

Critically endangered Sumatran rhino pregnant: conservationists

September 22 2015, by Kerry Sheridan



Sumatran rhino Ratu with her one-day old male baby Andatu beside her at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas National Park in Lampung, Sumatra island, in a photo released by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry on June 25, 2012

A rare Sumatran rhino in Indonesia is pregnant with her second baby and is expected to give birth in May, raising new hope for the critically endangered species, conservationists said Tuesday.

The mother is Ratu, a wild rhino who wandered out of the rainforest and into the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Indonesia's Way Kambas National Park 10 years ago.

She became pregnant in January after mating with Andalas, a male rhino at the park, said Susie Ellis, director of the International Rhino Foundation.

Sumatran rhinos have very long pregnancies that last about 16 months, even though they are the smallest of the living rhino species.

"We just wanted to be sure it would take before we made an announcement because in early pregnancy any number of things can go wrong," Ellis told AFP.

The pregnancy announcement was made on World Rhino Day, which aims to raise awareness about the five remaining species of rhinos.

The animals are under increasing threat by poachers and continue to lose precious forest habitat.

Only about 100 Sumatran rhinos are believed to exist in the entire world, so the pregnancy is seen as tremendously good news for those trying to save the animals from extinction.

"One more rhino means one percent more animals. That is not a lot but it is certainly an upward trend," Ellis said.



Suci (top), a female Sumatran rhino, and Harapan (below), a male, pictured on July 23, 2013 in photos courtesy Tom Uhlman (top) and Michelle Curley of the Cincinnati Zoo, Ohio

Sumatran rhinos are the only Asian rhinoceroses with two horns. They are covered in woolly hair that ranges from reddish brown to black in color.

Births of Sumatran rhinos in captivity are rare. Just four Sumatran rhinos

have been born at breeding facilities, including the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary and the Cincinnati Zoo.

Ratu's first baby, Andatu, was born at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in 2012, marking "the first Sumatran rhino born in an Asian breeding facility in more than 140 years," said a statement by Siti Urbana Bakar, the Indonesian Minister of Environment and Forestry.

The current pregnancy "represents nearly two decades of international collaboration to save the species," he added.

Andalas, the father of both Andatu and the expected calf, was born at the Cincinnati Zoo. He was moved to Indonesia from the Los Angeles Zoo in 2007.

The only remaining Sumatran rhino in the United States is Harapan, Andalas' younger brother.

He will be moved from the Cincinnati Zoo to Indonesia later this year in an effort to boost the breeding population at the rhino sanctuary, which is currently home to five Sumatran [rhinos](#).

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