

# First picture of wild Borneo rhino taken

June 15 2006

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The World Wildlife Fund says the first-ever picture of a rhino in the wild on the island of Borneo has been taken using a motion-triggered camera trap.

The WWF and Malaysia's Sabah Wildlife Department say the rhino is believed to be one of as few as 13 in the interior forests of Sabah, Malaysia -- an area known as the "Heart of Borneo."

"This is an encouraging sign for the future of rhinoceros conservation work in Sabah," said Mahedi Andau, director of the Sabah Wildlife Department.

The rhinos in Sabah spend their lives in dense jungle where they are rarely seen, which accounts for the lack of any previous photographs of them in the wild.

A full-time rhino monitoring team, funded by Honda Malaysia was established last year to prevent poaching.

"These are very shy animals that are almost never seen alive in the wild," said Matthew Lewis, program officer for the Washington, D.C.-based, WWF's Species Conservation Program. "The photos we get from the camera traps will eventually give us a better idea of the population structure by allowing us to identify individual rhinos: males, females and hopefully calves."

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