are already small and the ever accelerating clearing of their habitat is destroying the last remaining forested corridors the rhinos need to migrate to other habitat for food and breeding. Inside Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, illegal encroachment for coffee and pepper plantations has destroyed a fifth of its habitat. As the forests are cleared and access to the deepest regions of the park becomes easier the other serious threat to rhinos increases: poaching.

The Sumatran rhinoceros is the smallest and hairiest of all rhinoceroses. Today, the world population of the Sumatran rhino is estimated to be fewer than 300 individuals in the wild and is classified as critically endangered. The largest and possibly most viable populations now exist in Sumatra, with smaller numbers found in Borneo and Peninsular Malaysia.

No single Sumatran rhino population is estimated to have more than 75 individuals, making them extremely vulnerable to extinction from natural catastrophes, diseases, poaching, political disturbances, and/or genetic drift. Fewer than 25 individuals are believed to survive in Sabah, Malaysia, and there are no reliable figures for other parts of Borneo.

Loss of habitat and poaching are the most deadly threats to the Sumatran rhino. If they are to survive in the wild, extraordinary action needs to be taken to save the Sumatran forests where it is still found. Moreover, it is imperative that trade in rhino horn and other rhino products is halted immediately to take away the incentives for poachers to go after these animals.

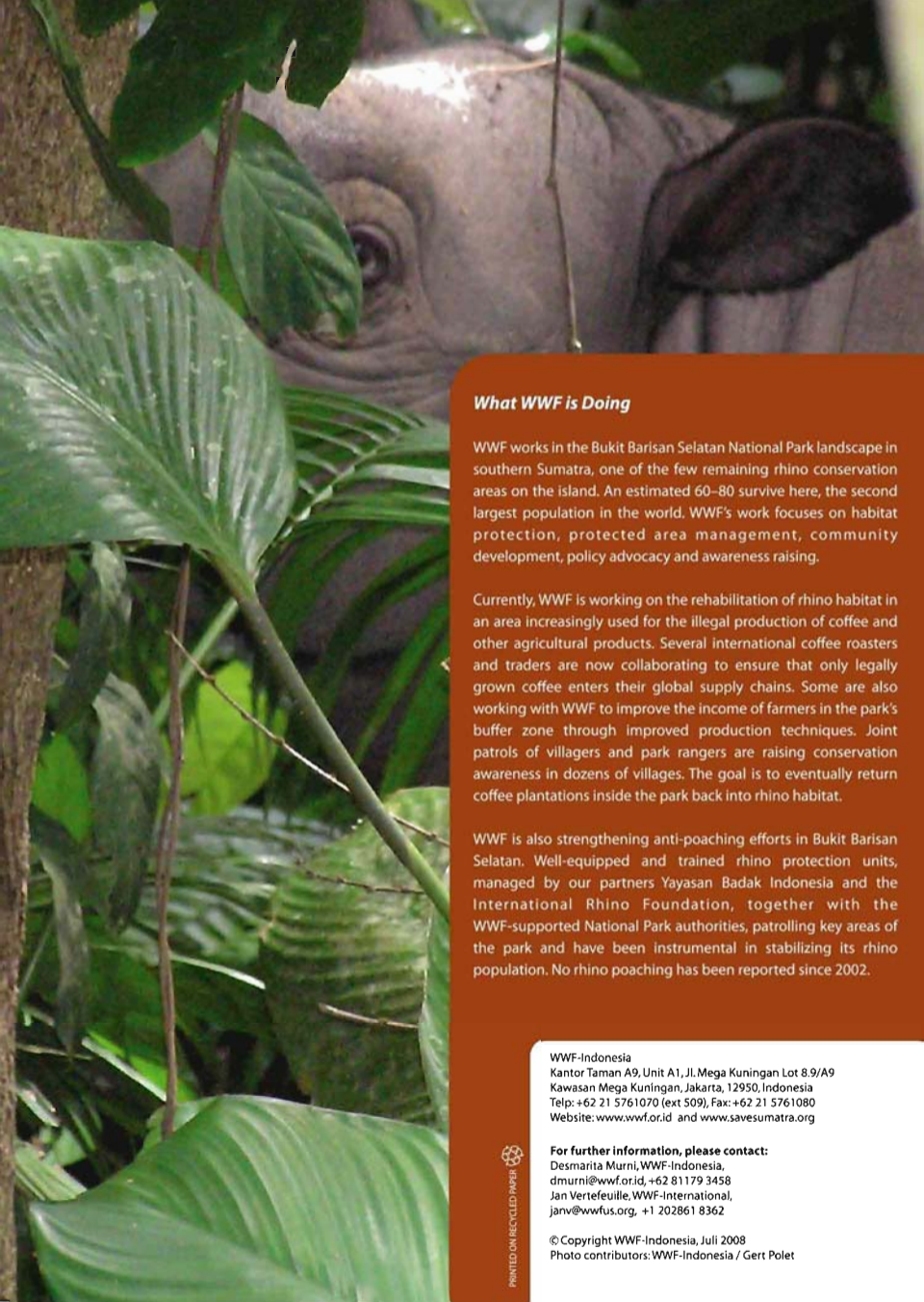
The Sumatran rhinoceros

(*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*)



www.savesumatra.org





What WWF is Doing

WWF works in the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park landscape in southern Sumatra, one of the few remaining rhino conservation areas on the island. An estimated 60–80 survive here, the second largest population in the world. WWF's work focuses on habitat protection, protected area management, community development, policy advocacy and awareness raising.

Currently, WWF is working on the rehabilitation of rhino habitat in an area increasingly used for the illegal production of coffee and other agricultural products. Several international coffee roasters and traders are now collaborating to ensure that only legally grown coffee enters their global supply chains. Some are also working with WWF to improve the income of farmers in the park's buffer zone through improved production techniques. Joint patrols of villagers and park rangers are raising conservation awareness in dozens of villages. The goal is to eventually return coffee plantations inside the park back into rhino habitat.

WWF is also strengthening anti-poaching efforts in Bukit Barisan Selatan. Well-equipped and trained rhino protection units, managed by our partners Yayasan Badak Indonesia and the International Rhino Foundation, together with the WWF-supported National Park authorities, patrolling key areas of the park and have been instrumental in stabilizing its rhino population. No rhino poaching has been reported since 2002.

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