

# Javan Rhino: *Rhinoceros sondaicus*. Population: 60

The Javan Rhino is at significant risk of extinction. Fewer than 60 survive in only two known locations, making the Javan rhino one of the most critically endangered and rarest animals on earth.

This species' proximity to China, where unfortunate superstitions attribute medicinal properties to rhino horn, places the world's last Javan rhinos in constant danger of extermination by poachers. Armed Rhino Protection Units (RPU) are a must. Thanks to IRF-funded RPUs, there has not been a poaching incident in Ujung Kulon National Park for six years.

In addition to the ever present danger of poachers, Javan rhinos in Vietnam are threatened by land development, encroachment by settlers, and the impending construction of a power plant.

## Javan Rhino Distribution

There are only two known locations of Javan rhinos. One is in Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia, where the population appears to have stabilized at about 50 rhinos. The world's last population of five Vietnamese Javan rhinos (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*) survives in Cat Tien National Park.

## Three Subspecies of Javan Rhino

- Indonesian Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus sondaicus*)
- Vietnamese Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*)
- Indian Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus inermis*) - extinct as of early 1900's.

## Distinguishing Characteristics

The Javan rhino has one horn comprised of keratin - simply hair and fingernail material. The horn is about 10 inches long, and is thought to occur only in the male Javan rhino.

The Javan rhino's grayish brown skin has a mosaic patterning that gives it a somewhat prehistoric appearance, and folds of skin on the body look like plates of armor. They are hairless, except for eyelashes, and tufts of hair on the ears and tail tip.

The Javan rhino has an unmistakably long and prehensile upper lip. This enables the rhino to grasp twigs, leaves, and saplings, and pull them into the mouth. They also graze in open grassy areas.

Like all rhinos, the Javan rhino is an odd-toed ungulate, with three toes on each foot. Also in common with other rhinos is a superb sense of hearing and keen sense of smell - but relatively poor eyesight.

## Size of the Javan Rhino

The Javan rhino weighs from 2,000 - 5,000 pounds, and stands from 5 - 5.5 feet at the shoulder. End-to-end, the Javan rhino can be 6 - 11.5 feet in length. The smaller Vietnamese subspecies is similar in size to the Sumatran rhino, standing only 3 - 5 feet high at the shoulder and weighing 1,300 - 2,000 pounds.



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## Activity

The Javan rhino is quick and agile, like the other Asian rhinos, and is reported to run up to 30 mph and make sharp turns in mid-air if necessary.

A large part of the Javan rhino's day is spent in the water, wallowing in mud holes, pools, and puddles. They have also been observed swimming in deeper water.

Javan rhinos consume salt regularly. In addition to visiting the salt-licks formed by mineral seepages, Javan rhinos (in Ujung Kulon) drink seawater.

## Life Span

- It is estimated that Javan rhinos live about 30 - 45 years in the wild, although they have not fared well in captivity, only living up to 20 years. There has not been a Javan rhino in captivity since 1907.

## Scientific Name and Origin

### *Rhinoceros sondaicus*

- Rhinoceros: from the Greek rhino, meaning "nose" and ceros, meaning "horn"
- sondaicus: (Latin -icus indicates a locality) referring to the Sunda islands in Indonesia.; "Sunda" means "Java"

Sources: Asian Rhino Project, International Rhino Foundation, Save the Rhino International & Rhino Resource Center

