



Javan Rhinoceros

(*Rhinoceros sondaicus*)

THE JAVAN rhinoceros ("rhino") weighs from 1500 to 2000 kilograms or 3200 to 4400 pounds. It has one horn and prominent folds in the skin, similar to the Indian rhino. This rhino prefers dense palm thickets in swampy lowland rain forests. It browses on saplings, bushes and certain fruits. It remains near water and enjoys bathing and wallowing in mud. Mornings and evenings are the chief feeding periods. The Javan rhino is generally solitary except for mating pairs and mothers with young. It usually seeks to escape from, rather than attack, an enemy, although when wounded or with a calf, it may charge. In 1934, it was said to be the rarest of all the earth's large mammals (*La Monte & Welch 1934*).

The population of the Javan rhino used to be widespread and abundant from Bangladesh east through Myanmar, southwest China to Vietnam and south through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia to Sumatra and Java (Indonesia). It has dwindled to only two known populations - Ujung Kulon National Park in Java (Indonesia) and Cat Tien in Vietnam.

In total, less than 80 animals remain worldwide



today and there are none in captivity. The species is listed as Critically Endangered and Protected on CITES Appendix 1.

Two major reasons have led to the decline of the Javan rhino. One is hunting for its horn, which is highly valued for use in Oriental medicine; the other is loss of lowland forest habitat, which by far is the most serious. Disease in the Ujung Kulon National Park may have also caused some loss of its local population. The rhino is vulnerable because of its routine visits to favored mud wallows. Hunters build tree platforms over, close to wallows and lie in wait to shoot the animals.

