

Malaysia officials to trap rhino for breeding

June 9 2010



A night shot of a Borneo female rhino in eastern Sabah state, April 21, 2010. Malaysian wildlife officials on Wednesday said they plan to trap the rare female Borneo rhino caught on camera to mate with a lone male rescued two years ago.

Malaysian wildlife officials on Wednesday said they plan to trap a rare female Borneo rhino caught on camera to mate with a lone male rescued two years ago.

"This particular female rhino is targeted for capture in order to provide a mate for our lone male rhino, Tam, who was captured in August 2008," Laurentius Ambu, wildlife director for Malaysia's Sabah state, said in a statement.

Officials said [captive breeding](#) was the only way to prevent extinction of the wild rhino, under threat from poaching.

The wild female rhino was spotted by remotely-set camera traps in eastern Sabah a few weeks ago. It followed the release on April 21 of an image of a possibly pregnant female in a another part of the state.

"Sabah now represents the last hope of saving the species in Malaysia and in Borneo," John Payne, chief executive officer of the Borneo Rhino Alliance (BORA).

BORA is assisting Sabah in the development of the Borneo Rhino Sanctuary in the Tabin Wildlife Reserve and providing security against poaching.

Sen Nathan, rhino conservation programme coordinator said poachers were the number one enemy of the rhinos.

"We have reached a stage now where even [habitat loss](#) is not so much the main reason for extinction, rather the ruthless hunting of the last few remaining individuals, to supply ridiculous markets for horns, bones and other body parts.

"For several species, we have reached the stage where actively concentrating the last few remaining individuals of the species in managed facilities might be the only way to avoid total extinction," he added.

Just 30 rhinos are known to remain in the wild on [Borneo island](#), which is shared by Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, and researchers are only able to monitor the population through images captured by remote camera traps.

The Borneo sub-species is the rarest of all rhinos, distinguished from other Sumatran [rhinos](#) by its relatively small size, small teeth and distinctively shaped head.

The Sumatran rhino is one of the world's most endangered species, with few left on Indonesia's Sumatra island, the north of Borneo island and peninsular Malaysia.

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